

The Empty Vessel

The Journal of Daoist Philosophy and Practice

Winter 2012

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**Year of the Water Dragon
Immortality and the 14 Words of Lao Zi
The Tao of Joy Every Day
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Qi Medicine and the
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What Is Daoism?

"The Dao that can be described is not the eternal Dao." So begins the *Daodejing* of Laozi written some 2,500 years ago. How then, to describe the indescribable? How to fit into words that which is beyond words? The Dao can only be pointed to, or referred to, say the ancient sages. It cannot be held, only experienced. It cannot be touched, only felt. It cannot be seen, only glimpsed with the inner eye.

Dao, then, is the Way, as in direction, as in manner, source, destination, purpose and process. In discovering and exploring Dao the process and the destination are one and the same. Laozi describes a Daoist as the one who sees simplicity in the complicated and achieves greatness in little things. He or she is dedicated to discovering the dance of the cosmos in the passing of each season as well as the passing of each precious moment in our lives.

Daoism was already long established when Laozi wrote the *Daodejing*. It originated in the ancient shamanic roots of Chinese civilization. Many of the practices and attitudes toward life were already established before Laozi's time. For many centuries Daoism was an informal way of life, a way followed by peasant, farmer, gentleman philosopher and artist. It was a way of deep reflection and of learning from Nature, considered the highest teacher. Followers of the Way studied the stars in the heavens and the energy that lies deep within the earth. They meditated upon the energy flow within their own bodies and mapped out the roads and paths it traveled upon.

It is a belief in life, a belief in the glorious procession of each unfolding moment. It is a deeply spiritual life, involving introspection, balance, emotional and spiritual independence and responsibility and a deep awareness and connection to the earth and all other life forms. It requires an understanding of how energy works in the body and how to treat illness in a safe, non-invasive way while teaching practical ways of maintaining health and avoiding disease and discomfort. Daoist meditation techniques help the practitioner enter deeper or more expansive levels of wakefulness and inner strength. But most of all, it is a simple, natural, practical way of being in our bodies and our psyches and sharing that way of being with all other life forms we come into contact with.

Today in China and in the West, Daoism is often divided into two forms, *dao jiao* and *dao jia*. Or religious Daoism and philosophical Daoism. Many scholars argue that there are not two distinct forms of Daoism and in many ways they are right. There is really a great intermingling of the religious form of Daoism and its various sects and the philosophical Daoism of Laozi and Zhuangzi. But many people who follow the Dao do not consider themselves religious people and do not go to temples and are not ordained as priests. Rather these two forms exist both side by side and within each other.

As it says in the opening lines of the *Daodejing*: "Dao or Way that can be spoken of or described in words is not eternal Dao." It is up to each of us to find the way to the Way in our own way. What we try to do with *The Empty Vessel* is offer articles and information to help you, our dear readers, to do that.



The Empty Vessel

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Statement of Purpose

The Empty Vessel is dedicated to the exploration and dissemination of Daoist philosophy and practice. It is open to sharing the various traditional and contemporary teachings in a nondiscriminatory manner. We at The Empty Vessel believe that it is in using these practices and attitudes of the ancient achieved ones in a timely and contemporary manner that we can best benefit from them and in doing so, be able to effect change in the world around us.

Empty Vessel China Tour 2012

Hangzhou • Maoshan • Wudang Mountains • Beijing
September 3 - 19, 2012



Join us in september when we travel to the sacred mountains of Daoism – Wudang Shan – home of Daoist taiji, qigong and martial arts. We will spend days hiking and visiting some of the many Daoist temples there, attend classes with a local master, drink tea in the temple teahouse and practice Wuji Qigong, a 600 hundred year old qigong form, created by the famous Wudang Daoist master Zhang San Feng. We will also be visiting Maoshan, an ancient Daoist mountain. We will visit the Qianyuan Guan, a Daoist nunnery, famed for the purity of their practice and the wonderful sounds of their orchestra. The abbess, Yin Xinhui, is one of the few heads of temples who does not take government money for rebuilding (which means less tourists) but works to maintain her temple through ceremonies (which, hopefully we will get to witness while we are there.)

We will also be spending time in Hangzhou, one of the most beautiful cities in China. Hangzhou, circling around West Lake, has long been revered for its beauty and culture. While there we visit a tea plantation (where the famous Dragon Well tea is grown), as well as the museum of Chinese Medicine and an awe inspiring lake show by Zhang Yimou, the well known Chinese film director, called *West Lake Impressions* (check it out on youtube).

The last few days will be spent in Beijing, where we will visit the White Cloud Temple, the Great Wall and the fabulous tea market as well as attend some amazing acrobat shows. All along the way we will eat amazing food, meet qigong masters, artists, musicians, tea masters, and one-cave dwelling hermit.

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"Thank you so much for planning such a perfect trip for us."

"Thanks again for organizing such an amazing trip. I had a fantastic time and will never forget it."

Along the Way

It's been pretty cold in Oregon this winter, unseasonably so. One thing about the rain, it does keep things warmer. But this year there has been very little of the famous Pacific Northwest kind of relentless rain and more blue sky but much lower temperatures.

Things here at the abode are progressing well. Our new website (CommunityAwake.com) is up and running and we are putting up new content on a regular basis. We are planning this year's China tour, which will be in the fall this time, to experience some of the mystical beauty of the mountains in autumn. Am deep into reading the *Daoist Encyclopedia*, a two volume tome, filled with history, definitions, and descriptions of practices and philosophy over centuries of Daoism in China. Not for the faint of heart but for anyone really interested in going deeply into the subject, a wonderful read.

Am looking forward to bringing in the new Dragon year with my friend Chuangliang Ai Huang up in Olympia, Washington. Of course, by the time you read this we will be well into the Water Dragon Year. Our learned friend Susan Levitt has done her usual great job of introducing the new year to us in this issue.

Now that the holi/holy days are over and this issue is off to the world, I hope to be able to spend some time creating some new music.

(Somehow I am feeling like Garrison Kealer here, describing his own town of Lake Wobegone.)

Winter is the season to spend more time indoors, eating warm food with friends and family. It is also a good time for inner work – deeper meditation and reflection on our life's path.

It is the kidney time of year, so it is important to pay attention to our kidney / adrenal energy and not overtax ourselves. It has traditionally been a time for storytelling and song. In times past, before computers and televisions, people would gather after dinner or in the deep night and share stories and songs. Not performance oriented as in today's world but rather a deep sharing of themes, feelings and memories.

In those days, everyone knew the songs and everyone sang along. No matter if you were considered a "singer" or not, it was the feeling and the camaraderie that was most important.

The world we live in today seems to be more interested in cutting people off from one another, everyone immersed in their own computer screen or iphone world. But the reason we homo sapiens have been so prolific and successful, even back in the cave dweller days, is because we banded together.

Ancient cave paintings from those days are often found deep, deep inside of caves, where the earth spirits dwell.

Perhaps it is time we went deep into our own caves and produced art that will last long after we are gone from this world. Perhaps it is time we spent our precious time building bridges – to the spirit world, to each other, to our own inner being, to Dao itself.

So my winter message to you all is – stay warm, stay happy, stay true to your highest expression of who you are. Stay real, stay grounded, stay on the path, stay loose, stay dancing, stay smiling. May we all move together into the warm bright sun of spring, which always comes after winter and always brings promise of new growth, new expression, new dreams, new experiences, new light, love and laughter.

Solala Towler, editor



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The Year of the Water Dragon, 2012

Susan Levitt



Magical magnificent Dragon grandly enters on the new Moon of January 22 at 11:39 pm PST. Dragon is the most powerful sign of the Chinese zodiac so anticipate a year that is exciting, creative, and over the top. Dragon's influence inspires passion, drive, and daring. Dragon year is an excellent time to start a business, get married, have a child, or take incredible risks. But results can be drastic: undreamed of success or unrealistic fantasies that crash. Either way, life's pace is speedy, dynamic, and anything can happen. Should Dragon year's maximum volume leave you overwhelmed, take time off to retreat and rest. On a planetary level, expect extreme earth changes such as earthquakes, tidal waves, and volcanic eruptions.

The Chinese Dragon is wildly generous, overly benevolent, and extremely lucky. Protective and powerful Dragon is the most sacred mystical animal in Chinese history. Dragon is a very ancient symbol in China, from the time of the dinosaurs. Proud and strong Dragon symbolizes royalty, wisdom, and prosperity. Magical Dragon can transform into any type of creature, and can overcome all challenges.

Those born in Dragon years (1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012) have strong karma to lead and succeed. Their life experiences are very intense because Dragon wears the horns of destiny; only Dragon can tame the Fates. Dragon is exciting, loves adventure, and believes that she is destined to achieve great success.

She wants to make a huge impact on the world so there are no casual friendships for a Dragon. Interactions are a continuation of past life karma that must be resolved now. Extremely independent and freedom-loving, Dragon is brave and not afraid to take charge. But Dragon must be aware to not overpower others through force.

Some Dragons can be dreamers; if Dragon's idealism and optimism are not combined with concrete action, they can turn into discontented daydreamers who pays little attention to practical reality. If Dragons take action to realize their dreams, there is no limit to the heights they can achieve. Dragon correlates to the Western sign Aries.

Traditionally in Chinese astrology, the mighty Dragon year brings luck and good fortune. Powerful, mystical, and magical Dragon is the bringer of spring rain, Dragon grants blessings, and is the symbol of power and the Emperor.

But in 2012, the Dragon is still crawling out of the recession that began in Rat year 2008. So this Dragon year is not the year when the recession ends, but the year when it is obvious what works and what does not work. In a Dragon year, there is not much middle ground. The time for middle-ground diplomacy was last year, Rabbit 2011. So in this Dragon year, expect extremes in stock markets, fluctuation of prices, and general chaos in all things financial. In Dragon year, it will be Europe's turn to crash. And it won't be over until Sheep year 2015.

Your Fortune in Dragon Year



RAT (1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020) Rat is smart, sharp, clever, and has a natural ability to be successful. But Rat has not had good luck in the last three years, but 2012 is your lucky year to shine! Although some translations refer to your sign as mouse, this can be misleading because your personality is rarely meek and mousy. So don't be mousy in this Dragon year when success can be attained in business, politics, and real estate. Rat can work the shrewdest angle, get the best deal, and win big. Now is the time to start new endeavors and innovate because you can succeed under Dragon's influence. Rat is a master planner, and events occur quickly in a Dragon year, giving you all the pace, action, movement, and breadth you need to end up with the biggest piece of cheese!



OX (1901, 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021) Honest, strong, reliable Ox is a hard worker. (If you need to hire someone, hire an Ox or a Dog.) Ox is known for integrity of character, whereas Dragon has little idea of what integrity is, unless it can be used to get ahead. So in this Dragon year, it is best to be very conservative with your money. Do not be tricked into any type of shady investment. If you see others living in grand Dragon style, don't even try to keep up with the show. Avoid lawsuits because you could be the fall guy. If you think you are getting a deal on a foreclosed property, think again. You start a whole new life cycle next year 2013 the year of the Snake, which will be most lucky for the Ox.



TIGER (1902, 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022) Financially speaking, Tiger and Dragon are the two strongest signs so you might feel a competitive edge this year. Avoid any big financial gestures during this Dragon year. Most of your plans, financial and otherwise, will not easily go your way. Avoid direct power struggles and stay loyal to those who love you. Tiger can be very impulsive, so do not ever get caught up in any Dragon investment frenzy. Bad deals are everywhere, and even your accurate Tiger gut instinct can be off in a Dragon year. Learn from the money mistakes of others. Like a Tiger on the hunt, silently observe but do not pounce.



HARE (1903, 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023) You are an artistic soul and money is not what truly motivates you. But you are a connoisseur who appreciates all the fine beautiful things that money can buy. There is a difference between the Hare who appreciates beauty whereas the Dragon wants to own and control beauty. So if you want to sit out any big financial action during this competitive Dragon year, that's OK. Then you'll feel safe during this changeable, chaotic time. Yet Hare can do surprisingly well financially in a Dragon year; Dragon's strong energy can encourage Hare to be more social, enjoy world travel, and seek adventuresome outings. It is while engaged in life that Hare discovers money connections and investment deals in a Dragon year.

Hare is the fourth sign. This phase is the beginning of spring. It symbolizes the effortless growth of plants in warm, magical spring light. The gentle qualities of springtime are traits of those born in Hare year. Hares differ slightly from rabbits in that rabbits are born naked and blind, whereas hares are born with a coat of fur and good vision. Hares run faster than rabbits and do not freeze when confronted by danger. Hares symbolize long life, as do cranes and turtles.



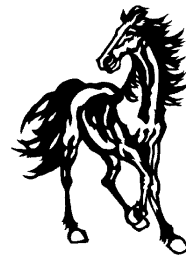
DRAGON (1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024) Dragon greatly enjoys the benefits of this Dragon year. Life is lived on a grand scale, and

you Dragons lead the way! This is your lucky cycle so celebrate life whenever you can, get involved, and shine in the spotlight. You have fresh ideas, high energy, and are raring to go as New Year begins. Take a risk, go for broke, and do not hide your brilliance. And you'll succeed more if you do not go it alone. Dragon can be a loner, but team with a Rat or Rooster to handle your financial details, or bond with a Monkey who has even wilder money ideas than you do. In Chinese mythology, the celestial Dragon T'ien Lung flies through the sky, chasing a pearl that is the Sun. Like the celestial Dragon, you born in Dragon year have potential to soar.

In Asian cultures, the qualities of Dragon are the opposite of European interpretations. Dragon is not an evil, malefic enemy. Instead, Dragon symbolizes royalty, prosperity, wisdom, and benevolence. Dragon has magnanimous and spiritual qualities and is a protector of temples and monasteries. Dragon has magical attributes because Dragon can change shape and transform herself into any type of creature. Dragon brings rain and represents masculine yang power. The year of the Dragon is a time of ambition, power, and daring. Events seem as if they are magnified threefold with increased intensity. The energy and vitality of Dragon year may make some people overly optimistic. Dragon year is an excellent time to start a business, marry, have children, and take incredible risks. On a global level, expect extreme earth changes, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tidal waves.



SERPENT (1905, 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025) Snake and Dragon can be compatible allies. You are both powerful, focused, and passionate. But Dragon's energy is active and yang, whereas you are receptive and yin. Snake is an observer who contemplates before acting, and is far more secretive or private than show-off Dragon. For you, Snake, it is natural to be conservative with your money. You'll start a whole new life cycle next year 2013 the year of the Snake. So you decide: either wait for your money luck when you shed your skin in Snake year, or proceed with caution in this Dragon year. Don't you, wise Snake, be tricked into any type of risky investment. Avoid lawsuits because you won't win - unless you drag the legal action into Snake year 2013.



HORSE (1906, 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026) Dragon and Horse are not on the same team. Dragon is a dreamer and Horse is a doer. Yet both Dragon and Horse are two very strong animals in Chinese astrology so avoid power struggles this year. In your financial dealings, do not engage in direct confrontations. Go out of your own way to avoid any lawsuits. They will not win in your favor, and Horse likes to win. Horse can be impulsive, so do not get caught up in any sort of Dragon investment frenzy this year. Active Horse loves life and does not sit on the sidelines and watch the world go by. But financially, be more conservative than your usual radical risk-taking Horse self. Money madness is unpredictable in a Dragon year, and you do not want to end up in financial chaos under the influence of the changeable Dragon.



SHEEP/GOAT (1907, 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027) Sheep is an artistic soul who would rather be a free spirit than focus on money. But there is a saying, "Sheep eat paper" meaning that Sheep can sure spend money! So while Sheep is not willing to sacrifice the essence of life to acquire big bucks, Sheep is most happy living the good life. Therefore, the Dragon year can seem like the time to strike it big, live a better lifestyle, go up a notch (or two or three) with home or auto, and make a grand gesture such as a round-the-world holiday. Instead, take care of yourself and don't let Dragon chaos get you frazzled. Dragon year is your time for common sense and no big financial risks. It's best to sit out the Dragon year financial chaos, and then be glad that you did instead of bleating and sorry that you didn't.



