

The Empty Vessel

The Journal of Daoist Philosophy and Practice

Spring 2013

\$5.95 U.S. Canada \$6.95



Food Cures and Diets

The Spiritual Warrior

Daoist Nature Meditation



Step into the Tao with **Dr. and Master Zhi Gang Sha**

World-Renowned Master Healer and Divine, Tao and Da Tao Channel



*Tao is The Way. Tao is the source of all universes.
Tao is the universal principles and laws.
– Dr. and Master Zhi Gang Sha*

Tao Song & Tao Dance Certification Retreat

June 20–26 • In person or via webcast
Toronto, ON, Canada

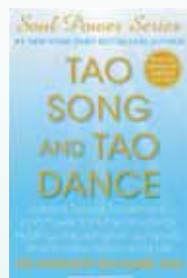
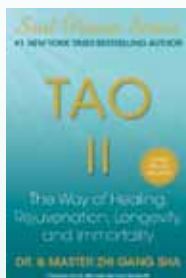
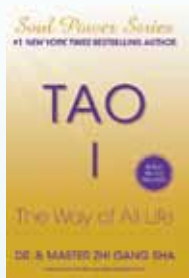
Tao I and Tao II Retreat

November 9–14 • In person or via webcast
YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado
Everyone is Welcome!

Tao III & Tao IV Retreat

November 15–21 • In person or via webcast
YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado
10-year Tao Training Program participants only

New York Times Bestsellers!



*MD in China and certified doctor of TCM and acupuncture in China and Canada
Grandmaster of ancient arts including tai chi, qi gong, kung fu, I Ching and feng shui
Sole holder of the 4,300-year-old sacred Taoist lineage of Peng Zu*

More than an invitation ... a sacred calling!

Institute of Soul Healing & Enlightenment™

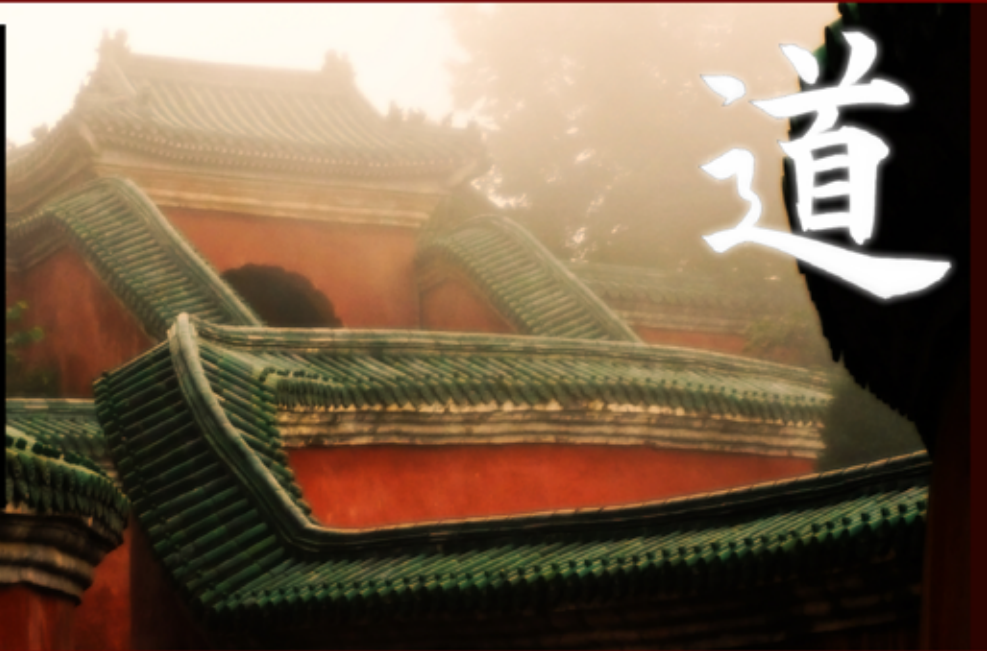
888.3396815 • DrSha.com • Facebook.com/DrAndMasterSha • Twitter.com/ZhiGangSha • DivineHealingHands.com

Daoist Nei Gong Workshops 2013

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma - Oct 5-6
San-Antonio, Texas - Oct 11-13

Berkeley, California - Oct 26-27
Alexandria, Virginia - Nov 1-3

Workshops taught by Damo Mitchell, head of the Lotus Nei Gong School of Daoist Arts & author of 'Daoist Nei Gong, Philosophical Art of Change' as well as the new book 'Heavenly Streams, Meridian Theory in Nei Gong'



Damo will be teaching four workshops in the US this year. Over the course of the four weekends he will be looking at the foundations of esoteric Nei Gong practice as well as aspects of Nei Dan and medical Dao Yin training.

Daoist Meditation - Oklahoma City October 5th - 6th

Over the course of this weekend Damo will be teaching the process of starting the Firing Process in Daoist meditation practice. Lectures and sitting practices will aim to build a foundation in Nei Dan and help to activate the Xiao Zhou Tian, an essential aspect of Daoist internal practices.

Nei Gong Foundations - San-Antonio October 11th - 13th

In Texas Damo will be exploring the early stages of Daoist Nei Gong training as outlined in his books. Friday night will begin with a lecture on the theory of Daoist internal work which will build into the weekends exercises aimed at activating Dan Yuan; The rotational force of Taiji.

Nei Gong and Dao Yin - Berkeley October 16th - 27th

In California the teaching will focus on applying Nei Gong practices within the field of medical exercises. Spinal Dao Yin will be taught alongside the skill of driving Qi along the Ren and Du channels as well as through the Chong Mai. This is the skill of 'waking the Dragon from its cave' within Daoist energy circles.

Daoist Nei Gong - Alexandria November 1st - 3rd

The final workshop of 2013 will focus on the various stages of Nei Gong training inherent within the spiritual limb of the Daoist tradition. Foundation exercises will look at the process of waking up the energy body and developing strong movement of Qi within the Jing Luo.

