



Educational Path of Self-Cultivation

I Beginning the Path

1. Cultivating Body, Mind and Spirit

We need food to nourish our bodies, minds, and spirits. Religions try to fulfil us with spiritual food when we don't know how to fulfil ourselves. Taoism suggests that everything in life can provide nourishment for some aspect of our being if we know how to access that nourishment. Taoist practices, especially the Internal Alchemy, can help us to determine our goals and to receive physical, mental, and spiritual food in a natural way. They also teach us how to return to our source, the Wu Chi (God), the Tao, and thereby attain spiritual independence as we learn to live harmoniously with nature and the universe. Once we are at peace with our environment, we can strive for immortality through the Tao. (The higher level of the Healing Tao is also known as the Immortal Tao.)

Ancient Taoist sages believed we were born to be immortal. We become mortal by draining ourselves of Chi through engaging in excessive sexual activity, indulging in negative emotions and depending only on material sources to supply our life force. The masters recognized that different levels of immortality can be achieved through Internal Alchemy, and they devised many practices for this purpose. The ability to transcend even death through the transmutation of one's physical into the immortal spirit body is the highest goal of Taoism. This level, known as physical immortality, takes the longest to achieve.

2. The Three Bodies

The ancient Taoist masters recognized the importance of working on all three levels of our being, which include the physical body, the energy body, and the spirit. The three bodies correspond with the three forces; the physical body with the Earth (primordial) Tin power, the spiritual body with the Heaven (primordial) Yang force and the energy body with the force of Man and Nature, sometimes also called Cosmic force (Yin/Yang combined). In the human body, we call these forces the Three Treasures (San Bao); Ching or Jing (life essence/sexual energy), Chi (the inner breath) and Shen (spirit or consciousness). They correspond with the three Tan Tiens; the lower Tan Tien (Yellow Court) with the Earth/ Ching force, the middle Tan Tien (cinnabar field) with the Cosmic /Human/Nature/ Chi force and the upper Tan Tien (Palace of Ni Wan) with the Heaven/Shen force. All three are important in forming a ladder with which we may climb consciously into the spiritual worlds and, just as importantly, back into the physical world to be creatively active here. This ladder enables Taoists to learn about the inner worlds and to return with knowledge and increased energy. An Immortal Body, which is developed in the practice of Internal Alchemy, enables one to establish a constant link between life and the after-death state.

3. Healing the Physical Body / Creating the Foundation

Becoming like a Child to Return to the Original Source.

The basic foundation of the Taoist practice teaches how to conserve physical energy within our bodies so that it will no longer scatter and weaken as a result of our worldly interactions. Full spiritual independence requires that we avoid being drained of this energy through the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, or through excessive sex. The novice in the Taoist System begins with a wide range of exercises that develop the physical body into an efficient and healthy organism, able to live in the world and yet stay free of the tensions and stress of daily life. One aspires to return to a childlike state of innocence and vitality, to regain the Original Force that is our birthright. Specific goals of this level are to learn how to heal oneself, how to love oneself, and how to love others.

II The Foundation Practices

1. Conserving Energy to follow the Light

The first level of practice is to develop a healthy body. During this process, we learn how to condense and conserve our life force through the Microcosmic Orbit meditation. Healing Love practice. Inner Smile, Six Healing Sounds, and Iron Shirt Chi Kung. We learn to gather and refine our life force into a Chi ball (energy sphere) so it will not dissipate when we are ready to leave this world. As people grow older, their life force weakens, often resulting in illness and suffering. Using drugs to combat illness drains so much of the body's life force that there may be not enough energy left to follow the primordial light (clear light) to the Wu Chi (our Original Source) at the moment of death. The basic practices of the Healing Tao ensure that we retain enough vital energy to make that journey. All the practices of the Basis are interrelated. Practicing them together will bring the best results.

2. Stopping energy leakage through conservation and recycling

The Microcosmic Orbit is the body's major energy pathway. There are nine openings along this path. If we learn how to seal them when we are not using them, this simple act of conservation will give us immediately more energy.

The Microcosmic Orbit meditation is the first step toward attaining these goals, as it develops the power of the mind to control, conserve, recycle, transform, and direct Chi through the body's primary acupuncture channels. By managing our Chi effectively, we gain better control over our lives; by using our energy wisely, we discover we already have plentiful Chi. With the advanced Orbit, one learns to connect with and draw from the unlimited source of Universal Love, a Cosmic Orgasm formed by the union to three main sources of Chi accessible to humans: the Universal Force, the Earth Force, and the Higher Self (Cosmic) Force. This process is both energizing and balancing.