MONKEY (1908, 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028) Dragon and Monkey are best friends so Dragon year is one of your best years ever. Monkey has not had good fortune in a long time, and finally 2012 is your year for good luck and is your time to shine. Monkey's traits are courage, ability to take action, love of anarchy, and true devotion to even the wildest of schemes. And that kind of thinking leads to success in a Dragon year! Achievements can be attained in business, politics, and real estate. Monkey can work the shrewdest angle, get the best deal, and win big. Now is the time to start new endeavors, for Monkey can succeed under Dragon's influence and win big.



PHOENIX (1909, 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029) Dragon year is good for you Phoenix, and next year Snake 2013 will be even better! You've not had much money luck in the past three years. But fortunately, luck is with you in 2012 to improve your finances, have rare opportunities, and be a financial player. You are naturally good with money, and you take pride in working hard and following the rules -- but forget rules in a Dragon year! Dragon wants short cuts, and ethics are not a consideration. Social buzz, PR, and talk brings success, not diligence, and this is fine with you. Dress in your finest plumage and join the show. Dragon's inspirational energy is ideal for your creative mind. Phoenix loves the flock so it's fortunate to team up with a Dragon, Rat, Monkey, or Snake or join an investment group.

Sometimes Phoenix is translated as Rooster or Chicken (the male referred to as cock and the female referred to as hen). We use the term Phoenix because we find it to be a more spiritual translation with the potential for personal transformation. When the spiritual journey of evolution and transformation is too great for Phoenix to bare, she may revert to the role of a rooster or chicken.



DOG (1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030) This is not Dog's lucky money year. In Chinese culture, dogs are the favored domestic animal because they are so loyal to their owners. Like a real dog, a person born in the Dog year possesses the admirable qualities of loyalty and integrity of character. In all your dealings, including financial, you are truthful and work for the collective good. None of this is true for the Dragon, who is your exact opposite! Dragon dreams, Dog does. Dragon can dazzle with smoke and mirrors, whereas Dog is practical, realistic, and down to earth (especially the Earth Dog born in 1958). So for money matters in a Dragon year, honesty and patience are not valued. Accountability is seen as a hindrance to big deals and big bucks. So be very careful with your finances this year because Dragon is happy to fly off with all the cash and leave you with your humanist ideals.



PIG (1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031) Pig would rather enjoy life and all of life's little pleasures instead of chasing status and money -- both of which are highly prized by the Dragon. Sensitive Pig finds little reward in amassing a fortune if there is no one to share the bounty. But in 2012, it's best to be financially conservative and not lose any money. Wake up to a whole new market after the economic crash of Rat year 2008 and financial fiasco of Tiger year 2010. Economic challenges brewed in Hare year 2011 and can now blow like a volcano in 2012. Pig can be gullible, and the swindlers are out in force in a Dragon year. Avoid law suits because you will be taken advantage of. You want investments that pay dividends, individual exchange-traded funds, and term life insurance. Avoid variable annuities or municipal bonds. Stay sweet and kind, and nobody's fool. ☯

Susan Levitt is an astrologer and feng shui consultant in San Francisco CA. She is the author of 5 books including *Taoist Astrology* and *Taoist Feng Shui*. For more information about Taoist astrology and medicine, visit Susan's web site at www.susanlevitt.com and follow her blog www.susanlevitt.wordpress.com.



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Qi Medicine and the Purpose of Cultivation

An interview with Master Zhongxian Wu



This interview with Singing Dragon author, Master Zhongxian Wu, was conducted in honor of his upcoming visit to the UK for a series of lectures and workshops celebrating the new Chinese year of the Water Dragon. Master Wu is the lineage holder of four different schools of Qigong and martial arts. While in China, he served as Director of the Shaanxi Province Association for Somatic Science and the Shaanxi Association for the Research of Daoist Nourishing Life Practices. He has been teaching unique and professionally designed courses and workshops to beginning and advanced practitioners, as well as for patients seeking healing, for over 25 years. Since moving to the states in 2001, he has published four books on traditional Chinese wisdom traditions: *Chinese Cosmic Orbit Qigong*; *The 12 Chinese Animals*; *Seeking the Spirit of The Book of Change*, and *The Vital Breath of the Dao*. Please visit www.masterwu.net for further details.

Master Wu, thank you so much for agreeing to talk to Singing Dragon. I think you have just celebrated ten years of living in the West. Have you found over that time that our understanding of Chinese medicine has changed?

The Western understanding of Chinese medicine has definitely changed in the last ten years. I have

noticed two main changes, with respect to the general public and the practitioners themselves. In terms of the general public, more and more people recognize the efficiency of Chinese medicine to meet their health care needs. More people are embracing Chinese medicine treatments because they want minimal unwanted side effects (or better yet, none at all) and also want to build up their health in order to prevent a future illness. In terms of Chinese medicine practitioners, I have seen that more practitioners are looking to understand the roots of Chinese medicine, and are emphasizing their own personal cultivation (for example through meditation, Qigong practice, studying the *Yijing*, Chinese astrology, etc.) to help them deepen their knowledge of Chinese medicine. Also, I see more practitioners are educating their patients about how important it is to strengthen their own Qi by improving their daily lifestyle habits and having a commitment to some internal cultivation practice.

How can Western practitioners best prepare themselves for studying Chinese medicine?

In terms of studying Chinese medicine, there is no difference in preparation for a Western practitioner or an Eastern practitioner. The best way to prepare is to do personal cultivation. In the Chinese medicine traditional education system, before the Master teaches you anything about medicine, they always first stress that you learn to be a good person and to cultivate your virtue. A good doctor first needs to be a good person, and have a good heart to help others. Traditionally, you didn't learn medicine as a business venture to make tons of money. For the Master to share knowledge with you, he/she has to be clear that your deep purpose and drive is to help others. The *Huang Di Nei Jing* (the Yellow Emperor's classic text of Chinese medicine) emphasizes that you have to be careful not to teach certain skills to the wrong person – the wrong person, meaning someone who does not carry a high level of virtue.

You are lecturing at the Confucius Institute in London in February on the topic of Qigong as the basis for Chinese medicine. Can you say a little about why this is such an important topic?

Yes, Qigong is the source of Chinese medicine. The whole system was discovered by ancient enlightened beings who made profound connections about their bodies and Nature while in heightened Qigong states. According to the *Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao* 奇经八脉考 (*Investigations into*

the *Eight Extraordinary Vessels*), a book by the Ming Dynasty's famous herbalist *Li Shi Zhen's* 李时珍, the subtle energies of the inner pathways of the body (for example the pulses, the points, the meridians, and even the organs themselves) may be seen only by those who cultivate *Fan Guan* 返观 (literally, 'reverse observation'), or the ability to look within with clarity. *Li Shi Zhen* concluded that only high-level Qigong practitioners could see the meridian systems. Before the modern term Qigong became popularized, all Qigong cultivation practices (including seated meditation) were known as *Guan* 观, which itself means 'observe or observation', and implies self-observation.

Also, to develop an appropriate herbal formula for someone requires an understanding of Qi harmonization. Chinese herbal medicine was first taught by the ancient shaman king *Shen Nong* 神农 (Divine Farmer). Actually, the first Chinese book of herbal medicine, *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* 神农本草经 is named after him and it is generally accepted that he wrote it as well. Our legends say that, through tasting the herbs, he was able to feel the different quality of Qi in each herb and understand how it relates to the Qi of the organ and meridian systems in the body. This kind of sensitivity and awareness was possible because he was a very high level Qigong practitioner, and was able enter into heightened states of consciousness and perception.

There would be no Chinese medicine without the ancient shamanic Qi cultivation practices of Qigong.

Would you tell us a little more about Qigong? Many people in the West are confused about what it is.

Qigong is a modern, popularized term for an ancient method of physical, mental and spiritual cultivation. It can be translated into English as Qi cultivation, spiritual cultivation or working with the Qi. By the way, by Qi, I mean the vital energy of the universe that keeps everything alive. Qigong practice models a harmonious way of life and has been used throughout thousands of years of history by those who wish to attain enlightenment.

Qigong involves working with the three parts of the body (*Jing*, *Qi* and *Shen*). In Chinese, *Jing* means essence and represents the physical body. The physical body is our structure and our container. It holds our essential life energy, our Qi body and our spiritual body. We can strengthen our physical bodies by practicing special Qigong postures. As I mentioned before, *Qi* translates as vital energy of the entire universe, including of course, the vital energy of your body. Your breath is deeply connected with the Qi body. Qi can also be translated as 'vital breath'. In Qigong, we cultivate our Qi body by maintaining awareness of our breath and by learning techniques to regulate our breath. This will increase our vital energy or life force. The *Shen* means spirit, and represents our spiritual body. In general, our mind is related to our *Shen*. Once we pay too much attention to the external world or worry too much about what is going on in our life, we weaken our Qi. If we are always looking

outside, we leak our spiritual Qi. In Qigong practice, we learn to look within in order to preserve our life energy.

How does it relate (if it does) to practices such as Yoga?

I have never practiced yoga, so I don't have the personal experience to be able to talk about how it relates to Qigong. However, a number of my students are yoga practitioners by profession, and many of them connect their Qigong practice with their yoga practice. They have found that elements of their Qigong practice complement their yoga practice so that in general, the practices enhance each other.

What is the purpose of your cultivation/Qigong practice?

From the view point of Daoist practitioners, the Daoist tradition is the immortal tradition. The purpose of Daoist cultivation practices is to become immortal. This often begs the question of what exactly is meant by immortality. In Chinese, the word for immortal is *Xian*, which is an image of a person who lives on a mountain. Throughout history, many Daoist masters have referred to themselves as *Shan Ren* – Mountain People – because they spend long hermitages in the mountains (or anywhere in nature), cultivating their true humanity. Another word for immortal is *Zhen Ren* – real or true human being. From the Chinese ideograms, we can see that the concept of an immortal is of one who has cultivated good health, happiness, and humanity and embodies these qualities in everyday life.

The idea of immortality or everlasting life has nothing to do with yearning to live forever. On a superficial level, of course no living being can escape death. Death is simply a part of the universal Five Elements natural cycle. However, death is always accompanied by the process of rebirth. In this way, there is no death. In the Immortal's tradition, we have an expression – *Xin Si Shen Huo*, which translates into English as "allow your heart to die so that your spirit will live." I interpret this to mean that by embracing death and bringing it gracefully into our hearts, we understand the knowledge of immortality. This, to me, is enlightenment.

Yes, our lives are short – no matter how long we live, compared with the long stream of the time of the Universe, our lives are just a momentary sparkle. Sometimes, when people physically die, their spirits remain very much alive. The quality of our lives is not measured by the time we spend in this world, but how we learn to transform our personal emotional energy into a force that can help others.

You are also teaching a couple of workshops in the UK in February. They sound very interesting – can you tell us a little more about the practices?

I am excited to be teaching Fire Dragon Qigong in London and Five Elements Qigong in Oxford. Both are traditional Chinese Qigong forms.

Fire Dragon Qigong embodies the spirit of the rising



Spiritual Transformation

dragon, which is an auspicious symbol of transformation in Chinese culture. Regular practice of this form establishes free flowing Qi in the 12 meridian systems of the body. It also helps transform areas of stagnation, thereby bringing the physical and emotional bodies into a balanced state of well-being. Actually, according to the Chinese calendar, the year of the Dragon begins on February 4, 2012. I will teach Fire Dragon Qigong that same weekend in honor of the Dragon and the great global transformation that will happen in 2012.

The Five Elements theory lies at the heart of classical Chinese philosophy and healing principles and is the foundation of Chinese cosmology and Chinese medicine. The Five Element Qigong form helps harmonize the Five Element's Qi in our bodies and organ systems with the Five Element's Qi of the universe. Regular practice will help us smoothly navigate change in our lives.

What in your view are the greatest benefits of practice for people looking for a healthier lifestyle?

In the traditional Chinese healing system, the definition of medicine is something that embodies these three qualities: vitality, joy and harmony. Anything may be considered medicine, and doesn't necessarily have to be a physical object. Instead, medicine is any object, event, thought or action that increases your vital energy, brings you joy (that you then can share with others), and helps you live harmoniously with yourself, with your family and friends (and society as a whole), and with Nature. In Chinese tradition, we consider Jing, Qi and Shen to be the best and most important medicine in the world. The greatest benefit of a regular Qigong practice is that

you learn to access and optimize your own best medicine within – your Jing, Qi and Shen – to support your daily life.

Does a knowledge of Chinese medicine increase the benefits of Qigong?

Yes and no. In my experience, everyone who has a regular practice of a traditional Qigong form receives benefits from their practice. In ancient times, Chinese medicine was discovered through the practice of Qigong, and it gave a pathway of understanding the Universe through each individual body. In this way, the benefits of Qigong practice precede formal knowledge of Chinese medicine itself. In modern days, we often go the opposite direction, and use prior knowledge of Chinese medicine to help guide the practice. People who have taken time to study Chinese medicine may have a better idea of the specifics of how the Qigong form is working in their bodies. In spiritual cultivation practice, there is a phenomenon called "knowledge stagnation", where having a lot of knowledge and thinking too much about what you think the practice will do becomes an obstacle to experiencing what is actually happening. On the other hand, advanced Qigong practitioners can use their knowledge of Chinese medicine to really deepen their practice. Either way, as long as you continue your daily practice with an open heart, Qigong will improve your health and deepen the relationship you have with yourself and with the Universe.

You have for some years been teaching an interesting Lifelong Learning programme, where students spend several days on retreat learning intensively from you. Could you tell us a little about this, and about the change and development you see in the students that follow through the programme?

In China, the traditional relationship between the student and Master is like parent and child, so that the Master can continue to give students guidance and support through their lives. Also, in different stages of practice of even the same Qigong practice, students will experience different phenomena, some subtle and some strong. Having step-by-step guidance helps the students understand the changes and keeps them from getting discouraged.

The purpose of the Qigong lifelong training is to create a family-style community of practitioners who are dedicated to supporting each other in their cultivation practice. We meet annually to share our experiences with the practice and to learn how to go deeper on this path to Enlightenment. Our intensive, week-long retreats provide the opportunity to learn a form in such a way that the practice becomes a part of the students, a part of their body and a part of their spirit, and this makes it easier for the practice to become part of their daily life. The retreats offer a different level of experiential learning than a few hours' workshop or a weekly class can provide.

Over the last ten years of teaching in the West, I have seen many changes in my students – recovery from a disease process, increased energy, strength and flexibility,

uplifted spirits, better relationships with others, healing practitioners who report greater success with helping their patients, etc. It is always nice for me to see how close my students grow towards each other during the retreats and how friendships grow into relationships that feel like family. We enjoy having a big Qi family!

Is Qigong a practice in which progress for all students occurs at roughly the same rate?

Not really. Different people have different bodies, different health conditions, different commitment levels (in terms of daily practice) and so have different experiences with their Qigong practice. Even the same person will have different experiences with their Qigong practice. Sometimes you will experience areas of plateau before you reach the next level, sometimes you will feel like you are moving 'backwards' in your progress and suddenly shoot forward, and sometimes it is just steady. After almost 40 years of practice, I feel I learn something new from my practice every day, even from the same form, again, again and again.

Would you tell us a little about your own experience with Qigong? How old were you when you began to practice?

I started to try some Qigong practice when I was about five years old, and began to take my practice really seriously when I was about 11. Originally, I practiced Qigong to have some fun. Surprisingly, I discovered many health benefits through the practice. In my first years of my memory, I was very sick, and every week I would have a terrible fever and my parents would take me to the hospital for medicine. I realized that I didn't have to use medicine to recover when I was 11, and recovered through my Qigong practice even faster. So, I decided to stop taking any medicine and dedicate myself to my Qigong practice. Also, when I was young, I was very nearsighted and needed glasses. One summer break, I spent about one month in nature, practicing Qigong. At the end of the month, my eyesight improved so much that I didn't need glasses anymore. Anytime I am feeling sick, have low energy, or something in life happens that affects me on the emotional level, I always practice Qigong and it helps me recover quickly.