For more information on any of these events, Damo or to book a place please visit our website:

www.lotusneigong.com

Contents

Spring 2013 Volume 20 Number 3

Features

- 8 **Daoist Nature Meditation**
by Solala Towler
- 10 **Food Cures and Diets**
by Livia Kohn
- 17 **The Spiritual Warrior**
by Robert D. Bessler
- 29 **Formless Taoism:
the Empty Vessel Interview**
with Ted Cibik



Our cover:
Lotus Reflection
by Paul Heussenstamm

See more of his amazing art work at
www.mandalas.com.
Thank you Paul!

Departments

Along the Way	7
Directory	40

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

The Journal of Daoist Philosophy and Practice

Publisher
The Abode of the Eternal Tao

Editor and Design
Solala Towler

Proofreading
Jack Woltz

Contributing Editor
Kurt Levins Sr.

Copy Editor
Shanti

Technical Consultant
Darrell (Tandava) Klette

The Empty Vessel: A Journal of Contemporary Daoism is published quarterly by The Abode of the Eternal Dao, 1991 Garfield Street, Eugene, Oregon 97405. E-Mail address: solala@abodetao.com. Web site: www.abodetao.com. Subscriptions are \$24 per year (U.S. funds). Online version at www.CommunityAwake.com

©2013 by The Abode of the Eternal Dao, all rights reserved. The Empty Vessel is not responsible for opinions or statements expressed by authors or for advertisers' claims.

Advertising rates are available by writing to The Empty Vessel, 1991 Garfield Street, Eugene, Oregon 97405, calling 800-574-5118 or emailing solala@abodetao.com.

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.



The Rising Lotus Qigong

Evolution of Body, Mind & Soul

www.TheRisingLotus.com 404-721-2326



Medical Qigong Therapy Certification Courses

Atlanta, GA

Introduction to Medical Qigong

August 22-26, 2013 or

February 13-17, 2014

Qigong Instructor Certification Level 1 (100 hours)

August 31 & September 1

September 14 & 15

September 28 & 29

October 12 & 13

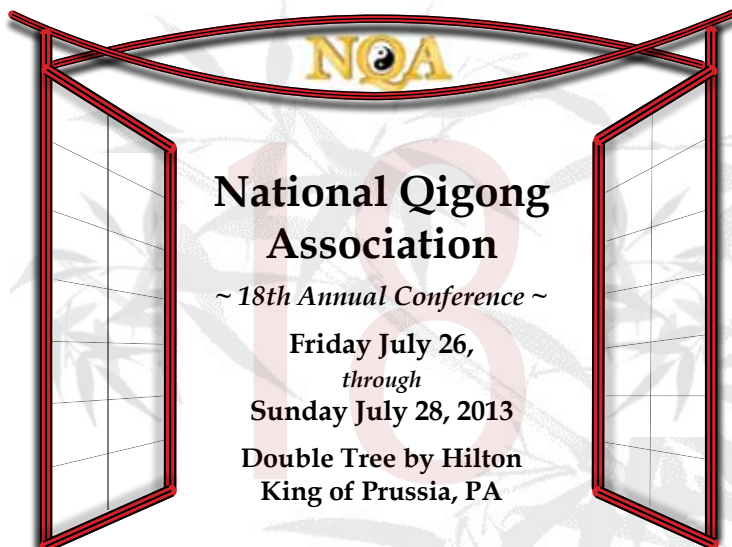
Details available on our website

The Rising Lotus Qigong offers a comprehensive system of training based on the principles of TCM for anyone interested in mind/body medicine. Our expertise lies in bridging the gap between theory, knowledge, and skill; providing our students with proven and effective treatment abilities.

We base our teaching methods on years of experience in the martial, medical and spiritual schools (jing, qi, shen) that are the **fundamental building blocks** of medical qigong therapy.

**We believe in a whole being approach to therapy,
and this is what we teach.**

Visit our website for full listing of **seminars, workshops, classes & products**



Just minutes from downtown Philadelphia!

The the NQA's 18th Annual
Conference
is the place for you!

Three days of workshops, lectures,
seminars, and demonstrations, pre-
sented by over 20 leaders in the fields of
Qigong, Taijiquan, and the
Energetic Arts
Network with friends in the Qigong
Community
~ Distinctive vendors and products ~
~ Silent Auction ~

This Year's Keynotes:

Daisy Lee



Damo Mitchell

For Conference details and to register please visit: www.nqa.org or call 1-888-815-1893

Along the Way

And so it is spring, the time of renewal, new growth and new beginnings. When I do my Wuji Qigong practice I always begin facing East, the direction of the sunrise, of springtime, of new beginnings, of the Green Dragon.

Spring is such an exciting time, when all of life in the natural world is blooming and bustling. It also awakens something in us that yearns to grow wide and high and bloom in as colorful a way as possible.

Here in Oregon, where I live, the winters, while mild in temperature, are, for the most part, grey and rainy. It's always so exciting to see the sun come out for more than three days in a row. My roses are bustling about greenly and the tulips are already dancing in the breeze. Soon it will be time to plant the garden and reap the wonderful benefits thereof.

Of course, to Daoists, there is no point in favoring one part of the year over another or one moment over another. Part of the sage's approach to life is to take each moment as it comes and accept and flow with it.

All life is change, says the *Yijing* (*The Book of Transformations*). The only constant is change. But many of us do not like change, unless it is a change for the better! Yet there is no escaping the wheel of transformation.

Laozi says,

It is natural that
sometimes it is right to move forward
and at other times to follow from behind.
Sometimes breathing is easy
and sometimes it is difficult.
Sometimes we are strong
and other times we are weak.
Sometimes we are up,
sometimes we are down.
(29)

And further,

Do not concern yourself with friends and enemies.
Maintain your own center in the midst of activity.
Not concerned with good or bad, honor or disgrace,
the sage is honored under heaven.
(56)

May we all take to heart and mind these teachings of the ancient master. May we all move/dance forward into the spring with stars in our eyes and bells on our toes.