It prepares one for working with greater amounts of Chi in the higher levels of meditative practice, particularly in developing the energy body.

3. Transforming negative energy into virtues: Opening the heart

The Inner Smile and Six Healing Sounds are simple yet powerful practices that teach us how to relax and heal the vital organs and to transform negative emotions back into a rich source of energy. They help open the heart center and connect us with the unlimited Universal Love, improving daily interactions and providing a vehicle for the virtues, which derive from the internal organs. Taoists perceive the heart as the seat of love, joy, and happiness, which can connect with the Universal Love. It is also a cauldron in which the energies of our virtues are combined and strengthened. Through the Inner Smile, you will feel these virtuous energies generated from their respective organs. You will then gather these into the heart to be refined and blended into compassion, the highest of all virtues. This is a most effective way of enhancing one's best qualities.

4. Managing the Life force

In the practices of Iron Shirt Chi Kung, Tan Tien Chi Kung, Tao Tin and Tai Chi Chi Kung, one learns to align the skeletal structure with gravity to allow a smooth, strong flow of energy. With strong fasciae, tendons, and bone marrow and good mechanical structure, we can manage our life force more efficiently.

The body also gains a sense of being rooted deeply in the earth, so one can tap into the Mother Earth healing force.

The ancient Taoist firmly believed that any change in the physical body produces a similar change in the mind and emotions. Conversely, any changes in the mental and spiritual are manifest through the physical body. The integration of the structure through all these practices, especially Iron Shirt Chi Kung, is eventually reflected in a more balanced energy level, better health, and greater emotional and physical stability.

5. Conserving, recycling, and transforming the sexual energy

A Taoist gains strength through the conservation and recycling of sexual energy. When collected, sexual energy (Ching Chi) becomes an incredible source of power that can be used by the individual or shared with a sexual partner via the Microcosmic Orbit pathway during sexual intercourse. The collected and transformed sexual energy is an important alchemical catalyst used in higher meditation. Once you have an abundant sexual energy, you can connect to the unlimited Cosmic Orgasm experience at every moment through your Higher Self, the most basic energy in every cell of your body.

III Developing the Energy Body

Our vehicle to Travel in Inner and Outer Space. The next level of the Universal Healing Tao system consists of the Fusion of the Five Elements I, II, and III. The most important part of this practice is the balancing and transformation of our negative emotional energy and preparing the body for the higher practices through opening of specific energy channels to facilitate the energy and protection.

1. Recycling our Negative Emotions

Our emotional life, filled with constant vicissitudes, drains our vital energy. Through the Fusion of the Five Elements meditations, one learns to transform into usable energy the sick energy of negative emotions that has become locked in the vital organs. Taoists understand morality and good deeds as the most direct path to self-healing and balance. To be good to others is good for oneself as well. All the good energies we create are stored in the energy body like deposits in a bank account. By helping others and giving them love, kindness, and gentleness, we receive more positive energy back in return. When we open our hearts, we are filled with love, joy, and happiness. We can actually transform the essence of our hearts from the material into the immaterial to gather supplies of this positive energy for us in the heavens as well as on earth.

In the Fusion we learn to use the extra energy saved through the foundation and the Fusion practices, including recycled negative energies, to build a strong energy body that will not dissipate. Developing this energy body awakens a part of oneself that perceives and acts free of environmental, educational, and karmic conditioning. Once the energy body is strong, it becomes a vehicle (like a space shuttle) to help the untrained soul and spirit for the long journey home, back to the Wu Chi.

At this stage of development, the energy body serves only as a vehicle, not yet having been given life through a spiritual rebirth, but the energy body can still be trained to function in the heavenly realms.

If we do not have a chance to practice awakening or to give birth to the soul and immortal spirit during life, the primordial light will awaken us at the moment of death. Unfortunately, we may be too untrained and inexperienced to follow this light. To prepare for the journey, the energy body is a vehicle of great importance.

We can train and educate the energy body so it can help the untrained soul and spirit recognize and follow the primordial light back to our original source. The energy body is further developed in the Lesser Kan and Li practice which is part of the Immortal Tao.