Did you find it hard to keep up the practice during your education years, and how did you manage it?

Not at all. I followed the traditional way, as taught by my Masters, and got up early, at 4 am, to practice at least 2 hours every day. I lived on-campus during high school and university, and would be done with my practice before anyone else had gotten up. I always felt like I had more time to do everything I wanted than my classmates did. I think I had more energy than everyone else because of my Qigong practice.

Do you go back to China to visit the Masters who taught you?

Yes. Almost every year I go to China to see my Masters and spend time with them. It is the same way I go to visit my parents, just like family.

I know you are the lineage holder of several lineages. Would you tell us a little about what this means, and how the lineage holder is chosen?

In China, traditional arts and disciplines are passed on through a discipleship system. In this system, the acknowledged Master of a given discipline teaches a small circle of students. Traditionally, the Master will always design many obstacles for the students, making it difficult to continue studying. Most students will drop off because of these obstacles. When the Master feels the time is right, he/she will select the next "lineage holder" from the close-knit circle of students who have had the perseverance to carry on. The lineage holder is then responsible for preserving the entire system of knowledge and passing knowledge to others.

Your beautiful calligraphy appears on the covers of your books – would you tell us a little about the relationship between Qigong and calligraphy?

Calligraphy is a form of Qigong – it is movement within the brush and painting with your breath. When we practice calligraphy, we are working with our three treasures, Jing, Qi and Shen, which is the same as any Qigong practice. When we make a piece of art, we need to have the same three elements found in all traditional Qigong forms – correct posture, breathing and visualization techniques. In fact, in the Daoist tradition, we use the calligraphy brush as a tool for healing and spiritual cultivation. One special kind of calligraphy created by a Master is used as talismans for healing and for FengShui purposes.

It seems it all connects up – Qigong, Healing work, Calligraphy, Qin music, Yijing prediction, FengShui. Do they all support one another?

All of these are different styles of Qi arts and Qi cultivation. These practices are Qi vehicles for human beings to connect to Nature and live in harmony. On a superficial level, these practices may seem different or unrelated, but yes, they do connect up. The entire Universe is like an invisible Qi web, which connects everything. As LaoZi states in his *DaoDeJing*, the universal web is vast, and nothing can escape from it.

Master Wu, thank you so much for answering all these questions. We truly appreciate it, and the Singing Dragon in London is really looking forward to your visit in February!

You are very welcome!





Qigong with Solala Towler

May 5, 6 & 7, 2012

Solala has been teaching qigong for 23 years. He has been the publisher of *The Empty Vessel: The Journal of Daoist Philosophy and Practice*, since 1993. He has had 12 books on the Daoist arts published and has recorded four cd's of meditation/qigong music. In addition, he is a founding board member of the National Qigong Association and leads yearly tours to China to study qigong and meditation with Daoist teachers in the sacred Wudang Mountains.

solala@abodetao.com

abodetao.com/CommunityAwake.com

Free Talk and Book Signing Friday, May 5, 2012. Time 7- 8:30

Solala will be reading from his book *Tales From the Tao* as well as giving a free lecture and demonstration on qigong.

Wuji (Primordial) Qigong

Saturday, May 6, 2012 10 am -4 pm Cost. \$100

Wuji Gong was founded by Zhang San-Feng, the originator of Taijiquan, (Tai Chi) in the Ming Dynasty, some 600 years ago. This ancient magical Daoist qigong form combines movement, breathing and visualization, which stimulates the flow of qi (vital force) for health and longevity. By working with the primal energies of the five directions (including the center) and the qualities of each direction, the practitioner is performing an energetic ritual, one that has been done in China for 600 years.. This class is open to beginners as well as experienced students of qigong and will include basic qigong theory, Daoist cosmology, and healing meditation. This day will be a "yang" day of external movement accompanied by internal vision.

Special Saturday Evening Sound Healing Workshop Saturday, May 6 7-9 pm Cost \$30

Special Saturday Evening Sound Healing Workshop Saturday, May 6 7-9 pm Cost \$30

By utilizing the power of harmonic overtones, Daoist breathwork, meditation and group chant we will be accessing the sounds, energetics and power of sound healing, a potent form of energy practice. We will be exploring the world of harmony, balance and inner sound. This class will be mostly experiential and will be an opportunity to enter deeply into the world of sound healing and the process of opening the inner ear or inner listening. By combining movement with sound and visualization we can raise and circulate qi (chi) in our bodies, psyches and spirit or shen. Experience the power of sound meditation to open and balance meridians, dantiens (energy centers), and the inner landscape of the body/spirit. No prior experience with singing or chanting required.

Chinese Essence Qigong

Sunday, May 7, 2012 Time: 10 am - 5 pm Cost. \$100

Essence qigong is a simple yet effective practice to enhance the body's healing capabilities. It is a very internal, meditative style that is a good adjunct for the more rigorous forms such as taiji. No experience is necessary to practice this easy-to-learn yet very powerful qigong. "We access the qi," says the creator of this form, Chen Fu Yin, "so that we can allow for the emergence of the shen or spirit." In this way qigong becomes a deeply spiritual practice. The benefits of better health, more vitality, clearer emotions, and stronger immune system are all doors into the great realm of the spirit, where true healing lies. This day will be a more "yin" day of internal vision along with gentle movement. (Can be done in a chair for the alter-abled.)

What Solala's students have said about his workshops....

"I felt the workshop did more than meet my expectations - it took me places I've never been and more importantly, it opened an access or light on my path that I knew existed but until now had not had the courage to pursue. Thank you for the gift."

"As a beginner I had almost no "expectations". Even Friday evening, I knew this would be a very positive experience. Many thoughts dove-tailed nicely with present perspectives and others opened up new paths. Solala proved to be wonderful teacher, making learning for a newcomer such as myself enjoyable, pleasant, and beneficial!"

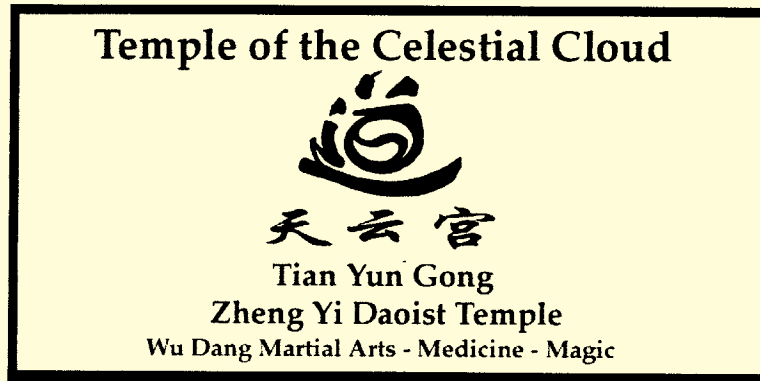
"Excellent seminar. Perfect way to spend a hectic weekend. Nice touch explaining in layman's terms oriental traditional medicine etc and how it effects qigong. Loved the readings and the meditations."

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The following books have been written by Professor Jerry Alan Johnson and contain translated texts from ancient Zheng Yi Daoist Mysticism and are introduced for the first time in English!

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Daoist Magical Incantations, Hand Seals, and Star Stepping Introduction to Training Daoist Magic, History of Daoist Magic, Training the Mind Secret, Training the Speech Secret, Words and Magic, Incantations, Daoist Magical Hand Seal Training, Introduction to Hand Seals, Types of Hand Seals, Eight Trigram Double-Hand Seals for Gathering Power, Hand Seals and Rituals, Hand Seals Used For Summoning, Hand Seals Used For Attacking and Defending, Hand Seals Used For Protection. History of Daoist Star Stepping, The Steps of Yu, Ancient Daoist Stepping Patterns, Incantations For The Nine Palaces of Heaven, Offering Incense with "The Dipper of Bright Stars and Pearls" Incantation, Gathering Energy from the Twenty-Eight Star Constellations, Magical Esoteric Star Stepping Patterns for Summoning Celestial Immortals, and the Five Animal Protection Incantation and much more. 239 pages \$85

Magical Tools and the Daoist Altar Acting as a bridge between the human and spirit worlds, the traditional role of the Daoist priest has been to continually renew the good relationship between the people of his or her community and the celestial powers of the gods. The various esoteric symbols, colors and items used in Daoist magical rituals serve to further focus the sorcerer's intention. Likewise, the use of incense, music, magical tools and other materials are sometimes included to intensify the sense and empower the energy used in the magical rite. The following book describes the Daoist mystic's clothing, altar, magical tools, and magical rituals needed to summon the supernatural powers of the Celestial Immortals as used in the ancient esoteric training of the Zheng Yi Branch of Daoist mysticism and much more. 433 pages. \$175

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Immortality and 14 Words of Lao Zi

Hirsh Diamant



Lou Guan Tai Temple, Shaanxi Province, China

Questions of Authenticity

A well-known concern in cultural studies is to question: who can speak for whom? Who has an authority to speak about somebody else - especially about a culture, a group of people, or a worldview? This question is connected with questions about plagiarism, authenticity (in both texts and artifacts), and cultural appropriation. Maybe in general, the question of authenticity is a question of ownership and as such is influenced by our western mentality and our thinking that land can be owned and wealth is measured by ownership of goods, both material and intellectual.

People in China have a less regimented view of authenticity. For example, in China, the tradition of making fake antiques goes back to ancient times. As I understand, in China it was common in classical times to use a line from a famous poem in one's own poetry. This would

demonstrate scholarship and be an homage of one author to another, instead of being considered plagiarism.

The ancient text of the *Dao De Jing* (DDJ) by Lao Zi is one of the most famous and most translated texts in the world, yet it is not uncommon to read scholarly debate about authenticity of the DDJ and its author, Lao Zi. Many scholars believe that the DDJ was composed by several authors, not the sole work of Lao Zi. I get frustrated by such debates and do not see in them much purpose - if for hundreds of years Lao Zi was considered the author of the DDJ, for me, that's good enough.

How to preserve something that is important? In China, there is a tradition of engraving important texts on stone. A stone tablet with engraved text is called a stele. In Xian there is a museum with about three thousand steles (this is probably the heaviest library in the world!) If there was text worth preserving, the Chinese



Words of Lao Zi printed on a cotton handkerchief as an antithetical couplet

engraved it on stone.

On my last visit to China, I thought, "If I want to study an authentic text, I should find it carved in stone, polished as black obsidian by hands of pilgrims." I was looking for some simple text, a text that I could enjoy studying and translating even with my limited knowledge of Chinese language. So when my students and I visited the ancient temple of Lou Guan Tai, near Xian, I was looking for something special (Lou Guan Tai is very famous because it is here that Lao Zi wrote the *DDJ*. The temple was built in the mountain pass where Lao Zi stopped on his way to the West.)

We came to the temple early in the morning on a spring day in March 2011. When I visited the temple two years earlier, I came during the celebration of Lao Zi's birthday - the crowds of pilgrims, market fairs, and billowing smoke incense transformed the mountain into a cacophony of sound and action. This time, everything was quiet. As we approached the temple, the tiled roofs and stone courtyards magically coalesced from the moun-

tain's mist. My students could not restrain their "Oh's" and "Ah's", exclaiming: "How beautiful!"

Lou Guan Tai Temple, Shaanxi Province, China

The temple was empty except for a few monks sitting in the sun or going about their chores. My students and I scattered about, exploring and taking pictures. I was taking pictures too; searching for something. Before long, it was time for us to leave. On the way out, our guide, Ms. Gao, told me, "Hirsh, I know you are interested in Daoism. I want to give you a gift."

She unfolded a white cotton handkerchief about ten inches square with Chinese letters printed in blue. "This was the last one in the store," she said apologetically. "I asked the vendor to take it off the display. These are the fourteen words of Lao Zi," she said, "I thought you might be interested."

As we continued on our journey through China, I



*The 14 Words antithetical couplet written on Lao Zi's cave –
the right side is Dao, the left side is De.*

kept asking friends and scholars if they heard about these fourteen words, but nobody seemed to know. I did find out that they are engraved on a stele at Lou Guan Tai, I just did not see them because the building where they are located was under renovation.

So I thought to myself, "The *DDJ* is a complex text of over five thousand words. On the handkerchief is a condensation of these five thousand words into fourteen. This text will be easier for me and my students to read and understand!"

Antithetical Couplets

The *14 Words of Lao Zi* are written as an antithetical couplet. The tradition of antithetical couplets is revered in China as a highly developed form of literary play and scholarly sophistication. The couplets are usually composed in set numbers of words: five, seven, etc. Often the couplets are composed as call and response. For example, a teacher writes five characters and students respond with five characters of their own. The meaning arises not only in individual sentences but also in how sentences relate to each other and how individual words relate between the two sentences.

English and most of the world's modern languages are hierarchical; they are written left to right and have capital and small letters. Chinese writing does not obey such regimented rules. The text could be read from left to right, from right to left, top to bottom, etc. Because Chinese words are for the most part written as single characters, the possibilities of writing and reading in varieties of directions are endless. This brings another interesting linguistic detour with palindromes (sentences that can be read in different directions.)

It is possible that other non-phonetic languages could be read this way, but I do not know of any examples. I know that because the Hebrew *Torah* is written as continuous script without vowels, mystics and visionaries often find epiphany by connecting words in new and exalted ways.

14 Words of Lao Zi (or how to invent words to describe concepts)

To compose his fourteen word couplet, Lao Zi invented new words. How does one invent words to describe concepts? Lao Zi combined two or three known words and gave an indication how to pronounce them by the sound of an additional word. For example here is how he combines the characters:

身寶

身 shēn - *body*, and 寶 bǎo - *treasure*; read this as 玉 yù - *Jade*. So maybe the concept here is that our bodies are precious as jade, or "body-precious-jade."

身丹

身丹 shēn dān - *body* and *elixir* read as 爐 lú - *stove* or *cauldron*. The meaning here could be "the stove to produce the elixir is our body."

烹

bǐng + huǒ - *fire*, 丙火, read as shāo, 烧 - *cook*. The traditional character for 烧 is 燒. This character is composed with 火 huǒ - *fire* and 尧(yáo) yáo phonetic. That is the same as the name of legendary emperor 尧 Yao, famous for his high moral standards. His name is composed with 兀 wù - *altar* or *sacred site*, built of three earths, 土 tǔ - *trice exalted*? So maybe the combined meaning of this concept is "noble fire of cooking purification."

Bǐng, 丙 is also an interesting character and concept. Bǐng is the third celestial stem that is describing yang fire; the character Bǐng is composed of one 一 yī, + enter 入 rù, + inside a 冂 void space, *interior*. So here fire enters into the inner sacred space. Would it mean: noble cooking

fire of inner purification?

A Few Words About Chinese Language

How to express the concept of existence? How to express the concept of everything, or of nothing? In the Dao De Jing, the word yǒu (有) - *to have*, is used to express existence.

history and mythology about Chinese writing and how it was invented, suffice it to say that Chinese written characters derive from images. So the character for the word "to have", yǒu (有), is composed of 月 yuè - moon, and yòu, phonetic, that was originally a picture of a hand. Together these images can be seen as monkey grasping a tree branch with one hand and reaching for a reflection of a moon with the other.

With a few simple strokes, a complex concept is expressed. That "to have" is an illusion and existence could be understood as a monkey (the mind) trying to grasp everything (a reflection of the moon in the water.)

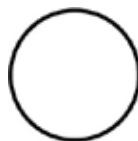
The word used for "nothingness" in the Dao De Jing is wú (无無) - without. The character 無 wú could be seen as a person (a corpse) lying on a funeral pyre with a fire under it. When the fire is burnt, what is left? Nothingness...