I will be teaching at the National Qigong Association yearly conference in August (see ad page on facing page). I hope some of you will be able to attend this wonderful event and will come up and introduce yourself to me. It is always a joy to meet my readers!

Solala Towler, editor



The Empty Vessel

Subscribe to
The Empty Vessel
and receive four issues of

- Insightful and stimulating interviews with contemporary Daoist masters and teachers
- Informative and inspirational articles on Daoist philosophy and practice.
- Reviews of the latest books & DVDs.

Subscribe now for only \$24 for one year. (U.S. funds please.)
or subscribe to our full color
on-line version
for only \$20 at
www.CommunityAwake.com/
www.abodetao.com

☐ Begin my subscription
with the next issue

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

(Add \$15 for postage outside the U.S.)

Abode of the Eternal Dao
1991 Garfield Street
Eugene, Oregon 97405
541.345.8854
www.abodetao.com

Daoist Nature Meditation

Solala Towler



Photo by Sandra Osbourne

There was something formed in chaos,
coming before heaven and earth,
existing in the silent and tranquil void.
It stands alone and unchanging,
it pervades everywhere without becoming exhausted,
it is the mother of heaven and earth.
I do not know its name
and so call it Dao.
For want of a better word
I call it great.
Being great it is far reaching.
It is far reaching
yet it returns to its source.
Therefore I say that Dao is great,
heaven is great,
earth is great,
and humankind is great.
In the universe there are four greats
and humankind is one of them.
People follow the way of earth;
earth follows the way of heaven;
heaven follows the way of Dao;
Dao follows its own natural way.
Daode Jing 25

Wood (Spring)

We begin with the season of spring, the time of year when the new growth of trees, plants, flowers and people begin to reach out towards the life-giving sun. The color associated with spring is green. The totem animal is the Green Dragon. The element is wood, the wood of newly growing grasses, plants, trees and flowers. The direction is east, the direction of the sunrise, of new beginnings, new ventures and adventures. The organ associated with spring is the liver. The positive emotion is free-flowingness, our ability to flow freely through the challenges of our lives. It is also associated with flexibility, the flexibility of the young plant to bend with the wind and not be broken.

Laozi says:

When we are born we are supple and tender
like a young plant.
When we die we become rigid and unyielding.
The ten thousand beings,
including plants and grasses,
when young are soft and pliable.
At their death they are dry and brittle.
Therefore we say that the stiff and unyielding
are the companions of death.

The soft and yielding are the followers of life.

76

In the morning sit, stand or lie upon the earth in an area of trees, bushes, flowers or grass. Open your eyes wide and let the good, deep, green color fill your vision. Allow the color green to fill your being with the energy of new growth. Feel your ability to flow freely throughout the challenges of your life as well as your day-to-day life. Feel the excitement of the new sunrise, the new day, the new opportunities each day brings. Allow your inner being to soften and become as flexible as a newly sprouted blade of grass.

Fire (Summer)

Stand facing the warm light of the sun, eyes closed lightly. Feel the love and gentle warmth of the sun flower inside you, filling you up with the fire of joy and expansiveness.

The color associated with summer is red. The totem animal is the Red Phoenix. The element is fire, the fire of joy and creativity. The direction is south. The organ associated with spring is the heart.

You can also swallow the yang fire of the sun down into your dan tian, though usually not more than nine times (so that you do not overload your system with the fiery yang energy of the sun). Feel the energy of the sun, the supporter of all life on our beloved planet as it shines down upon you and within you, filling you up with light and joy.

Earth (the time between each season)

Stand, sit or better yet, lie down upon the good rich earth. Feel it holding you up, supporting you, caressing you. Move your hands along her ground, your fingers caressing the earth. Feel how, when we lie upon the earth we are connected to everyone else upon the world as they also live their lives upon it.

The color associated with this time is a rich earthy yellow. The totem animal is the Yellow Dragon. The element is earth. The direction is towards the center of the circle. The organ associated with summer is the spleen. The positive emotion is empathy, a sense of groundedness and a deep connection with all other life forms (the ten thousand beings).

Gold (Autumn)

Stand, sit or lie down, paying close attention to your breath. Breathe deeply, allowing your lungs to fill all the way up, your abdomen expanding as you inhale. Hold it for a few seconds, then breathe out again, emptying your lungs completely. Imagine your lungs as the precious substance that they are. See them as shining gold. (Usually this element is listed as metal but in the alchemical



Photo by Sandra Osbourne

tradition it is seen as gold, a much warmer and more precious element indeed).

The color associated with autumn is white. The totem animal is the White Tiger. The direction is west, the direction of gathering in for the harvest. The organ associated with autumn is the lungs. The positive emotion is courage.

Water (Winter)

Sit, stand or lie down by a body of water – a stream, a pond, a lake, a river, the sea. Listen to the sounds that the water makes. Feel it moving through you as the water of your blood moves through you. Feel yourself dissolve into the water and then be reborn again, over and over.