IV Forming the Spirit Body – the practice of the Immortal Tao

1. The Lesser Enlightenment Kan and Li meditations

The Inner Alchemy meditation of the Lesser Enlightenment of Kan and Li (water and Fire, sex and love) reunites the male and female within each of us. It involves the practice of self-intercourse, which by internal sexual coupling of the sexual energies enables one to give birth to the soul body. The soul body then acts as a "baby sitter" to help nurture the spirit body. The soul is the seed, but it can also be matured into the immortal body if one has not had the chance to raise the spirit body in this life. Practitioners of Taoist Alchemy believe that if we give birth to the spirit body and develop the immortal body in this life, we can overcome the cycle of reincarnation. Once the "baby sitter" or soul body is formed, it is in the Tin stage, or infancy (soul embryo). We need to feed, raise, educate, and train the young soul body to become fully grown. Once the soul body is developed, we can give birth to the spirit body.

2. The Greater Enlightenment of Kan and Li meditations

The meditations of the Greater Kan and Li lead to the actual birth of the energy and to the formation of the immortal spirit body. At this stage of practice, we learn to digest increasingly higher-grade energies of the Higher Self and Universal Forces from the sun, moon, planets, stars, and galaxies, and from the mind to the Tao itself for the growth and maturing of the spirit in the body. An awakening to that which is eternal and enduring occurs through this practice. Aware of our true nature as spirits, we experience the ability to leave the physical body and travel in the immortal spirit body, which leads us to experience of the inner worlds of spirit. Fear of death is vanquished as we become familiar with life beyond physicality. This Kan and Li meditations teach us how to recognize the inner light of our own spirits and shows us how to merge with or "marry" it to the outer light. Once we capture and "marry the light", we give birth to the second stage of the true immortal spirit. At this level, it is important to develop the "internal compass" associated with the pineal gland. This compass guides us in the spiritual world, directing us to our place of origin.

3. Cultivating the Yang Stage of the Immortal Body

Sealing of the Five Senses, Union of Kun and Ken, Reunion of Heaven and Man. There are also two levels in this practice.

At this first level, one transfers all physical essence into the immortal body. Taoists refer to this as the Yang body. One continues to transform the physical body energy to feed the immortal spirit so it can mature. When all the body's material elements are transformed into subtle Chi, what remains is known as the "rainbow body". Death is still necessary to speed up the process. Many masters who attained this immortal body were able to transform the material into immaterial and transfer it into the spirit body. At the moment of death, they were able to transfer their consciousness, their energy, and the physical elements of their bodies up with them into the spirit body, although even this level is not yet the true immortal body. In this process, their physical bodies actually shrank in size; they may have weighed two-thirds of their usual weight after their physical deaths occurred. This meant they had successfully transformed much of their material being into an immaterial state while retaining full consciousness.

At the second level, death is transcended entirely. One can simply transform the physical body into the immortal body and leave this world or return to it at will. This is the state of complete physical immortality. It takes from eighty to a few hundred years to complete these practices and transform all the material elements of our body into the immaterial. The final goal of ascending to heaven in broad daylight is reached. There are many records in Chinese history of many thousands of Taoist immortals who reached the level of daylight ascension in the presence of many witnesses. In the Bible, Elijah and Moses also accomplished this feat. In the final stage of this practice, the adept can unite the immortal spirit body, the energy body, and the physical body, or operate them at will. It is then that the human being knows full and complete freedom as an immortal, where no world has a boundary.

V The Supportive Practices

1. Chi Nei Tsang

Chi Nei Tsang is the best technique for healing both yourself and other people without draining your own energies. Chi Nei Tsang is a Taoist abdominal massage system; it releases blockages that can prevent the smooth flow of energy in any of the bodily systems. These include the lymphatic, organ, meridian, circulatory, and nervous systems of the body

2. Five Element Nutrition

The Taoist approach to diet is based on determining the body's needs and then fulfilling them according to the five elements of nature, which support the five major organs of the body. This system reveals and strengthens any weak organ by balancing one's food intake to enhance any deficient elements. It does not condemn most food that people enjoy (including sweets), but instead creates a better program in which these foods can support the body's internal balance rather than disrupt it. Choosing and combining foods in this way can help us avoid the cravings to which we sometimes fall prey.