Yin Yang

What I hear from my masters and teachers is that concepts are easy, but the practice is difficult. This is why we need to go to workshops, buy books, and attend conferences - to re-inspire us to return to practice.

In Talmud there is a story about Hillel (הלל), a famous Hebrew sage born in 110 BCE. A gentile asked him if he could teach the whole Torah while standing on one foot. "Sure," replied Hillel. "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah, the rest is the explanation. Go and learn." Similarly I think the whole concept of health and immortality could be expressed in less than ten seconds - it is the harmony of yin yang.

In the beginning there was a void full of potential. This void is called Wu Ji (無極) and can be expressed with an empty circle.



Then Wu Ji differentiated into Tai Ji (太極)



Right 正 zhèng + Green 青 qīng (pronounce: 正 zhèng - right)	靖	贍	Body 身 shēn + Treasure 寶 bǎo (pronounce: 玉 yù - jade precious)
Person 人 rén + Dao 道 dào + Measure 寸 cùn (pronounce: 道 dào - way)	傳	舩	Body 身 shēn + Elixir 丹 dān (pronounce: 炉 lú - cauldron)
Human 人 rén + Law 法 fǎ + Heart 心 xīn (pronounce: 行 xíng - action)	德	烹	One 一 yī + Enter 入 rù + Gate 门 mén + Fire 火 huǒ (pronounce: 烧 shāo - cook (refine))
Reach 至 zhì + Become 成 chéng (pronounce: 修 xiū - cultivate)	甄	炅	Wood 木 mù + Stone 石 shí + Earth 土 tǔ (pronounce: 炼 liàn - practice (alchemy))
Water 水 shuǐ + Heaven 天 tiān + Well 井 jǐng (pronounce: 益 yì - benefit)	溱	愈	Destiny 命 mìng + Heart 心 xīn (pronounce: 延 yán - prolong)
Human 人 rén + At 在 zài + Inside 内 nèi (pronounce: 寿 shòu - long life)	僊	萬	Thousand 千 qiān + Ten Thousand 萬 wàn (pronounce: 年 nián - years)
Nine 九 jiǔ + Real 真 zhēn (pronounce: 丹 dān - elixir)	壺	槩	Self 自 zì + Family 家 jiā + Water 水 shuǐ (pronounce: 药 yào - medicine)

*Body's precious cauldron cooks in the alchemy of fire immortal medicine.
Immortal medicine leads inner transformation to benefit what's real.*

*Immortal medicine
leads inner transformation
to benefit what's real.*

You can compose here your own
trans-interpretation of the second line:

靖
傳
德
甄
溱
僊
壺

*Body's precious cauldron
cooks in the alchemy of fire
immortal medicine.*

You can compose here your own
trans-interpretation of the first line:

贍
舩
烹
炅
愈
萬
槩

The focus of Yang Sheng (養生), Cultivation of Life, is to achieve harmony of yin yang.

When the ancestor Fu Xi (庖牺) conceived the concept of yin yang, he explained it as one part of the mountain in the light and the other in shade. He expressed it as a solid and a broken line:



Often yin and yang are understood as opposites; light and dark, hot and cold, moist and dry, etc. A better interpretation would be to understand yin yang as complementary. Fu Xi conceived yin yang as two sides of the same mountain. When I told this story to fourth grade students in a lesson about Chinese culture, Patrick, a nine-year-old student wrote a poem:

In the darkness of cosmos there are planets of light.
On the planet there is a mountain,
One side light, one side dark,
One whole mountain.

On the mountain there is a tree,
One side light, one side dark,
One whole tree.
On the tree there is a bird,
One side light, one side dark,
One whole bird.
Inside the bird, there is darkness,
In the darkness, there are planets of light.

Yin yang is one of the most important concepts in Chinese culture.

To explain the yin yang concept, my teacher, Master Xu, playfully asked us difficult questions: "With a cup of tea, what is yin, what is yang?", "With students sitting in class, what is yin, what is yang?"

When we are able to see all phenomena as interplay of yin yang, we are able to make better judgments on how to strive for harmony.

Dào (道) Dé (德)

The title of Lao Zi's classic Dao De Jing (道德經) is composed of three characters. From these three, Jing (經) is the simplest one to translate. Jing simply means "classic" and there are many classical texts that are called jing including *Yi Jing* (The Book of Changes), *Huang Ting Jing* (The Book of Yellow Court or Golden Pavilion Classic), and many others.

My teacher, Master Xu, calls Chinese a muddy language. Muddy, because meanings of words are often multiple and slippery. Muddy also because meanings of words arise contextually and are modified by their relationship with other words.

For the word Dào (道), there are many definitions in the dictionary including: direction; way; road; path; principle; truth; morality; reason; skill; method; Dao (of Daoism); to say; to speak; to talk; measure word for long thin stretches, rivers, roads etc; province of Korea; and formerly Japan dō. The most common meanings are *the way* or *the understanding*. A common expression in Chinese, *zi dao* (知道), meaning "I know," literally meaning "I know the way."

The character dao (道) is composed of several parts: shǒu (首) means *head*. Here we can see the *torso*, zì (自), or oneself with left and right eye, or with sun and moon over the horizon. The left part, chuò (𠂔) means *to go* or *to flow*. Chuò looks like a person on a stern of a boat. So one way to understand Dào (道) is *the way a river flows* or *go with the flow guided by sun and moon*.

If Dào has many meanings, Dé (德) is even more difficult to translate. Common translations include: virtue; goodness; morality; ethics; kindness; favor; character; etc. Dé can be understood as an inner, essential quality related to virtuosity. Dé is composed of chì (𠂔) - *foot-step*, and zhí (直) - *straight*, with xīn (心) - *heart*. Also, the upper part, 𠂔 looks like a crown, so Dé could be understood as *walking royally with heart and mind united*.

Dào Dé means *ethics*, but also with their descending and ascending tones, these words could be understood as "*the way the world is*" and "*how the world can be transcended*," or as the incarnation of Dào (the way) and ascension of Dé (the virtue).

The 14 Words antithetical couplet written on Lao Zi's cave - the right side is Dào, the left side is Dé.

Going Green with Lao Zi

What is the goal of immortality? If we read the fourteen word couplet of Lao Zi as I have proposed, with first half as Dào (道) and second, as Dé (德) and with the first half descending, and second, ascending, then the last word will be zhèng (正).



Zhèng can mean: just, correct, main, upright, straight, principle, etc.

My mother-in-law always said, "Zhèng dà," meaning something like, "Wow!" She said it with great gusto and with either an affirmative or questioning tone.

In the ancient seal characters, the image of zhèng



shows connection of zhèng to the uprightness of a plant.

The other part of Lao Zi's word is qīng (青) - *green*.

I think Lao Zi is saying that the real goal of immortality and self-cultivation is to cultivate what is real, like plants are real, because real means life!

So the two parts of the couplet could be read as alpha and omega:



zhèng yù
小塚明朝
really precious

Or, "life is really precious!"

How would you, the reader, define what is really precious?

Am I trying to say that Lao Zi's message from five thousand years ago is "Go Green?" In a way I am, but choosing zhèng (正) as the last word, or looking for an

alpha and omega of fourteen characters is really superficial. It will be more beneficial to think about the text as circular, rather than linear, and so any word could be the beginning and /or the end.

Cooking for My Wife

I was fortunate this summer to work on this booklet and to study some classical Chinese texts. I was also teaching this summer and helping my wife, Jennie, to develop a garden and to feed our small flock of chickens and ducks. This summer, for the first time in my life, I had an unhurried opportunity to learn how to start plants from seed; repotting and replanting them, and watching them grow. I had an unhurried opportunity to be in a midwife like attitude attending to mysterious processes of the soil, seeds, and plants. Working with the garden while thinking about immortality has been a gift!

Lie Zi, the immortal who could ride the wind, tells a simple story about how he was humbled in his learning and returned home to cook for his wife. Lie Zi says that:

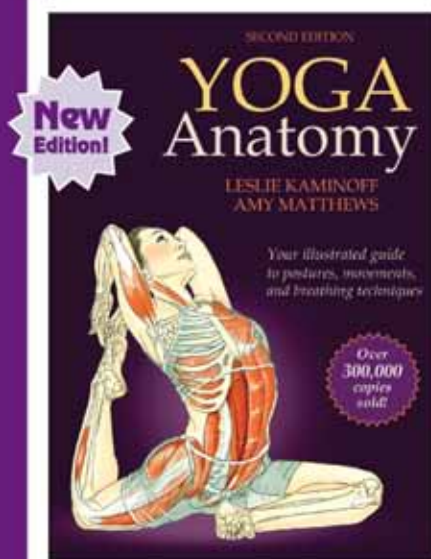
三年不出	for three years he did not go out,
為其妻爨	cooked for his wife,
食豕如食人	fed animals (pigs) as people,
于事無親	treated all things as his relations;
小塚明朝	what was fine carved, returned to natural form,
塊然獨以其形立	by using only what's essential, the natural shape was established
紛然而封戎	even in the calamity of warring times,
壹以是終	from then on and forever.

(From the Book of Lie Zi, Chapter of the Yellow Emperor, part 13)



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Move, Breathe, Grow



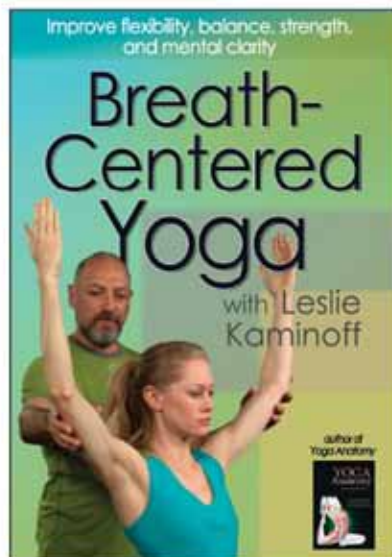
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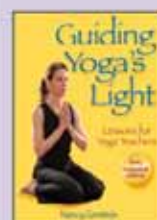
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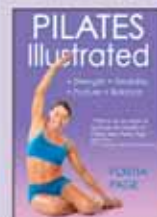
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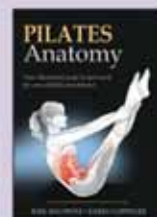
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The Tao of Joy Every Day

Derek Lin

Introduction

Tao cultivation, the practice known as *xiu dao* in the Chinese tradition, provides tremendous benefits. Those who have mastered it find that they enjoy better results with less effort in every aspect of their lives. You can free up more time for yourself and your loved ones, more time for the worthwhile things in life.

Mastery, however, is not something that you can attain quickly. Tao cultivation, like any other skill, requires practice to perfect. People look at this and cannot help but ask, "How can I reap the benefits of having more time for myself, if I cannot free up any time to practice Tao cultivation in the first place? Is this a catch-22?"

This is a good point. Living in the modern world, we all lead busy lives. There is always so much we need to do that any kind of long-term commitment to spiritual cultivation seems impossible. You may be aware of a need to really work on yourself within, but you can never seem to get around to it.

This book is the answer. All you have to do is read one page per day. Each page takes only a few minutes to present you with a Tao-centric concept. Keep it in your thoughts as you go through your day, and contemplate the questions and suggestions designed to bring you closer to the Tao mind-set.

It will not seem like much, but the small amount of work on a daily basis will add up to something remarkable over a period of time. Look at your hands holding this book open as you read these words. A year from now, when you finish the last page, the hands that close this book will belong to an entirely new person. One year out of your life will make all the difference in the world.



Day 48

TRUE MASTERY

Some people assume the Tao has something to do with supernatural powers, when in reality it is nothing more than a down-to-earth way of life. It is at its most extraordinary when it reveals itself in its most ordinary. Thus, it is said that those who have attained true mastery are able to eat when they eat, and sleep when they sleep.

This may seem too simple, but the truth is that it is easier to talk about than to put into practice. Think about

the times when your mind is somewhere else while you are eating. The food becomes tasteless in the mouth and poorly digested in the stomach.

It is the same with sleep. Think about the times when you toss and turn, unable to drift into a restful slumber due to anxieties and worries. Sleep is one of the most ordinary activities imaginable, and yet we are not always able to do it properly.

Can you consistently eat when you eat, and sleep when you sleep? More so than the books you have read or the facts you have memorized, your honest answer is the best way to gauge how much progress you have made in the Tao.

The Tao Today

Open your perceptions and observe all the things beyond eating and sleeping that people do every day. Are you able to perceive the extraordinary Tao hiding just beneath the surface of all the ordinary activities?



Day 93

CROUCHING TIGER

The most important quality about cultivators of the Tao is their composure. They are not loud or showy. It is against their nature to flaunt, boast or put themselves on display. Their composure comes from knowing themselves so well that there is little need for them to seek external validation.

This does not mean they are shy or self-deprecating. Even when they say nothing, one can feel a definite confidence emanating from them. Tao cultivators are relaxed and in good humor because they understand their own abilities. When challenges come up, they know they can handle the situation.

They possess a combination of qualities that is rare in our society. They tend to be extremely capable and competent, but this is not well known to the people around them, because they prefer to go about their activities unnoticed. Theirs is the way of quiet excellence; they are the crouching tigers.

The Tao Today

Do you feel the urge to tell people about your

achievements? As a person of the Tao, you must realize that whatever skills you possess will still be yours whether people know about them or not. Praise and recognition from others will not enhance or amplify your abilities.

Instead of seeking external approval, seek self-knowledge. When called upon to act, do what is necessary with efficiency and effectiveness, and then leave without needing to claim credit. Let people be surprised when they see a side of you they have never seen before. You, too, can be the crouching tiger.



Day 97 WORSHIP

Experienced Tao cultivators have a different view of the concept of worship. They notice that when people engage in the practice, most of them request favors from a supernatural entity and offer some kind of good behavior in exchange. The favor may be health, prosperity or assistance to overcome a challenge. The good behavior offered in return may be continuing faith, resistance to temptations or a personal change that the supplicant thinks the deity wants.

When examined under the harsh light of objectivity, the above does not seem spiritually uplifting. It is basically a one-sided transaction where the human dictates all the terms and assumes agreement.

The process is different for Tao cultivators. They know that good things happen in life as the result of living in accordance with the Tao, not as a result of making deals with gods. Therefore, rather than request anything, they give thanks for the goodness they have already received. This one simple change results in a profound transformation: the nature of a ritual shifts away from a transaction toward an affirmation of life.

The Tao Today

This practice is a different take on the very idea of worship. Its mind-set is truly empowering and energizing, because it has nothing to do with begging or pleading. Worship, for the skillful Tao cultivator, is all about immersing oneself in appreciation. No matter how this appreciation is expressed, its energy elevates the practitioner to the next level.



Day 106 PU

The Chinese character pu means simplicity and plainness. In the Tao, it is a principle of cultivation represented

by a plain piece of wood.

What can be simpler than a plain piece of wood? It is something anyone can come across out in the wilderness. It is completely natural, and it has a certain power and beauty in its simplicity. These attributes are all connected to one another.

Many of us have drifted away from this principle. We become increasingly disconnected from nature and increasingly distant from its beauty. The more complex our lives become, the more overwhelmed we feel. We need to reverse course and get back to the pu principle. We must reconnect with nature to once again appreciate its beauty. We must also simplify our lives to regain the clarity we once had.

The Tao Today

The more you go back to the basic and elemental level of life, the more powerful you become. This is true for a plain piece of wood, and it is also true in every aspect of life. Complexity reduces your effectiveness; simplicity increases it. Apply the pu principle to your environment and discard your clutter. Apply it to your day and streamline your activities. In the Tao, less is more.



Day 108 A CUP OF TEA

The Tao is everywhere, even in a cup of tea. Its basics are so simple, and yet its effects on us can be profound. It is healthy not only for the body, but also for the mind and soul.