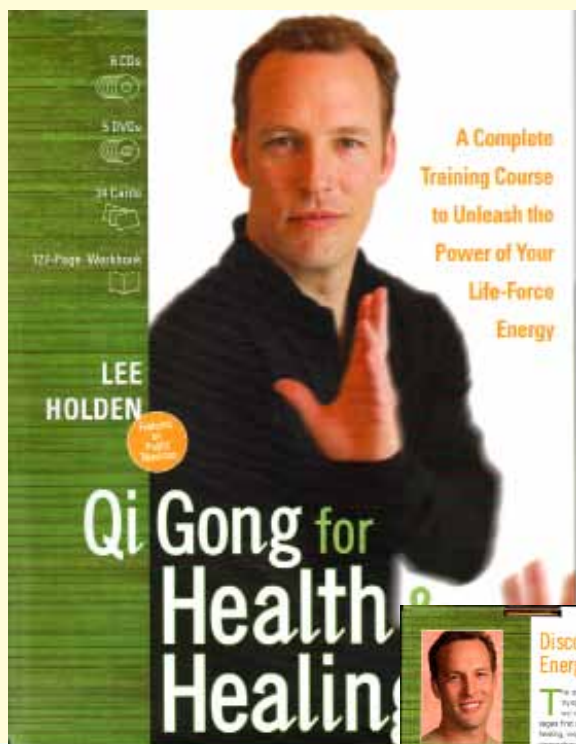
The color associated with winter is a deep blue/black. The totem animal is the Black Turtle (sometimes in combination with a serpent). The element is water, the deep mysterious water from which all life is born. The direction is north and the energy is that of Returning to the Root. The organ associated with winter is the kidney / adrenals. The positive emotion is that of will and concentration.

If you feel you are deficient in one of these elements or if you just want to strengthen any one of them you can do the meditation longer. But it is important that we have a balance of all five elements in our system to live a long and happy life!

New From Sounds True

Qi Gong for Health & Healing by Lee Holden

A Complete Training Course to Unleash the Power of Your Life-Force Energy



6 CDs

5 DVDs

34 Cards

127-Page Workbook

All the Tools for a
Personalized Qi Gong Practice

Qi Gong for Health and
Healing Highlights

- Qi Gong for self-healing—simple acupressure techniques for activating your body's healing points.
- Emotions as energy—qi gong movements and meditations to balance and heal emotions.
- The Healing Sounds Practice—detoxify your major organ systems while cultivating mental calm.
- Meridians and the microcosmic orbit—learn how to circulate energy throughout the body as you open to spiritual insights.

Lee Holden is an internationally celebrated qi gong master who has appeared regularly on PBS. He is a doctor of Chinese medicine, a licensed acupuncturist, and an international instructor in qi gong, meditation, tai chi, and stress management. Currently, Lee is the co-founder of the Santa Cruz Integrative Medicine and Chi Center.



\$149 + \$15 p & h

Abode of the Eternal Tao

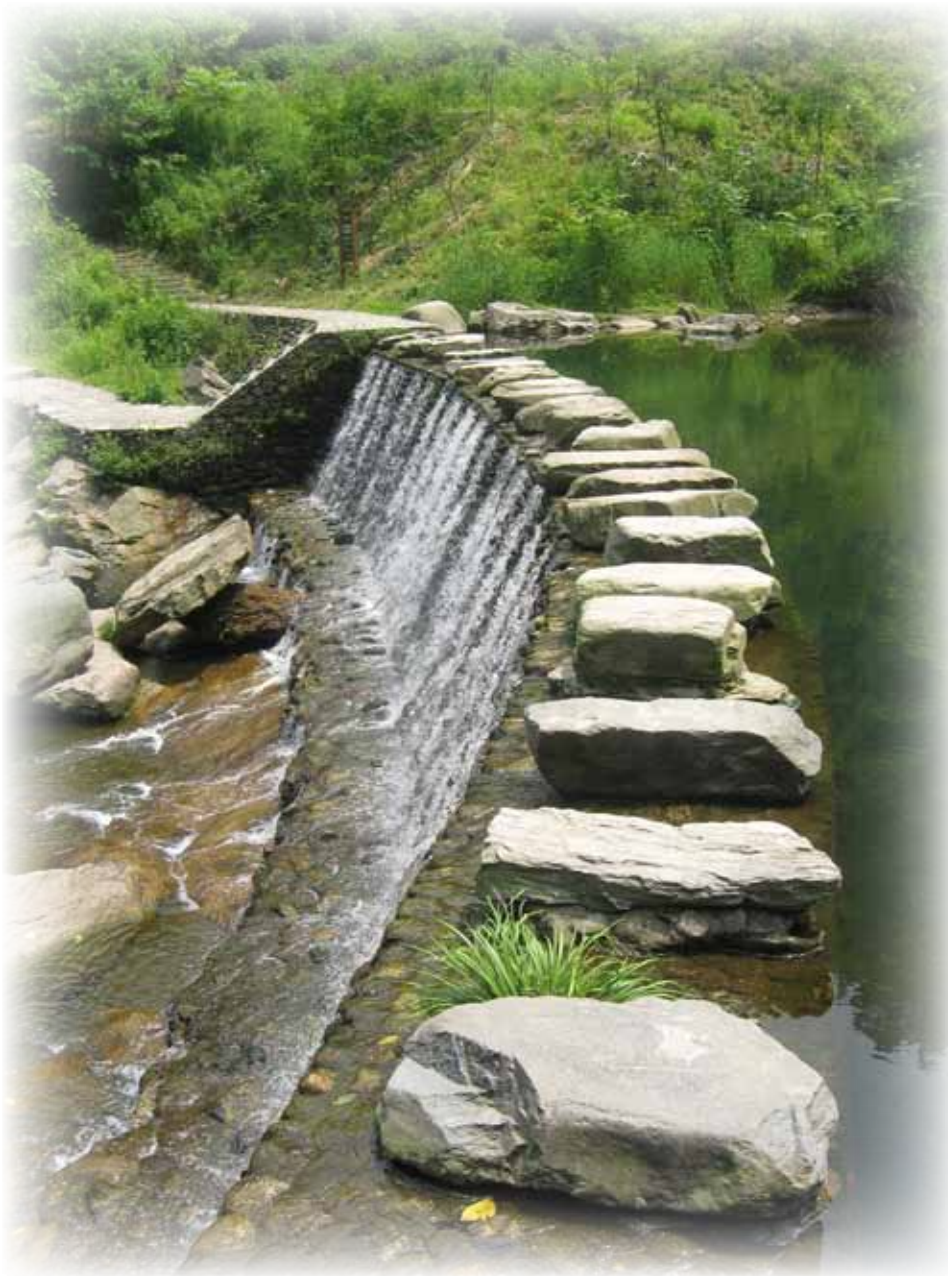
1991 Garfield St Eugene OR 97405

541.345.8854

Four Tales From the Dao

Solala Towler





The Fortunate Hunchback

There was once a hunchbacked man named Shu. He was so deformed his chin rested on his navel, his shoulders rose up over his head, his top knot pointed to the sky, his organs were all shoved together and his thigh bones were in line with his hips. But by washing clothes and sewing he was able to support himself.