Tea has been around for a long time, but it seems like we need it more than ever. Many of us have lives where we rush from one thing to another, busily taking care of business and maintaining the appearance of being busy. We forget to take a moment for ourselves to enjoy a good cup.

Making tea is every bit as important as having it. Whether you are using a tea bag or brewing a pot, the process forces you to slow down and maintain mindful awareness. There is an art to it that you can explore in great depth.

Drink your tea in silent solitude to facilitate your internal connection with the Tao. Think about life instead of work, or think about nothing at all and just relax. Let the fragrance, warmth and flavor work their magic on you. Before too long, some strange alchemy brings calmness to your entire being . . . and a smile to your lips.

The Tao Today

Be sure to take time for tea today. Be fully present as you make tea. Be mindful of every step of the process, and turn it into your own mini-ritual. Dismiss distracting

thoughts from your mind as you enjoy your tea.



Day 112 **RIDING ON THE WIND**

Lieh Tzu, one of the great sages from antiquity, was said to have the ability to fly. When asked about this, he would laugh and say he did not know if he was riding on the wind, or if the wind was riding on him.

A few students of the Tao in later generations took his words literally and tried to learn levitation. They failed. They did not understand that Lieh Tzu, like many sages of his time, spoke in terms of memorable metaphors. Lieh Tzu's flight represented the carefree life resulting from the total mastery of the Tao.

This ancient teaching of the Tao compared the attachments we have in life to heavy rocks weighing us down. In order to relinquish these rocks, or cut the cords that bind us to them, we must relax and let go of our attachments. As the heavy weights are released, we become lighter and lighter, until we can lift ourselves up into the sky.

The Tao Today

Identify the attachments in your life. Everyone's attachments are different. What are yours? How heavily do they weigh you down? Consider ways to release them, so you can let your inner self learn how to fly.



Day 117 **THE GOD OF TAOISM**

Who or what is the God of Taoism? We know it cannot be the Tao itself, since it is not a personified deity. What other options are open to us?

It cannot be Lao Tzu, because he was a human being just like you and me, and because the Tao existed long before he was born. The fact that he is worshipped as divine by followers of religious Taoism simply means there is a superstitious component in human nature that demands expression.

A better answer may be nothing and no one. The original teachings of the Tao did not describe any deities because none were necessary. Everything from the way nature operates to the way human beings interact can be fully explained in terms of patterns and principles. There is no need to invoke supernatural entities with human-

like emotions. The Tao is quite sufficient in and of itself.

The Tao Today

We can think of the God of Taoism as simply the representation of universal harmony, beauty and elegance. There is infinite intelligence in it, and yet it does not think or feel as humans do. There is endless compassion in it, and yet it is not a deity that listens to your prayers and intervenes on your behalf. It is like sunlight, because it is an essential part of nature that will always be around to illuminate your world.



Day 119 **DEFINING YOURSELF**

How do people define themselves? Some do so with words. They may say, "I am a seeker," or "I am a healer," or "I am a good friend" and so on, but what if they are less than truthful? They may claim to be compassionate, only to exhibit a mean streak; they may claim to be trustworthy, only to betray your trust.

Perhaps they can be defined by their thoughts. This can be more accurate than what they say. For instance, someone who claims to be a salesman may think of himself as a predator. But what if the self-image is at odds with reality? What if someone thinks of himself as courageous, but turns out to be cowardly when the going gets rough?

The Tao of self-definition, therefore, is not based on what you say or think about yourself. Instead, it is based on what you do. You are a seeker only if you are constantly seeking. You are a healer only if you bring others back to health. You are a good friend only if you consistently play that role. The ways you affect others determine your true identity. Your actions, speaking louder than words and thoughts, become the definitive definition of who you really are.

The Tao Today

How do you define yourself? What are the words and thoughts of your self-definition? Are they consistent with what you do? Are your actions worthy of your noblest aspirations? What are the actions you can take today to substantiate or even enhance your definition of yourself?



Day 121 **THE DOOR**

Chapter 47 of the Tao Te Ching says you do not need

to go outside the door to know the world. This appears to be advice to stay home, but that is only a surface-level interpretation. Traveling is a broadening experience, and if you only study theories behind closed doors, you can easily end up with ideas that are disconnected from reality.

Keep in mind that Lao Tzu often teaches in metaphorical terms, and in this case, the door is not a physical door, but the division between inside and outside. To go outside is to direct your gaze outward, on the material world; to remain inside denotes turning that gaze inward, to your inner self.

This clarifies the meaning of the chapter immediately. In order to attain spiritual understanding, you must look for the answers internally. Many people look for answers externally, by following self-improvement fads. All along, they have the answers right in the heart, but they are so used to the idea of directing their gaze outward that they never bother looking in the opposite direction . . . where the real treasure is!

The Tao Today

Now we can see that this teaching does not conflict with people who enjoy traveling. You can remain “inside the door” even when you go somewhere, because you can remain connected to your inner vision no matter where you happen to be.



Day 189 KARMA

Once we see the Tao as the oneness that includes all of us, we can also see that karma must be the energy exchanges in this metaphysical medium. Just as there are actions and reactions in the physical world, karmic energies must also go back and forth along the connections of the Tao. Loving kindness toward others may come back as helpful assistance; hatred and abuse toward others will also come back as equivalent negative consequences.

This is why sages have always taught that the movement of the Tao is circular. What goes around will always come around, regardless of its positive or negative characteristics. This movement takes place in the timeless Tao, so it is not constrained by the passage of years or even lifetimes. Sooner or later, all accounts will be balanced; karma has all of eternity to see to this.

The Tao Today

Look at your every action in a new light: not as a single, isolated event, but as a stone cast into an invisible pool of metaphysical water. Visualize a karmic ripple spreading outward from you, affecting more and more people as its circle expands. You know this is the beginning of an exchange of karmic energy. You also know

that, before too long, you will see ripples being reflected back at you.



Day 199 DOING AND BEING

Sometimes, people experience a culture shock when they study the Tao from authentic Asian sources. Things seem quite different from their expectations because there is an emphasis on the right way to get things done. “Why emphasize doing so much?” they may wonder. “Isn’t the Tao about being?”

The Tao is actually about both. The tranquil Tao of being is certainly important, but so is the dynamic Tao of doing. The two form a complementary pair, and in order to really progress in the path, one has to master both tranquility and dynamism.

Westernized versions of the Tao often gloss over the importance of action. Some books speak against taking action, and even the planning of actions is frowned upon. This is strange to the practitioners of the East, who have no hang-ups with day planners or to-do lists, and cannot understand why some people think getting rid of them represents great wisdom. To them, the Tao is the harmonious balance of the composed mind with well-planned and well-executed actions. Both are necessary, and both must be present in a complete individual.

The Tao Today

Have you also been under the impression that the Tao is about the action of no action? You may have read a distorted translation, or writings about the Tao based on such translations. Look to the people who practice tai chi, qi gong and other martial arts to see how the Eastern mind-set really works. You know you cannot become proficient in those disciplines just by thinking while doing little or nothing. It is exactly like that with life.



Day 219 RETURN TO EMPTINESS

Tao cultivators describe death as a return to emptiness. We originally arose from the emptiness of the Tao, and must return to it sooner or later.

There was a point in time when you did not exist as anything other than the pure potential to manifest. Being born allows this potential to be distilled into a specific human form, and dying is the mirror image of the process.

After the return to emptiness, the human being who was walking around and joking with others not so long ago lives on only as a memory. Decades later, when those who still remember have also returned to emptiness, their memories will pass away with them. The fading to emptiness in memories will be even more complete.

The Tao Today

The return to emptiness awaits everyone. Even the most famous among us will fade from memory in time. The more clearly you understand this, the more obvious it will be to you that there is no reason to be attached to anything. Instead, there is every reason to live a fulfilling life in the here and now. Carry that fulfillment with you when it is your time to make the return trip. It is something that can never be taken away from you.



Day 223 CLARITY

There is an easy way to tell the difference between genuine teachers and those who only pretend: observe how they answer questions. The pretentious ones will provide nebulous answers shrouded in mystery and paradox. The real teachers will respond in a way that makes the complex simple and easy. The difference is clarity.

There can be no doubt that there is mystery at the heart of the Tao. There are things about life, existence, metaphysics and consciousness we do not understand very well at all. This, however, does not mean everything must be mysterious and we can never know anything for certain. Just as quantum mechanics has numerous real-world applications despite its mysteries, the Tao also has practical, down-to-earth aspects that are clear and useful, despite its own mysteries.

The Tao Today

Keep this in mind: the principle is simple; the mystery is the mastery. Beware of those who try to convince you that the Tao is unknown and unknowable. Real masters are ones who understand the subject matter so well that they can explain it in the simplest possible terms. This is true for the genuine teachers just as it is for the real experts of any discipline. Look for this kind of clarity in those who would be your teachers.



Day 244 WORDLESS TEACHING

It is not difficult to tell those who have mastered the Tao and those who have not. One quick way is to see how they teach what they know.

Those who understand less than they claim are the ones who identify themselves as teachers and push their teachings, whether others have expressed interest or not. They like to teach because it is a way for them to feel important. They seem to know a lot, but they may have trouble when it comes to living up to their own teachings and being consistent in words and actions.

Those who have fully mastered the Tao are content to be quiet. They feel no need to teach, because they can see that everyone progresses at his own pace. They do end up providing valuable teachings regardless, but only through what they do rather than what they say. They serve as examples for others in this fashion, inspiring admiration and respect. This is the teaching without words, exactly as described by Lao Tzu.

The Tao Today

If you look around in your environment, you are bound to discover a few people who teach by setting excellent examples. These people, in their own ways, have mastered the wordless teaching of the Tao, even if they have never heard of the Tao before. Theirs is a virtue that you can aspire to as a most noble goal.



Day 287 THE QUEST FOR ANSWERS

The quest for answers is part of your journey in the Tao, and something that requires the principle of moderation. Between not caring for answers and an obsessive need for answers, there is a happy middle ground for the healthy, curious mind.

Some subscribe to the notion that we should not pursue knowledge at all, based on Tao teachings that warn against book learning, but this is not the message that the sages wanted to convey. What they were pointing out was that being able to recite facts was not the same as being wise, so one should absorb knowledge with that in mind.

The other extreme are those who feel the need to know everything. They are uncomfortable with uncertainty, so they demand answers. This is really fighting a losing battle, because it is simply not possible for any one person to literally know it all. The sages would advise them that rather than looking for all the answers, look for only the answers that they really need, answers that will have a real impact on life. The quest for such answers would be more in keeping with the Tao.

The Tao Today

It is a good thing that you can never be a know-it-all. After all, the desire to show off knowledge comes from the ego. It is also a good thing to not be willfully ignorant. Learn what you can and share your knowledge. The fact that no one can know everything is all the more reason for you to work with others and learn from them as they learn from you.



Day 288

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Why do the ancient sages including Lao Tzu consider wisdom to be more important than knowledge?

People often say that knowledge is power, but what exactly is knowledge? The dictionary says it can be defined as an acquaintance with facts, a familiarity with information. Knowledge is all about data.

Wisdom is what knowledge transforms into when it is taken from books and applied to life. Thus, knowledge

is an intellectual abstraction, while wisdom is the experience that is tied to reality. An excellent way to express the difference is through the imagery of the Tao sages: knowledge is a tool we can use to dig for answers; wisdom is the treasure that we eventually unearth.

The Tao Today

Some students of the Tao make the mistake of studying for knowledge instead of wisdom. They end up with a lot of information about the Tao, while overlooking the great benefits of its practical application to life.

Do not waste the teachings that way. Process every piece of knowledge you gain through real-life application. It is only true and useful if it works. Transform knowledge into wisdom. ☯

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Derek Lin is one of the bestselling Taoist teachers and writers in America today. Fluent in both Chinese and English, he conveys Eastern teachings to Western readers clearly, simply, and authentically. His previous books, including *The Tao of Daily Life*, *The Tao of Success*, and his own translation of the *Tao Te Ching*, have become category bestsellers.

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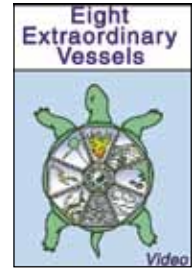
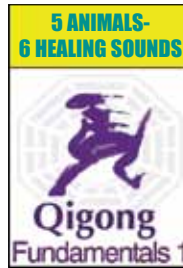
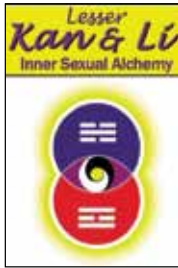
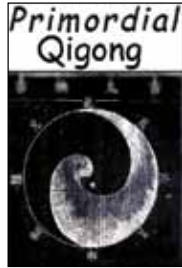


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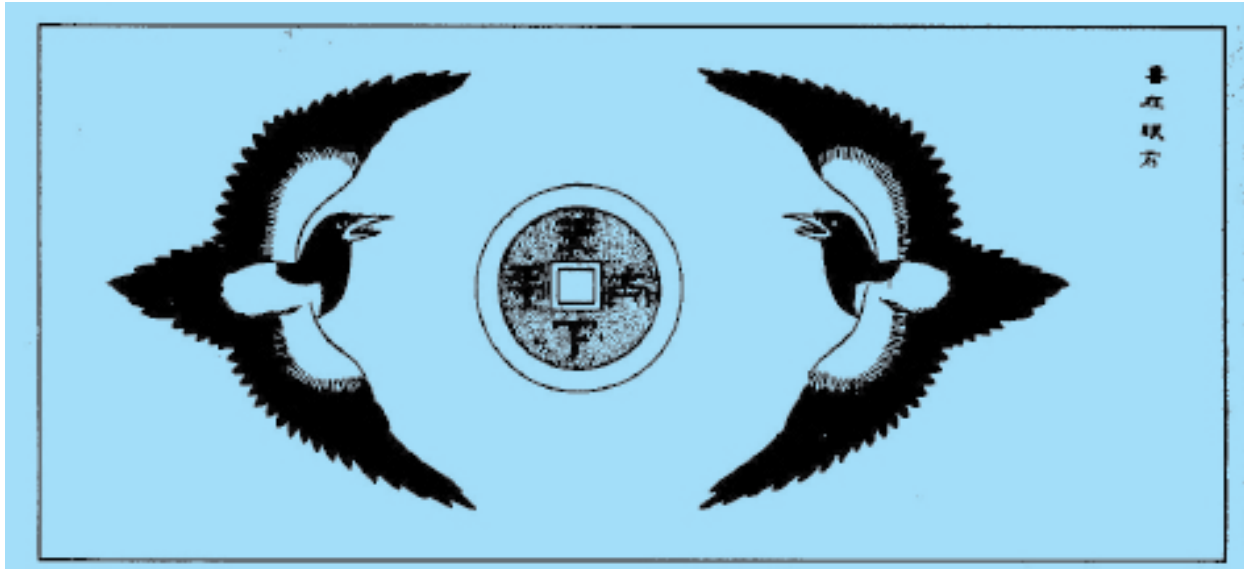
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The World of Chinese Medicine

Marc Micozzi



Over 5000 years ago the people of the Yellow River Valley in what is now China became organized as a cohesive society that would come to permanently dominate the southeast quadrant of the Asian continent and eventually extend its influence thousands of miles to the east and to the south over successive centuries.



Greater China

In the cultural history of East and Southeast Asia it is useful to consider the concept of "Greater China," radiating outward from the Yellow River Valley and en-

compassing the contiguous areas of Manchuria, Korea, Japan, Indochina, the Malaysian Peninsula, and the Indonesian Archipelago. This vast area came under Chinese influence through mercantile and military expansion in the long period between the earlier phase of "Further India" and the later waves of Islamic influence in much of this part of the globe.

The peoples of this Chinese civilization also would eventually travel to every corner of the earth, taking their traditional culture, including traditional medicine, and spreading it around the globe. Today, together with modern Western biomedicine, it is one of only two forms of medicine that can be said to be available in virtually every urban setting in the world.

Conversely, when foreign cultures encountered the dominant Chinese civilization, they would usually be brought into the fold. A famous example is when the Mongol invader from the West, Genghis Khan, conquered China. Within two generations, his grandson Kublai Khan had become thoroughly "sinified" – that is, he proverbially became *more Chinese than the Chinese*. He even came to symbolize the prototypical Chinese Emperor in the eyes of eighteenth and nineteenth century Western literary figures such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who used Kublai Khan in his poem of the same name, as the symbol of oriental despotism, eroticism, exoticism and splendor, all at once. This type of depiction of China came to be understood as actually a Western image of China

and the East, labeled *Orientalism* by Edward Said (1978, in his book of the same name) in the twentieth century.

Consistency in diversity

The ability of the Chinese to incorporate valuable new discoveries and ideas was at the same time central to maintaining the core of their culture and cosmology.

An important example of China encountering and incorporating new ideas was the influence of Gautama the Buddha from India, who traveled into China and profoundly influenced its cosmology and culture. The spiritual tradition of Buddhism came to exist side by side with Confucianism and Daoism, again illustrating the ability of Chinese civilization to accommodate and incorporate *diverse* traditions. An Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) wrote these lines:

In my garden
Side by side
Native plants
Foreign plants.

Beyond the boundaries of accommodation and assimilation, the Chinese made efforts to protect the purity of their culture and civilization and to keep out foreign “barbarians.” Such efforts are dramatically illustrated by the huge project for the construction of the Great Wall (the only manmade artifact that can be seen from outer space). At places it is only 50 miles from Beijing (*Bei* northern, *jing* capital) – at *Ba Da Ling*, for example. While keeping out the Islamic influence of the Middle Asian Muslim hordes during the Middle Ages, the Chinese nonetheless picked up a few new ideas from the animal kingdom just beyond the Great Wall for the menu of classic Northern Chinese cuisine (such as duck and lamb), as well as for transportation (such as the camel), for the important trade route, “the Silk Road.”

Later, when nineteenth-century Europeans were the potential colonizers, the Chinese created “cantonments” for each of the European powers, to keep them isolated and obstruct the flow of European “contagion” into the culture, in places such as Port Arthur, Hong Kong, and Macao. Finally, the descent of the Red Curtain after the 1947 Communist take-over was designed to keep foreign influence out, and perhaps just as much to keep Chinese in.

Accommodating and incorporating *diversity*, while maintaining a *consistent cosmology*, is also an important characteristic of Chinese medicine, and so new discoveries and ideas about medicine did not supplant the old ones—they were just accommodated alongside. As we will read in Chapter 5, for example, the ancient practice of Chinese herbal medicine was not supplanted by the later discovery of acupuncture; instead, the two co-exist in a common Chinese cosmology of medicine.



Celestial origins, legendary rulers

The ancient mythology of Chinese medicine attributes the birth of medicine to three legendary and semi-mythical emperors who might be called the “celestial trinity.” The semi-mythical origins of these three kings are said to extend back in time nearly 5000 years. However, please keep in mind that, as we shall see, the written records only pick up the story much later. The first references to medical practices that begin to resemble Chinese medicine as we know it today, do not occur until the end of the third century BCE. Acupuncture first surfaces as a therapeutic method in the first century BCE. Some interpretations of the ancient archaeological evidence and texts seek to establish a greater antiquity for acupuncture by drawing inferences between ancient stone artifacts and modern acupuncture needles. In considering the manner in which Chinese medicine is constructed, none of these theories can be discarded.

In addition to their medical revelations, each of the celestial trinity is also credited with introducing many other useful practices into the world, placing medicine into a truly holistic context with the development of other critical aspects of Chinese civilization.





Fu Xi, the Ox Tamer (伏羲, circa 3000 BCE), celestial origins of medicine

Fu Xi, or the *Ox Tamer*, taught people how to *domesticate animals*. He also divined the *Ba Gua*, eight symbols that became the basis for the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*. When Fu Xi reveals celestial knowledge of domestication of the main Chinese beast of burden and engine for physical labor (the original and all-time “Year of the Ox”), he illustrates medicine as an intrinsic part of human society as well as part of the natural order.

Shen Nong, the Divine Husbandman (神農, circa 2750 BCE), origins of Chinese herbal medicine

Shen Nong, or the *Divine Husbandman*, also known as the *Fire Emperor*, is said to have lived from 2737 to 2697 BCE. He introduced *agriculture* to the world when he taught the Chinese people how to cultivate plants and raise livestock. Shen Nong, the channel for celestial knowledge on agronomy and agriculture, demonstrates that the breeding of animals and plants includes cultivation of plants for medicines as well as food.

This semi-mythical sequence of animal domestication (“ox taming”), followed by agriculture and raising livestock (“divine husbandry”), maps to modern archaeological interpretations of the development of complex civilizations in areas such as the Yellow River Valley, where peoples first kept nomadic herds of semi-domesticated animals on the move, then eventually settled down in fertile areas to raise animals and grow crops in one place.

As the originator of Chinese herbal medicine, Shen Nong learned the therapeutic properties of herbs and other substances by tasting them. Later authors would attribute their own works to Shen Nong to indicate the antiquity and importance of their texts. A good example of this tradition is *The Divine Husbandman’s Classic of the Materia Medica* (*Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*), which was probably written in 220 CE and reconstructed in 500 CE by Tao Hong Jing. When it comes to Chinese antiquity, it is never easy to separate legend from fact, but all historical evidence points to the truly ancient character of herbal

medicine in China, so it is appropriate that Shen Nong is considered its originator. This “Classic of Shen Nong” is not a treatise on ancient medical theory but a simple compilation of plant and other material substances and their influences on the body.



Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor (黃帝, circa 2650 BCE), origins of acupuncture and qi manipulation

Huang Di introduced a more spiritual, “heavenly,” and less “earthy” (literally, likened to the roots and parts of medicinal plants) approach to balancing vitality, or *qi*, through application of acupuncture. This new method does not use material sources and substances, such as medicinal plants, and is literally “immaterial,” allowing more direct access to the spiritual and celestial aspects of healing—thus gaining the attribution, the “Spiritual-Pivot.” Today Huang Di is perhaps the most generally known of the three legendary emperors. Bringing his people wisdom gained from *visiting in the celestial realm of the immortals*, this “Father of the Chinese Nation” is credited with introducing the art of writing, the techniques for making wooden houses, boats, carts, bows and arrows, silk, and ceramics, as well as the practice of traditional Chinese medicine. In our archaeological sequence, this stage represents the later development of complex civilization, where further social organization was required—for example, for irrigation and controlling floods, among peoples who had settled down to raise crops and livestock.

The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic (*Huangdi Neijing*) is the first document in which traditional Chinese medicine was described in a form familiar today. The text is divided into two books: *Simple Questions* (*Suwen*) is concerned with medical theory, such as the principles of *yin and yang* (paired opposites in dynamic equilibrium, which help define the nature of life), the *Five Phases* (which relate to dynamic processes in the body), and the effects of the seasons; *The Spiritual Axis* or *Spiritual Pivot* (*Ling Shu*) deals predominantly with acupuncture and moxibustion.

Like *The Divine Husbandman's Classic of the Materia Medica*, *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* was not written by the emperor himself but was compiled long after his death, probably around 100 BCE. *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* is still revered in modern times, both for its legendary context and for its medical contributions to Chinese culture. The text is written as a series of dialogues between the Emperor and his ministers, including the famous Qi Bo, whose excitement about the “new” treatment of acupuncture resonates down through the centuries until today. He describes to the Emperor that acupuncture represents a more “heavenly,” or celestial, spiritual approach to healing that does not require the use of the older, dirty, smelly and often bad-tasting formulations of roots, barks and leaves of medicinal plants. Debates over the effectiveness and appropriateness of acupuncture in comparison with herbal remedies continue among Chinese practitioners to this day.

The celestial knowledge revealed to these three emperors, as recorded today, was recovered on materials ranging from silk documents excavated from the *Ma Wang Dui* Han tombs (168 BCE or earlier) to widely translated works such as the *Shen Nong Bencaojing* (神農本草經, *Divine Farmer's Materia Medica*) and the *Huangdi Neijing* (黃帝內經, *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*, or *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*).



Diversity, diffusion, and dissemination

While these legendary celestial origins remain diverse, with iconic texts, notable practitioners, and concepts that date back millennia, these medical systems are at the same time characterized as traditional or unchanging, consistent with Chinese cosmology. Each system of knowledge has significantly evolved often with the intervention of state institutions, originating in the pronouncements of these semi-mythical, demigod rulers of China as embodiments of the state (see the section on the Middle Kingdom on the following page). Furthermore, (1) travel of practitioners, (2) dissemination of classic textual translations, and (3) exchange and trade of the *materia medica* and pharmacopeia of Chinese remedies, across the whole of Asia, contributed to many manifestations of classic forms of medical knowledge.

The transmission of textual sources via translators depended in part on regional proximity, and on sharing the same written language, as was the case for ancient China, Japan, and Korea (where classical Chinese characters were in use until the fifteenth century CE). Another important factor in considering the spread of Chinese medicine is regional ethnomedical practices based on the use of *materia medica*, or effective herbal remedies common to geographical distributions where they grow. A common property embedded in all medical practices and materials is the role of *qi* or vital energy.



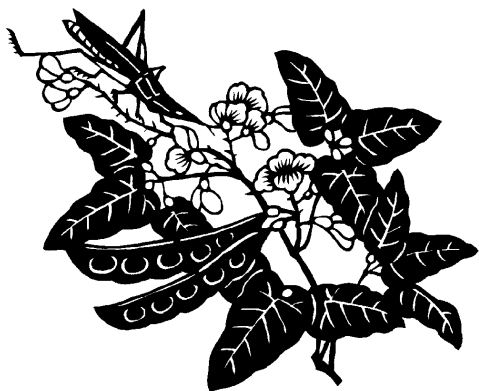
Celestial origins of vital energy

The two important aspects of Chinese medical cosmology that we address here are *vital energy* or *qi*, and the *celestial origins* of medical knowledge and practice.

First, *health* is a result of the proper *balance* (yin/yang) of *vital energy* (*qi*) in the body, and *disease* is a result of imbalance. The intervention of a Chinese medical practitioner helps to maintain or restore this balance of vital energy, thus maintaining or restoring health. Medicinal herbs, acupuncture, and physical manipulations (*tui na*) and exercises (*qi gong*) are different medical modalities for maintaining or restoring health through the balancing of vital energy. This balance of vital energy is the goal of all these modalities as different paths to the same end, metaphysically working in the same way.

As we have seen, another important aspect of Chinese medical cosmology is that the knowledge of these medical modalities is divinely revealed to humans from *celestial* sources. Since, as detailed above, every major aspect of Chinese medicine had its origin attributed to the writings and teachings of semi-mythical divine rulers in the line of Chinese Emperors, attribution to the heavens as the source of all human knowledge, which is channeled through demigod rulers, to mortal humans, forms the basis for Chinese civilization in general, as

well as for health and healing. This is the source of the iconic Chinese characterization of its own civilization as representing the “Middle Kingdom,” halfway between heaven and earth. This concept is directly revealed in China’s name for itself, *Zhong Guo*, literally “the land at the middle.” The medicine of China is the medicine of this Middle Kingdom.



The Middle Kingdom

The metaphors of Chinese medicine provide a useful way of representing human functional anatomy and physiology. As an empirical system, Chinese medicine is tremendously sophisticated and nuanced in terms of devising treatments tailored to each individual and to his or her specific conditions.

While the heavens are the source of Chinese civilization, including medical knowledge, the political organization of China provides models for how the body functions. It is striking how, throughout all of Chinese medicine, anatomy, and pathology (see Chapter 4), terms relating to the political governance of society are used as metaphors for how the human body is regulated—that is, essentially as an analogy of human physiology.

This view is striking to the Western reader, since Western biomedicine uses the metaphor of a machine to describe functions of the human body: the mechanical model. While the human body has been used as a metaphor for the political governance of a human society—for example, by Thomas Hobbes in his famous treatise, *Leviathan* (1651)—we do not apply the reverse concept in Western medicine. *Leviathan* was in fact the body politic made manifest—a social body composed of cells of individual men, just as the human body is composed of individual cells.

Modern medicine is largely based on the premise that the body is essentially made up of populations of cells comprising tissues and organs which work together as regulated by physiology, just as populations of individuals make up societies and work together under political governance.

The Chinese use medical metaphors that describe human physiology in terms analogous with human socio-political organization. This utilization may relate to the preoccupation of Chinese civilization with the Emperor

(as the *celestial* source of divine knowledge and wisdom), his mandarins at court, and the disseminated bureaucratic organization that provided the foundation for government administration of complex works, organizations and operations.

One of the great projects of the ancient Chinese civilization was the creation of canals or “waterways” for irrigation and for transportation. The requirements for organization of labor for such projects had a transactional relationship to the development of Chinese social organization and political control. These processes and relationships were described by Karl Wittfogel (1957) in the classic treatise *Oriental Despotism*. The inherent relations of the contours of Chinese society with (1) major public “infrastructure” projects, (2) the political organization of the Chinese government, and (3) the Chinese pictographic language needed and used for communications, result in a rich vocabulary of metaphors describing medical aspects of the human body as waterways, channels, etc., in the original Chinese language.

In most Western translations words like “meridians” for the acupuncture energy channels do not fully correspond to these more “fluid” Chinese metaphorical concepts.

A flood of knowledge

The *celestial origins* of knowledge, the concept of *vital energy*, and its character represented as *flow*, like water, are all illustrated in the following legend. The demigod Gun (鯀), grandson of Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, failed to build dams to restrain the great floods that threatened China. In contrast, his son Da Yu (大禹), one of the forefathers of Daoism, managed to control the floods by opening natural pathways along geographical “lines of force” to drain the accumulated waters.

Controlling and directing the flow of water was seen as one of the first steps to a civilized world. In the *Lingshu*, the rivers and streams of *qi* within the body were originally compared to the natural waterways of China (compare the *nadi* of yoga and the sacred rivers of India). Once the analogy between *qi* channels and watercourses had been made, channeling of *qi* into routes around the body presented a significant way of bringing the body, like the waterways, under control. A similar process may have occurred with *qi gong*, whose traditional postures were probably developed from more spontaneous movements and breathing behavior.

The development and application of these ideas about the nature of health and healing are illustrated in the following two chapters, “The Dynasties of Chinese Medicine” and “The Concepts of Chinese Medicine.”



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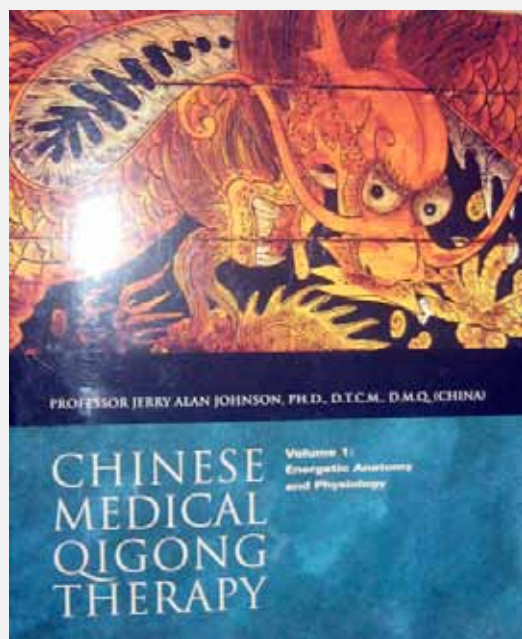
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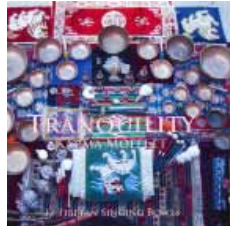


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This CD consists of 22 Tibetan bowls, their deep resonant sounds vibrating together and inducing a state of deep relaxation and bliss. I often do my qigong practice to this one. Karma is the master of the bowls, having played them for many years. His concerts, with over 30 bowls, ten foot Tibetan horn, various flutes and bells and other instruments, are legendary. (See his CD *The Tibetan Bowls Experience* for this.) This CD takes the listener on a journey into the inner realms, deep into the world on inner harmony and peace.