He also winnowed and sifted grain and, in this way, was able to make enough to support ten people. When soldiers came to the village to press men into the Emperor's armies Shu was always passed over. When work gangs were formed to build great public projects Shu

was exempt. And lastly, when the government gave out wood and grain to the needy he always got more than anyone!

If this poor man was able to support himself so ably, how much easier it should be for those of us whose deformities are those of the mind!

True Forgetfulness

Clubfoot-Hunchback-No-Lips came to see Duke Ling. Duke Ling, After speaking with him, Duke Ling became so delighted with him that when he looked at normal people, it seemed to him that their backs looked stiff and straight, their legs looked thin and spindly and their lips looked too full.

Jug-Neck-Goiter came to see the Duke of Chi. He so impressed the Duke that when he saw normal people he thought their necks looked thin and scraggy.

When one's personal integrity shines forth one's outward appearance will be forgotten. Not forgetting

what should be forgotten and forgetting what should not be forgotten—that is called true forgetfulness!

The Natural Order of Things

When the Master died, Chin Shih came to the funeral, looked around and shouted three times.

One of the other disciples said, "I thought you were a friend of the master."



"The Master came because it was his time. When it was time for his to leave, he left. If we ourselves are also content to follow the natural flow there would be no room for grief. This is truly freedom from bondage. When the wood burns the wood itself is consumed, to where it goes we cannot say."

The Emperor and the Sage

Things had been going from bad to worse. It seemed that no matter how the Emperor ruled, things turned out badly. There had been famines and wars throughout the land. There was even conflict within the August chambers itself. His many wives quarreled amongst themselves continually and even his advisors stood in the great hall, shaking their ancient heads and pulling on their equally ancient beards. It had begun to be whispered in the marketplace and in the fields of the laborers that the Emperor had lost heaven's favor and so would soon lose his place on the Dragon Throne. For, as everyone knew, once a ruler loses Heaven's favor, it would not be long before he would be overthrown.

His advisors seemed to be of no help whatsoever. In truth, all they ever wanted was to advance themselves in his favor

and would tell him only what they thought he wanted to hear. When he was young he enjoyed this but as he became older and more interested in being a good ruler, he found himself becoming impatient with the lackeys and ass lickers that he found himself surrounded by.

He had spent many nights locked in with his astrologers, who had assured him that he had been born under a lucky star and could do no wrong. Then he had spent further nights with the experts on the *Book of Changes* only to be told that all hexagrams pointed to great success and longevity for his dynasty.

"Yes, of course I am," replied Chin Shih.

"Well, do you think it proper to behave this way?" asked the disciple.

"Yes," said Chin Shih. "When I first walked into the room I thought that the Master's spirit was still here. Now I see that it is not. I came prepared to mourn but, upon seeing everyone here wailing at the top of their lungs, I realized that this was all wrong. This is ignoring the natural course of things."



was said that the sage resided. The Emperor decided to go on alone, ordering his personal guard to stay behind, much to their dismay.

When he reached the cave he found it empty and abandoned and was bereft and sad that he had missed the one man who could assist him. On the way down from the cave he ran into an old man who was sitting by the side of the path, combing his fingers through his long beard and humming to himself.

This must be the sage, he thought to himself and, though he was the Emperor and ruler of all under Heaven, he knelt before the old man and beseeched him to give him some advice on how to best rule the country.

The old man seemed to ignore the Emperor for some time and the Emperor began to wonder if this was indeed the man he had been looking for. Looking down at his feet, with his mind in turmoil, the Emperor began to make ready to leave this addled old man and give up on his quest for the sage when he suddenly noticed that, though the old man seemed to be sitting on a stone on the side of the path he was actually floating, a few inches only, just above the ground. Then he knew that he had

indeed found the sage that he had been looking for and began to plead with him to advise him on how to better rule his vast country.

"I have knowledge only about ruling my own life," said the sage, "I don't know anything about ruling a country." He then went back to humming and combing his beard, which though thin, was extremely long.

"But I have a responsibility to manage the shrines of the Royal Ancestors," said the Emperor. "I also must conduct the ceremonies to give thanks to gods of the Earth and Sky. I have so many responsibilities. The people look to me as their Ruler and Protector. Yet I often feel so confused that I do not feel I can fulfill these obligations.

"I have made great sacrifices," he went on, "and have spoken with many men of knowledge and have studied

But he knew something was wrong and he knew that he would get no honest answers at court and so he decided to travel to the mountains to visit a certain Taoist sage he had heard lived there, high on the craggy top. It was said that the sage lived on moonlight and dew and knew the future of any man that came before him. He was sure, or course, that this was all nonsense, but he decided it would not hurt to try.

For many days he traveled, with a large escort, in case of bandits. He enjoyed sleeping under the stars at night, which he had not done since he was a boy. He also enjoyed beginning each day's journey in the brisk bright air of the morning. His usually poor appetite improved and he even put on a little weight.

Finally they reached the path that led to the cave where it

the history of my family but I cannot seem to find a way to learn how to be the ruler that I wish to be."

The old man stopped combing his beard and fixed his old yet surprisingly clear eyes on the Emperor's. "It takes someone who can manage his own life properly before he can be expecting to manage an entire country." He said at last. "I see before me a man full of doubt and worries, most put there be others in their own self interest. And so I ask you, how, if the Ruler's own life is in turmoil, can he expect to be able to rule a country properly?"

At this the Emperor felt as though a great weight had been lifted off his shoulders. He felt that the scales had dropped from his eyes. Of course, he had been so concerned with his abilities as the Ruler of the country he had given no thought to his own personal nature. Truly, if he were to be a wise and judicious Ruler he must begin to know himself.

Thus began a life-long journey into his own self nature that enabled the Emperor to not only rule his own country wise and well, but lead him, at the end of his life, to be lifted to the heavens on the back of a golden dragon to sit by the side of the Jade Emperor himself.

The Man Who Wanted to Forget

There was once a man by the name of Hua Zi who had lost his memory. It was said that if he was told a thing in the morning he would forget it by night. If you were to give him a present he would forget to take it with him. In the street he would stop suddenly, forgetting where he was going, forgetting even how to walk. When he finally arrived home he would stand in the middle of the room, forgetting where to sit. Each day he would forget what had happened the day before.

Naturally, his family was quite distraught. Admittedly, he did not seem too unhappy. As a matter of fact, he seemed quite at ease with his disease but the family was suffering, the family business was suffering, the family's name in the town was suffering and that was just too much.

So the family met and decided to call in various healers, diviners, and even sorcerers to see if they could affect a cure, but all to no avail. They called in a doctor of the medical arts, who, after feeling the old man's pulses and looking at his tongue, shook his head and said that there was nothing he could do for the patient. "There is a wind in his shen," he told them. "His spirit is wandering far from here and I do not know how to call it back. His liver is out of accord with his spleen and his lungs and his kidneys are not in communication. I recommend giving up hope for a cure." Then he charged them one gold piece

Yijing (I Ching) readings with Solala Towler



Using his 23-year training in the Daoist Arts, Solala is offering long distance (phone) *Yijing (I Ching)* readings through www.ishalerner.com. Guidance is offered on life decisions, career choices, spiritual goals, etc., using several versions of this ancient classic book of divination and self-cultivation, including Ni Hua Ching's *Book of Changes and the Unchanging Truth*.

Through the *Book of Changes* it is possible to receive guidance/information about the various forces that are influencing our situation at any point in time. It is how we work/play with these forces that creates our future. Any situation, no matter how challenging, can be used in this way to further one on the path of spiritual self-cultivation. Through the guidance of this ancient divination tool, we learn how to flow with the changes life offers us instead of fighting them. The words and teachings of the ancient masters can help us see and understand more clearly any situation and give us the tools we need to use each present moment to create the future we seek. All readings are recorded and you will receive a copy.

Tap into the wisdom of the ancient masters through the guidance of this ancient book on self-cultivation! Just go to www.ishalerner.com (under I Ching).



for his examination and left the house.

Then one day the family was told about a certain philosopher, a man of high learning and erudition, who might be able to help them with their plight. So anxious for a cure was the family that when the philosopher, who, although he appeared on the young side for so high an office, demanded half their business as his fee, they agreed.

The philosopher was led into the chambers of the old man Hua Zi who sat on the edge of his bed with a benign though vacant smile. The philosopher walked back and forth in front of Hua Zi for a time pulling on his slight whiskers. He went over and peered into Hua Zi's ears, then his eyes, and then his nose. Satisfied he turned to the family, who had all gathered there.

"This disease cannot be cured by the usual methods," he announced authoritatively. "Yes, yes," agreed the family.

"So we have been told."

"Yes," repeated the philosopher. "This is a very serious case indeed. It cannot be cured with herbs, with incantations, with divination or any of the usual methods. It can only be cured by restoring his mind."

Well, the family could not help but agree with this learned though very young philosopher. "Yes," announced the first born, "it is plain to see that it is his mind that is troubled. No wonder those other diviners, healers, and doctors were not able to cure him with all of their talk about his feng shui being out of balance, his five transformations being out of synch, his organs all being blown about by an internal wind. I could have told you as much, if you had asked me." Here he gave the rest of the family the haughty glare of the first born.

So, after drawing up the contract to be paid half of the family's vast business holdings, the young philosopher began his cure. First he stripped Hua Zi of all his clothing. After spending a pleasant morning in the sun out in the garden Hua Zi began to feel cold as the afternoon breezes began to blow. He came into the house, as naked as a baby and began to look for his clothing.

"See," said the philosopher, pointing to the naked old man wandering throughout the house searching for his clothes. "It is beginning to work already."

Next he took away all of Hua Zi's food, giving orders that on no account was Hua Zi to be given anything to eat. Well, after a couple of days of this poor Hua Zi began to feel very hungry indeed and began roaming through the house, searching for some crumb to eat.

Again the philosopher was jubilant. He called the family together and said "His disease can indeed be cured. But now I must use a very secret and powerful method that has been passed down to me by a long line of very wise teachers. I cannot allow you to be here while I practice it. Please return in seven days and the cure will be complete."

And so the family, with much muttering and shaking of

heads, were led out of the old man's chambers, not to return for seven days.

Sure enough, when they returned seven days later they found Hua Zi completely cured! To this day no one knows how this very young but very talented philosopher was able to untangle the tortured mind of Hua Zi but cure him he did.

However, as soon as Hua Zi saw his family enter his chambers he gave out a great roar and lunged at his first born and chased him out of the room and down the corridors, all the way out to the street, beating him about the head and shoulders all the way. Then he turned on his poor old wife and drove her out of the room. His other family members begged him to be calm and cease his violent activities, whereupon he began beating them, all the while shouting in a very loud voice. Finally, when he had driven all the family members out of the house he took up his old hunting spear and went after the philosopher!

The philosopher ran speedily out of the house and into the street, shouting at the top of his lungs, "Murder! Murder". A few of the local constables heard his cries and came to his aid. Imagine their surprise when they found old, harmless, forgetful Hua Zi bearing down on the prostate philosopher with a hunting spear!