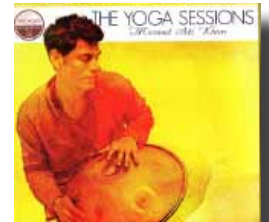


The Yoga Sessions

Masood Ali Khan

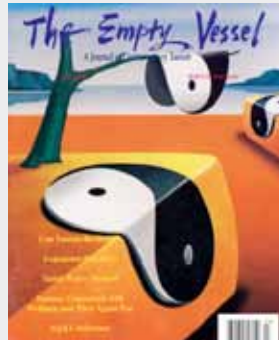
www.whiteswanmusic.com

This CD is full of the amazing and haunting sound of the hang drum, a flying saucer-looking metal device, like a steel drum instrument turned inside out. It is played with the hands, with a good musician able to play a rhythm and melody all at once. This CD is a powerful journey into the musical world of hang drum, accompanied by didgeridoo, violin and some lovely vocal chants of Indian devotional songs.



Special Sale on Back Issues

Many of our back issues have already sold out. If you would like to order back issues we still have a few sets of 39 issues available for \$200, postage included! (U.S. postage only) For overseas orders please contact us at solala@abodetao.com.



Directory

Oregon College of Oriental Medicine. Three year academic and clinical program. We offer classes in Oriental medicine, acupuncture, and Chinese herbology. Master's degree is accredited. Financial aid and China internships are available. Preparatory to national certification and state licensing examinations. (503) 253-3443 for information, literature.

Genesee Valley Daoist Hermitage Residential facility. Qigong, sustainable gardening, meditation for self cultivation. Chinese herbs, massage, Daoist healing to harmonize chronic disorders. PO Box 9224, Moscow, Idaho 83843-1724. (208) 285-0123.

Tidewater Tai Chi Center has been offering classes and workshops in tai chi, chi kung, meditation, self cultivation practices and other Taoist arts in Norfolk and Virginia Beach since 1974. For information call 757.533.9092. Send email to dondavis@verizon.net or visit www.tidewatertaiichi.com.

The Alaska College of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture & Massage Therapy. 2636 Spenard Rd., Anchorage, AK 99503. Offering course work in a full spectrum of Asian Studies including Taiji, Qigong, Meditation, Medical QiGong, Taoist Herbology, Massage Therapy, with advanced study in Thai Yoga Massage and Tui Na Acupressure Massage and a three year Masters program of study in Acupuncture. We offer year round full or part-time schedules of study. We feature biannual Spring and Fall Health and Wellness Festivals where participants can study cutting edge information with our expert staff and visiting masters from around the globe. Traveling to Alaska? Check out our website and make sure our classes and workshops are in your plans. www.touchoftao.com. (907) 279-0135

White Cloud Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico offers learning opportunities to people of all ages. Certification programs in Taoist Studies, Energy Medicine and Chi Nei Tsang: External Qi Healing. Weekly Tai Chi and Qigong classes. Qigong Research and Retreats. Continuing Education for Massage, Nursing and Acupuncture. Ask about retreats. (505) 471-9330, www.whitecloudinstitute.com.

Retreat for Women: July 7 - 14, 2012, 8th Annual Qigong Women in the Wilderness Retreat. Ancient Wisdom to Nurture the Mind, Body and Spirit of Modern Women. Join Rebecca Kali and Cis Hager for a special, weeklong retreat just for women. Enjoy gourmet meals and a beautiful, cozy, lakeshore setting as you relax and experience Qigong, Taiji and Subtle Energy Work in a program specially developed to empower and benefit women. Location: on Farm Lake, near the BWCA, Ely, MN. Contact Rebecca Kali at phone: 800-341-8895 email: Kali@QiCentral.org www.Retreat4Women.com

Qigong & Tai Chi Tour to China & Tibet - April 11- 27, 2012, "Journey to Shangri-La"...the journey of a lifetime, a life-changing journey! China & Tibet - off the Beaten Path. Chengdu, Lijiang, Shangri-La, Lhasa & other locations in Tibet. Explore spectacular scenery & experience sacred spaces. Learn ancient wisdom & become immersed in traditional cultures. Exceptional daily program of Qigong, Tai Chi & Daoist Healing Arts. An extraordinary adventure with kindred spirits. Sponsored by Dao of Well-Being™ Tours & Qigong Alliance International. Contact

Rebecca Kali for more info & daily schedule. phone: 800-341-8895 email: Kali@QiCentral.org www.QigongChinaTrip.com

Qigong & Daoist Training Center offers certification in qigong and Daoist training and ordination as a priest: qigong, TCM, Daoist Cultivation practices, and Daoist Zuowang Meditation. Michael Rinaldini, founder, American Dragon Gate Lineage, received authorization to train/ordain others by Chinese Daoist Master Wan Sujian. Level 4 NQA Certified Qigong Teacher. www.dragongateqigong.com. 707 829-1855

The Taoist Institute offers studies and services in Chinese qigong, tai chi chuan, Daoist weddings, shamanic energy & Reiki healing. Director: Dr. Carl Totton. 10630 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA, 91601 (818) 760-4219. www.taoistinstitute.com.

Embrace The Moon School for Taijiquan and Qigong is located in Seattle, Washington. Embrace The Moon offers classes in the full Chen Taijiquan & Luohan Gong Qigong curriculums to all ages and fitness levels as well as offers extensive teacher training and advanced development programs in these systems. Founder & Chief Instructor Kimberly Ivy has 35 years of experience in the Martial Arts (Judo, Aikido, Taijiquan), Qigong & Yoga. She holds black belts in Judo & Aikido, and is ranked 6th Duan Wei by the International Wu Shu Association. Ms. Ivy is a 20th Generation Disciple of Grandmaster Chen Xiao Wang and among the senior international Luohan Gong students of Grandmaster Gaspar Garcia. More information on the school can be found at www.embracethemoon.com. Ms. Ivy is available for seminars on the topic of your choosing. Contact her to schedule at kim@embracethemoon.com or by calling (206) 789-0993.

Taoist Arts Center. Wu Style Tai Chi, Chi Kung, Meditation. Traditional Taoist arts offered in a friendly and cooperative environment. Classes, Workshops, Private Instruction. Director: Susan Rabinowitz, 342 East 9th Street, NYC 10003. (212) 477-7055. www.taoist-arts.com

Healing Tao USA University: Michael Winn, Director. 30 fabulous, low cost Tao summer retreats in Blue Ridge Mtns. (Asheville, N.C.) with top masters: medical qigong, sexual energy cultivation, internal alchemy (neidan), taijiquan, bagua zhang, Chi Nei Tsang (Deep Organ Massage), largest array of qigong in the West under one roof. 888-999-0555. www.HealingTaoRetreats.com or info@healingtaoretreats.com

Daoist Traditions College of Chinese Medical Arts in Asheville, North Carolina. Accredited Masters program in Oriental medicine; steeped in the spirit of Daoism and teachings by Jeffrey Yuen, a world renowned leader in Classical Chinese Medicine. Preparing students to enter the profession as skilled acupuncture clinicians. www.daoisttraditions.edu. admissions@daoisttraditions.edu. 828-225-3993.

Tools for Living the Dao

Books

Daoism

Workbook for Spiritual Development of All People

by Hua Ching Ni

Summarizes thousands of years of traditional teachings and little-known practices for spiritual development. There are sections on ancient invocations, postures for energy channeling, stories and sections on emotional independence and a balanced life and Taoist spiritual practices. A good primer for beginning Taoists. Softcover, 240 pages. \$14.95

The Complete Works of Lao Tzu *by Hua-Ching Ni*

Lao Tzu's timeless wisdom provides a bridge the subtle spiritual truth and practical guidelines for harmonious and peaceful living. Mater Ni has included one of the only English translations of the Hua Hu Ching, a later work of Lao Tzu which has been lost to the general public for a thousand years. Softcover, 212 pages. \$13.95

The Taoist Inner View of the Universe *by Hua-Ching Ni*

This presentation of Taoist metaphysics provides guidance for one's own personal life transformation. It offers a glimpse of the inner world and immortal realm known to achieved Taoists and makes it understandable for students aspiring to a more complete life. Softcover, 218 pages. \$16.95

Tao, the Subtle Universal Law *by Hua-Ching Ni*

Most people are unaware that their thoughts and behavior evoke responses from the invisible net of universal energy. The real meaning of Taoist self-discipline is to harmonize with universal law. To lead a good stable life is to be aware of the actual conjoining of the universal subtle law with every moment of our lives. This book presents the wisdom and practical methods that the ancient Chinese have successfully used for centuries to accomplish this. Softcover, 165 pages. \$12.95

The Esoteric Tao Teh Ching *by Hua-Ching Ni*

Offers instruction for studying the Tao Teh Ching and reveals the spiritual practices "hidden" in Lao Tzu's classic. These include in-depth techniques for advanced spiritual benefit. This version gives the esoteric meaning of the Tao Teh Ching as revealed to the virtuous leader of the Han Dynasy, Emperor Wen by an unusual old man called "The Old Gentleman on the River." Softcover, 192 pages. \$13.95

Mysticism: Empowering the Spirit Within *by Hua-Ching Ni*

"Fourteen Details for Immortal Medicine" is a chapter on meditation for women and men. Four others are devoted to the study of 68 mystical diagrams, including the ones on Lao Tzu's tower. Softcover, 200 pages. \$13.95

Nurture Your Spirits *by Hua-Ching Ni*

Spirits are the foundation of our being. Hua-Ching Ni reveals the truth about "spirits" based on his personal cultivation and experience so that you can nurture your own spirits, which are the truthful internal foundation of your life being. Softcover, 176 pages. \$12.95

The Tao of Philosophy *by Alan Watts*

This collection of essays compiled from lectures and seminars presents the words of Alan Watts, as he spoke them, on issues of great significance in the spirit of Taoist thought. They reveal the author's appreciation for

the wisdom inherent in the course and current of nature. Hardcover, 96 pages. \$16.95

Tao Te Ching *translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English*

One of our favorite translations of this timeless and sublime work! The text captures the true poetry of Lao Tzu's work and Jane English's wonderful nature photographs illustrate perfectly the philosophy of the sage. Oversize softcover, 174 pages. \$18

Chronicles of Tao *by Deng Ming-Dao*

This volume combines the trilogy of *The Wandering Taoist*, *Seven Bamboo Tablets of the Cloudy Satchel*, and *Gateway to A Vast World* under one cover. A wonderful way to receive Taoist instruction through a story form. This is the tale of Kwan Saihung's training from boyhood, in an ancient Taoist temple high in the Huashan mountains, to adulthood in America. Full of rich characters, Taoist practices and philosophy, and kung fu adventure! Softcover, 476 pages. \$19

365 Tao *by Deng Ming-Dao*

This volume of daily meditations is the perfect thing for bathroom reading or for daily reflection. Deng Ming-Dao's years of training in self-cultivation shine through in these short yet deeply felt passages. Softcover, 380 pages. \$16

Scholar Warrior *by Deng Ming-Dao*

Subtitled *An Introduction to the Tao in Everyday Life*, this book contains sections on medicine, chi gong, herbs, meditation, finding one's purpose in life, diet, sexuality, death and transcendence. Softcover, 351 pages. \$23

Daoist Mystical Philosophy *by Livia Kohn*

A central text of medieval Daoist mysticism. Written by an unknown author, probably of the Northern Celestial Masters at Lougan, in the late 15th century C.E. it closely resembles the Daode Jing in structure and contents. Edited and commented on several times until the twelfth century, the text played an important rôle in the Tang religious thought. With an excellent in-depth introduction by Livia Kohn, one of the leading experts on medieval Daoist thought and practice. Softcover, 285 pages. \$24.95

Women in Daoism *by Catherine Despeux & Livia Kohn*

Outlines the status and roles of women in the Daoist tradition from its inception to the present day. It describes the historical development and role of Daoist women in Chinese society; focusing on the different ideals women stood for as much as on the religious practices they cultivated. Softcover, 296 pages, \$25

Daoist Body Cultivation *edited by Livia Kohn*

a comprehensive volume by a dedicated group of scholars and practitioners that covers the key preaches of medical healing, breathing, diets, exercises, sexual practices, Qigong and Tai quan. Ultimately aiming to energetically transform the person into a spiritual and transcendent being, Daoist cultivation techniques have proven beneficial for health time and again and can make an important contribution to the world today. Softcover, 243 pages, \$24.95

Everyday Tao *by Deng Ming-Dao*

This companion volume to 365 Tao offers clear, specific directions on bringing the Taoist spirit into our work, our relationships, and other aspects of our everyday lives. Softcover, 256 pages. \$15

Harmonizing Yin and Yang: The Dragon-Tiger Classic

by Eva Wong

A translation of a concise Taoist alchemical manual along with its two most important commentaries. Covers external alchemy, sexual alchemy and internal alchemy.

Softcover, 146 pages. \$14.95

Entering the Tao *by Hua Ching Ni*

A valuable anthology of Master Ni's work, culled from prolific writings; it provides a good overview of his work. There is advice and inspiration on many aspects of life, from the physical to the spiritual. A good introduction to this contemporary Taoist master's work.

Softcover, 158 pages. \$13

Taoism: The Road to Immortality *by John Blofeld*

In this comprehensive study, John Blofeld explains the fundamental concepts of Taoism, tells many stories of ancient masters, and provides incisive reflections on Taoist verse. Taoist yoga, a little known aspect of Taoist practice, is also discussed in detail. He also writes in a colorful and unique way about his visits to Taoist hermitages in China and his interchanges with contemporary masters.

Softcover, 195 pages. \$16

Cultivating Stillness:

A Taoist Manual for Transforming Body and Mind

translated by Eva Wong

Written between the second and fifth centuries, this book is attributed to T'ai Shang Lao-chun, the legendary figure widely known as Lao-tzu. It was a principle part of the Taoist canon for many centuries. Accompanying commentary, written in the nineteenth century by Shui ching Tzu, explains the alchemical symbolism of the text.

Softcover, 136 pages. \$15

Tales From the Tao *by Solala Towler*

Teaching stories from *Chuang Tzu* and *Lieh Tzu* along with passages from the *Tao Te Ching* as well as original stories by Solala. Lavishly illustrated with photographs from China, Nepal and Tibet printed in black and silver on glossy paper.

Oversize softcover, 250 pages. \$22.95

Small hardcover, 192 pages, \$12.95 (also available in Spanish)

Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters *by Solala Towler*

A new interpretation of this ancient and timeless classic, with commentary. Profusely illustrated with photos from China, printed in black and silver on glossy paper. The principles of spontaneity, flexibility, not going against the natural flow of the Tao, grace under pressure, facing death fearlessly, and going beyond the obvious and commonplace to find our own true nature, thereby transcending the world's problems and vaulting us into the world of spiritual immortality, are all contained in this work.

Oversize softcover, 170 pages, \$22.95

Small hardcover, 155, pages, \$12.95

Qigong/Chi Kung

Internal Alchemy *by Hua Ching Ni*

"Ancient spiritually achieved ones used alchemical terminology metaphorically for human internal energy transformation. Internal alchemy intends for an individual to transform one's emotions and lower energy to be higher energy and to find the unity of life in order to reach the divine immortality." Another valuable book from this contemporary Taoist master.

Softcover, 288 pages. \$15.95

Cosmic Fusion *by Mantak Chia*

Cosmic Fusion exercises establish the spiritual body firmly in the lower abdomen, where chi energy is gathered and distributed to all parts of the body--and into all creation. The fully illustrated exercises in this book also show how to collect and channel the greater energies of the stars and planets. By "fusing" all these different energies together,

a harmonious whole is created, a unity of what is above and below. Softcover 272 pages, 208 color and b/w illustrations, \$18.95.