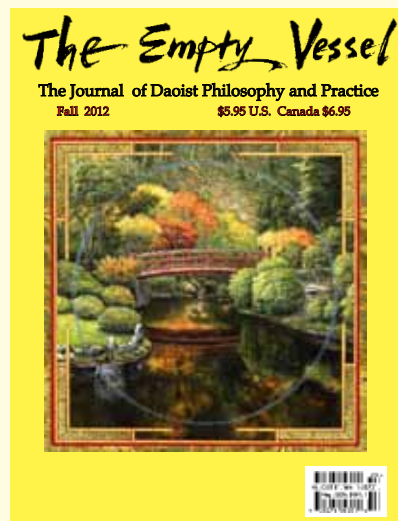
They managed to disarm and arrest Hua Zi and dragged him down to the police station and charged him with attempted murder of the philosopher.

Upon being questioned as to his actions Hua Zi replied: "When I lost my mind I was happy, carefree, and felt myself as boundless as the sky. When I slept I had no dreams, at least that I can remember, and I woke up each day into a new world. I had nothing on my mind and I felt like a free man. Now that I have my memory back all my old problems and fears have come back to haunt me! I can now remember all the joy and sorrows, triumphs and troubles, and fortune and misfortune of my long life. There is no end to it.

"When I forgot myself I was happy, I was safe, I was serene. Now that I have my memory back I am miserable. I have woken up from my happy dream into a nightmare! Shall I never return to those happy days when my memory was lost?"



Reprinted from *Tales From the Tao* by Solala Towler, published by Watkins © 2005.



CommunityAwake.com
(under Abode of the Eternal Dao)

Full-color issues of
The Empty Vessel magazine
(extra pages than the print version)

Downloadable articles from past issues

Music

Video from China

Schedule of qigong classes

Guided Meditations

Chapters from Solala's books

Info on China Tours

On-line qigong courses and lessons

Readers blog/forum

Many free features!

CommunityAwake.com
(under Abode of the Eternal Dao)

Food Cures and Diets

Livia Kohn

The *qi* of the outside world also enters the body and interacts with our inborn primordial *qi*. It does so first of all through food, giving value to the old adage that “you are what you eat.” Thus, eating the right kind of food can cure the body while wrong or damaging food can make it ail. In East Asia, there are several ways in which food is used medically:

1. Food cures, also known as Chinese medicated diet or nutritional therapy, consist of ordinary food classified according to its healing properties and used for prevention and healing;
2. Macrobiotics, a Japanese adaptation of the Chinese food system, emphasizes whole foods, locally grown, and chewed thoroughly;
3. Daoist diet, for religious goals, involves the abstention from grain, increased herbal supplements, and periods of fasting.

Food cures use ordinary food stuffs and drinks for the prevention and cure of diseases. They employ everything people normally eat, but emphasize the food’s medical and energetic qualities.

Documented since the third century B.C.E. and linked with the legendary founder of agriculture, the Divine Farmer (Shennong), they focus on prevention and cure, taking only a marginal interest in the alleviation of symptoms. This means that in some cases working on a problem with a change in diet may at first make symptoms more intense until a deeper, more permanent cure is effected. Still, Chinese nutritional therapy does not subscribe to the dictum “good medicine tastes bitter” but tries to create tasty alternatives to habitual eating patterns.

The basic teaching of Chinese eating is to use clean and fresh foods, pure in color and clear in texture. Avoid anything old, moth-eaten, rotten, poor in quality, as well as anything processed, canned, or preserved. The more natural the food, the better. In this point, Chinese food cures are in perfect agreement with Western health food supporters. Then, however, the differences begin. Food in China is not classified on the basis of the food pyramid and its chemical constituents, such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, nor do they use calories or free radicals or other modern evaluation methods. Rather, the Chinese system arranges foods according to properties, flavors, and energetic movements. The most basic division is into yin and yang. Yin foods tend to grow in the earth and in dark, shady locations; they are sweet in flavor, fatty in consistence, and rich in potassium. Yang foods grow in air and sunshine; they are salty in flavor, lean in consistence, and rich in sodium. Yin foods include raw food,



Shennong, the Divine Farmer.

leafy vegetables, fish, and mellow tasting substances; they have a cooling, moisturizing, and decongesting effect, and promote fluid production while mitigating heat accumulation. Yang foods include anything fried, boiled, fatty, or spicy, as well as meats; they are warming, drying, and stimulating in nature, and as they absorb the cooking heat, they generate heat in the body and stimulate circulation.

Within this general system, food has three major properties:

1. stimulating (yang/heating/*qi*-enhancing)—apricots, barley, cherries, pineapple, plums, celery, coconut;
2. calming (yin/cooling/*qi*-reducing)—bananas, bean curd, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, mushrooms, pumpkins, tomatoes, watermelon;
3. neutral (neither yin nor yang/*qi*-maintaining)—apples, cabbage, carrots, papaya, grain, beans, eggs.

These properties are associated with the four seasons, with people’s ages, and with particular mental states. Thus, foods eaten in spring should be stimulating and neutral; in summer, they should have a calming and cooling effect; in the fall, they should serve to retain fluid



Photo by Sandra Osbourne

(more meats); and in winter they should stimulate and warm the body. In other words, food is used to balance the energetic pattern of the seasons, and people should eat yin foods in yang times and yang foods in yin times. However, at all times one should avoid raw and ice-cold substances, since their yin properties deplete the system, weaken the spleen, and harm the small intestine.

Another modification of the food intake is according to age. Young people tend to be warmer, more energetic, and more yang in quality, while older folks have increased yin. Small children, being the most yang, often crave sweets to mellow their yang-*qi*. Older people, on the contrary, tend to like meats, stews, and warming foods to counteract their yin-nature. Beyond this, food also has an effect on the mental attitude. If we lack in confidence and depend much on others, more yang food may be indicated; if we tend to be aggressive, assertive, and stubborn, a mellowing yin-rich diet would be beneficial. Overall, yang foods increase valor and energy, while yin foods will have a calming and slowing effect (see Craze and Jay, *Cooking for Long Life*, 19, 23).