The Way of Qigong *by Kenneth S. Cohen*

An introduction to the ancient Taoist exercise system of Tao Yin. Tao Yin focuses on creating balance between internal and external energies and revitalizing the body, mind, and spirit with a combination of strength, flexibility, and internal energy exercises. Its ultimate goal is for the practitioner to become pure, responsive, and full of energy, like a child.

Softcover, 224 pages, \$18.

Fusion of the Eight Psychic Channels *by Mantak Chia*

Shows how to open the Great Bridge Channel and the Great Regulator Channel--the last of the eight psychic channels that connect the twelve organ meridians and enable energy to flow from one meridian to another. By opening these psychic channels in conjunction with the Microcosmic Orbit, practitioners can balance and regulate the energy flow throughout the body to protect all the body's centers.

Softcover, 128 pages, \$14.95

The Root of Chinese Chi Kung *by Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming*

A valuable work by a well known chi kung master, this volume covers history, basic concepts, categories, chi kung theories as well as keys to chi kung training.

Softcover, 272 pages. \$27.95

The Eight Treasures *by Maoshing Ni*

Eight sets of exercises that combine toning and strengthening movements, stretching, and specific breathing techniques for the purpose of maintaining health and preventing disease. An ancient system of energy enhancing movements based on the natural motion of the heavenly bodies. (See accompanying video).

Softcover, 196 pages, \$17.95

Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong *by Zhao, Jin Xiang*

A workbook of the immensely popular form of chi gong. This easy to learn, half hour form is practiced by millions of people in China and is extremely powerful.

(See video section for accompanying video)

Softcover, spiral bound, 102 pages. \$30

Mastering Chi *by Hua Ching Ni*

A great introduction to anyone just beginning qigong practice. Includes: Choosing the Exercise Right For You; sections on Children, Young People, Older People, Men and Women; and descriptions of various types of taiji and qigong exercises.

Softcover, 220 pages. \$17.95

Attune Your Body With Dao-In *by Hua Ching Ni*

A step-by-step instructional book on this ancient Taoist exercise. Much like a Taoist yoga workout, Dao-In is gentle and easy to do. Illustrated. (See video section for accompanying video).

Softcover, 135 pages. \$16.95

The Healer Within *by Roger Jahnke*

Details the scientific healing and personal cultivation aspects of qigong for Western readers and practitioners. Offers tools and methods for treating and maintaining a personal qigong and meditation practice—from gentle movement through self-applied massage, breathing practices and deep relaxation and meditation practices.

Softcover, 264 pages \$14

Complete Guide to Chi-Kung *by Daniel Reid*

The author is able to achieve an impressive balance between modern scientific knowledge and the ancient wisdom of the Taoist sages. Good for anyone who plans to begin practicing qigong or for anyone wishing to go a little deeper in their own practice and written by a well-known author on Chinese medicine and qigong. One of the best books we've seen on this subject.

Softcover, 336 pages. \$19.95

Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body by B.K. Frantzis

As well as including a comprehensive guide to chi kung theory, this book also gives you a complete, systematic lesson plan, with 98 functional illustrations and built-in safeguards to ensure that the exercises are practiced correctly. The author explains not only how they are done, but why. Going beyond mere body movement, he teaches from the inside out, linking the biomechanics and anatomy of the physical body with the subtleties of the energetic (chi) body.

Softcover, 200 pages. \$16.95

Taoist Ways to Transform Stress into Vitality

The Inner Smile, Six Healing Sounds by Mantak Chia

An introduction to the ancient Taoist exercise system of Tao Yin. Tao Yin focuses on creating balance between internal and external energies and revitalizing the body, mind, and spirit with a combination of strength, flexibility, and internal energy exercises. Its ultimate goal is for the practitioner to become pure, responsive, and full of energy, like a child.

Softcover, 224 pages, \$18.

Fusion of the Eight Psychic Channels by Mantak Chia

Shows how to open the Great Bridge Channel and the Great Regulator Channel—the last of the eight psychic channels that connect the twelve organ meridians and enable energy to flow from one meridian to another. By opening these psychic channels in conjunction with the Microcosmic Orbit, practitioners can balance and regulate the energy flow throughout the body to protect all the body's centers.

Softcover, 128 pages, \$14.95

The Eight Treasures by Maoshing Ni

Eight sets of exercises that combine toning and strengthening movements, stretching, and specific breathing techniques for the purpose of maintaining health and preventing disease. An ancient system of energy enhancing movements based on the natural motion of the heavenly bodies. (See accompanying video).

Softcover, 196 pages, \$17.95

The Healing Promise of Qi by Roger Jahnke

One of the best resources for using both qigong and taiji for creating a healthy and fulfilling life. Filled with exercises, stories, illustrations and wonderful insights by someone who has spent many years practicing and these these ancient arts.

Hardcover, 316 pages, \$24.95

Health and Long Life The Chinese Way by Livia Kohn

This book, written by the author of a number of books on Daoist philosophy and practice, is a good overall view of Chinese health practices, which cover a wide variety of subjects. Besides chapters on diagnosis, acupuncture, massage and herbal treatments, the book contains chapters on fengshui, food cures, qigong, meditation, inner alchemy and sexual practices.

Softcover, 235 pages, \$24.95

The Chi Revolution by Bruce Frantzis

Challenges you to free yourself from negative actions and the incessant chatter of our monkey mind, and optimize your health and well-being. The unique energetic exercises that comprise the Chi Rev Workout will teach you how to activate and strengthen your chi so you can start relaxing into your life today.

Softcover, 223 pages, \$19.95.

Jade Woman Qigong by Master Liu He

Master Liu's signature form of qigong is designed to help all women achieve wholeness by activating the innate healing power within their own minds and bodies. The result is a greater awareness of all aspects of a woman's spiritual, mental, emotional and physical life.

Softcover, 236 pages. \$27.95

Sexual Cultivation

Taoist Secrets of Love: Cultivating Male Sexual Energy

by Mantak Chia & Michael Winn

A unique volume of Taoist Sexual Yoga, especially attuned to the male. These practices enable men to conserve and transform sexual energy through its circulation in the Microcosmic Orbit, invigorating and rejuvenating the body's vital functions. Hidden for centuries, these esoteric techniques and principles make the process of linking sexual energy and transcendent states of consciousness accessible to the reader.

Soft cover, 250 pages. \$16.95

Healing Love Through the Tao:

Cultivating Female Sexual Energy

by Mantak and Maneewan Chia

This book outlines the methods for cultivating female sexual energy, introducing for the first time in the West the different techniques for transforming and circulating female sexual energy.

Softcover, 328 pages. \$14.95

The Tao of Love and Sex by Jolan Chang

Longevity and the sexual response: the prolongation of virility into extreme old age; the art of lovemaking regarded as a basic therapy in the Taoist medical canon—these subjects, which are burning topics for us in the West, are discussed with insight in this first detailed study of the lovecraft of the Taoist medical schools. Illustrated with classical erotic paintings.

Softcover, 136 pages. \$15

Sexual Secrets: The Alchemy of Ecstasy

by Nik Douglas & Penny Slinger

A definitive and all-encompassing guide to sex and mysticism. Profusely illustrated throughout, it covers sacred sexuality from the traditions of India, Nepal, Tibet, China and Japan. Reveals the wisdom of the sages whose teachings on sexuality have stood the test of twenty centuries and, even today, show how physical love can become the pathway to liberation.

Softcover, 383 pages. \$25

The Tao of Sex by Howard S. Levy & Akira Ishihara

Consists of a highly readable translation of the sexological sections found in the Japanese medical encyclopedia "The Essence of Medical Prescriptions" (Ishimpo) which has been celebrated as the most important bible of sex for East Asia.

Softcover, 241 pages. \$15.95

The Sexual Teachings of the White Tigress:

Secrets of the Female Taoist Masters by Hsi Lai

Translation of a 3,000-year-old White Tigress sexual manual explaining techniques for absorbing male sexual energy, intensifying organs, restoring beauty, re-creating youthful sexual energy and enliven the sexual organs.

Softcover, 264 pages, \$19.95

The Sexual Teachings of the Jade Dragon:

Taoist Methods for Male Sexual Revitalization by Hsi Lai

Reveals how Taoist sexual practices can help men achieve "immortality" through the enhancement of their sexual prowess through a 3,000-year-old system. The goal of the Jade Dragon is health, longevity and immortality through external and internal regimens for the enhancement and accumulation of the Three treasures of Taoism—jing (sexual and physical energy), qi (breath and vital energy), and shen (spiritual and mental energy).

Softcover, 242 pages, 16.95

DVDs

Attune Your Body with Dao-In by Hua-Ching Ni

Dao-In is a Taoist exercise consisting of a series of gentle, rhythmic

movements to adjust and attune, and at the same time generate, strengthen or invigorate personal energy. Presented by contemporary Taoist master, Hua-Ching Ni, himself in his eighties, who demonstrates the movements and is himself an example of the healing properties of this ancient yet simple practice.

50 minutes \$39.95

Self-Healing Qigong For the Five Organ Systems

by Dr. Maoshing Ni

An excellent course in self-healing qigong, this video offers a comprehensive course as taught by Dr. Maoshing Ni of Yo San University. Covers specific techniques for healing and strengthening the five major organ systems (liver, kidney /bladder, respiratory /immune, cardiovascular and digestive). Each organ system is explained in detail in both medical and energetic terms and then the specific exercise is taught.

Two hours, \$39.95

Qigong:Awakening and Mastering the Medicine Within

by Roger Jahnke

Includes the Enhance Vitality Method, a practice of stretches and warm-ups to enhance the movement of blood, lymph, qi and oxygen throughout the body; the Seven Precious Practices, movements to gather and release qi; the Tendon Changing Practice, concerned with optimizing coordinating and balancing the connective tissues of the body; Marrow Washing Practice, combines accumulated qi from the elements to store it in the marrow, enhancing blood and immune factors. Roger Jahnke brings a gentle yet authoritative voice to this field.

60 minutes, \$29.95

Eight Simple Exercises for Health: Eight Pieces of Brocade

by Yang Jwing-Ming

Companion video to the book of the same name. \$29.95

The Eight Treasures *by Maoshing Ni*

Companion video to the book of the same name. Never before presented in its entire 32 movement form, this system of Eight Treasure's is unique in its ability to work the body from head to toe while unblocking obstructions in the energy channels. \$39.95

Jade Woman Qigong *by Maser Liu He*

Master Liu's signature form of qigong is designed to help all women achieve wholeness by activating the innate healing power within their own minds and bodies. The result is a greater awareness of all aspects of a women's spiritual, mental, emotional and physical life.

35 minutes, \$35

Chi Kung Fundamentals: Five Animals

Six Healing Sounds + Inner Smile *by Michael Winn*

China's oldest shamanic chi kung + Ocean Breathing. Fuses color, sound, breath, virtue and movement into One fun, powerful method.

Audio (4.5 hrs) + Video (1.5 hrs) \$59 Video only \$24.95

Open Micro-Cosmic Orbit *by Michael Winn*

10 top methods. Advanced jing-chi-shen theory, guided meditation to mix chi & blood. Five unique Heaven & Earth chi kung movements easily open and balance yin-yang chi flow.

Video (2 hrs) \$45

Healing Love/Tao of Sex *by Michael Winn*

Heal male, female sexual problems (impotence to PMS). Sexual chi kung creates Original Force suction. Supercharge your orgasm, boost creativity, grasp sexual relationship dynamics. No partner need, for single or dual cultivators.

Audio (9 hrs) + Video (2 hrs) \$135. Audio only: \$109

Primordial (Wuji) Chi Kung *by Michael Winn*

A magical ceremony mixes tai chi, feng shui, alchemy & chi kung. Gathers chi of directions, collect power of Heaven & Earth, opens inner heart

to Supreme Unknown. Easy to learn, delivers chi fast.

Video (1.5 hrs) \$45

Deep Healing Chi Kung *by Michael Winn*

Used in Chinese chi kung hospitals for chronic & terminal illness. I added alchemical elements, now spiritually powerful, useful to anyone seeking deep change. Video (1.5 hrs): \$29

Self-Massage and One Thousand Hands Buddha *by Liu He*

Self Massage can be practiced any time of the day to bring quiet to the mind and awaken the body with renewed energy. One Thousand Hands Buddha is a spiritual healing qigong method inspired by the symbolic positioning of Buddha's fingers, referred to as "mudras." It is an approach producing calmness, which inhibits the heart from "galloping away", thus leading the practitioner into a state of silence and peace a little at a time.

64 minutes. \$35

Kung Fu for Kids *by Nicholas Yang and Ben Warner*

An instructional program that teaches children the basics of traditional Kung Fu in a fun and exciting way. The discipline and focus learned in Kung Fu can help kids in many other activities, including academics, sports, music, and literature.

75 minutes. \$19.95

CDs

Taoism: Essential Teachings of the Way and Its Power

by Ken Cohen

In easy-to-follow language, Ken Cohen reveals Lao Tzu's vast spiritual legacy, including Taoism's mystical roots in China's ancient shamanistic tradition. This complete introduction to Taoism covers: origins, philosophy, and religion; keys to ethical living, inner silence and simplicity; Taoist meditation for awareness and healing; Taoist prayers, rituals, and iconography; teachings on diet, poetry, feng shui, dream yoga, and much more. 3 cassette set: \$24.95

Bowls of Compassion CD *by Karma Moffett*

The haunting music of Tibetan bowls, made of secret alloys of five, seven and sometimes nine metals, including meteorite. Ringing pairs and groups of bowls create overtones that interpenetrate each other and the body of the listener, allowing one not only to hear the music but also internally experience the vibration of the tones. Perfect for meditation or gentle movement. \$15.95

Ocean Bowls CD *by Karma Moffett*

The ocean's natural rhythms and bowls' harmonic tones penetrate the subtle energy body. Stagnant parts of energy immobilized from injury, trauma or stress are gently vibrated into movement. With repetition energy is released and circulated at increasingly profound levels. Perfect for movement or meditation!

60 minutes, \$15.95

Mountain Gate *by Solala Towler*

A soothing blend of nature sounds, Tibetan Singing Bowls, bamboo flute, Native flute. Designed specifically for taiji, qigong, meditation, yoga or massage. Two 30-minute sessions—*Sun Rises over the Sea & Viewing Moonlight Through the Pines*.

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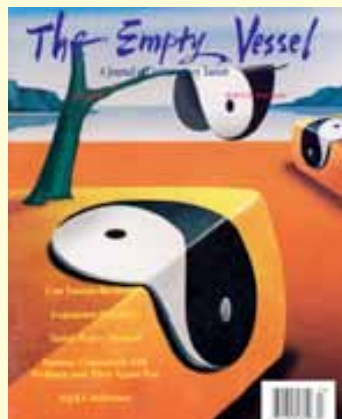
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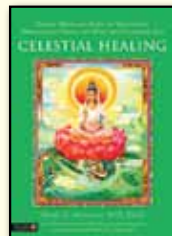
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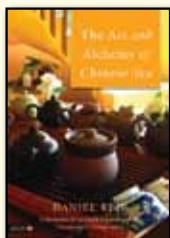
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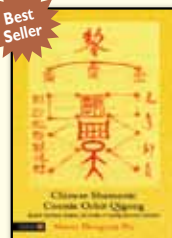
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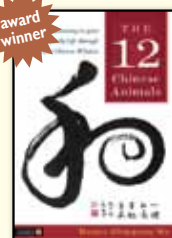
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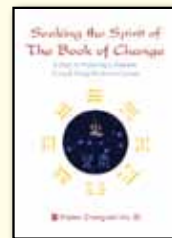


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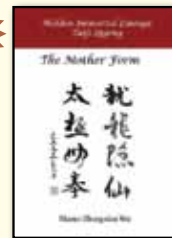
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