A more subtle Chinese classification of food, which follows upon the yin-yang division, is according to the five flavors:

1. spicy or pungent (metal)—linked with lungs and large intestine; induces perspiration and promotes *qi* and blood circulation: green onions, chives, cloves, parsley, peppermint, cinnamon, chili, curry;

2. sweet (earth)—associated with spleen and stomach; slows down acute symptoms and neutralizes toxicity: string beans, cherries, chestnuts, bananas, honey, watermelon;

3. sour (wood)—linked with liver and gall bladder prob-

lems; obstructs movement; useful in controlling diarrhea and excessive fluids, such as perspiration: apples, grapefruit, lemons, pears, plums, mangoes, vinegar;

4. bitter (fire)—related to the heart and small intestine; reduces body heat, dries body fluids, and expels excess liquids, may induce diarrhea: hops, lettuce, radish leaves;

5. salty (water)—associated with kidney and bladder issues; warms the body, softens hardness; treats tuberculosis of lymph nodes and other symptoms involving hardening of muscles or glands: pickled vegetables. (See www.foodsnherbs.com)

The five tastes should be evenly balanced in every meal to stimulate the organs properly and eliminate wayward *qi*. The *qi*-flow in the meridians can be regulated by using food much like acupuncture points, examining a given imbalance in terms of excess and deficiency, analyzing it in relation to the cycles of the five phases, then tonifying the son or draining the mother, depending on the situation.

Next, all foods also have specific energetic effects, described in terms of temperature:

cold	cool	neutral	warm	hot
effects on	effects on	effects on		
stomach yin center	spleen yang			kidney yang
lung yin	triple heater			heart yang
liver yin				liver yang
kidney yin				

While most foods naturally have a temperature quality, some also change depending on their state. Thus, for example, raw wheat has a tendency to be cool and neutral, supporting the center of the body; when sprouted it becomes cold and acquires a slightly pungent taste, serving to alleviate heated conditions; as cooked porridge, wheat is mainly neutral and sweet, enhancing *qi*; and when baked as wheat flour, it obtains a warm temperature and aids in treating cool or cold body conditions (Engelhardt and Hempen, *Chinesische Diätetik*, 411).

The different temperature qualities of food are intrinsically related to the five phases and their corresponding organs and meridians. For example, a liver weakened by too much yin food can develop an imbalance with the spleen and may cause it to overwork. This in turn may lead to an overflow of acidic secretions in the stomach, felt as heartburn and acid reflux. On the other hand, the warming and cooling qualities of food can be used to modify already existing imbalances, increasing the *qi* through warm or hot food in a weakened meridian or depleting it through cool or cold things in one that shows signs of excess or inflammation.

Another way to examine the quality of food in the Chinese system is by looking at its dominant movement:

1. outwards: induces perspiration and reduces fever; use in summer; spicy or sweet (pepper, ginger);
2. inwards: eases bowel movements and abdominal swelling; use in winter; bitter or salty (lettuce, clams, crabs, seaweed);
3. upwards: relieves diarrhea, prolapsed anus or uterus, falling stomach; use in spring; spicy, sweet, or bitter (apricots, celery, cherries, grapes, olives, potatoes, peanuts, rice);
4. downwards: relieves vomiting, hiccupping, and asthma; use in fall; sweet or sour (apples, bananas, cucumbers, grapefruit, lettuce, peaches, strawberries).

Beyond these, there are also glossy foods that facilitate digestion (honey, spinach) and obstructive foods which slow it down (guava, olives). For example: to disperse cold, use ginger or wine; to improve the appetite, eat green or red pepper or ham; to induce a bowel movement, take castor beans or sesame oil; to reduce fever, eat star fruit or water chestnuts; and to relieve pain, take honey or squash. Also for a headache due to increased heat, use cooling and downward moving foods, such as wheat, beans, bamboo sprouts, radish, spinach, and tomatoes. To help in cases of blood and *qi* stagnation (angina pectoris), use foods that stimulate and move blood and *qi*, including leeks, onions, vinegar, crabs, and small quantities of wine. For erectile dysfunction, often caused by a depletion of kidney-*qi*, take walnuts, cinnamon, anchovies, mussels, mutton, and game (Engelhardt and Hempen, *Chinesische Diätetik*, 576-85). In all cases, the ideal is to create a diet that balances the body's tendencies and symptoms in movement as well as flavors and energetic tendencies.

Exercise: Create a sample menu for someone with a cold-induced fever that affects the lung meridian. Then

try one for someone who suffers from insomnia and nervousness due to liver heat rising.

Because of its strong emphasis on balance which includes also the need for hot, energy-giving yang foods, Chinese medicine does not support a vegetarian diet. Vegetarians eat too many cooling, yin foods, thus depleting their *qi* to levels suitable only for recluses who are not physically active. By the same token, the addition of fish to a vegetarian diet, although it provides protein according to the Western system, will not increase yang, since fish is a cool food that relates to water and therefore yin. On the other hand, a diet overly heavy in proteins and meat is not beneficial either, since highly caloric, strong yang foods, may deplete the body's *qi* by causing certain organs to overwork and creating deficiencies in others. It is best, therefore, to eat some meat, but not too much and if possible organic, healthy specimens free of hormones and stimulants.

Not only the choice of food is important, however, but also how it is prepared and eaten. Food should be viewed as a precious gift from nature, a treasure trove of health and vitality, and accordingly treated with gratitude and respect. Cooking should be done in a quiet and peaceful atmosphere, with plenty of time and enjoyment. The cook's mind should be relaxed and full of giving, loving vibrations, since his or her attitude will influence how the food works and tastes. As Craze and Jay say, "As you cook, breathe deeply and slowly. Work gently as if holding a newborn baby. Keep harsh noises to a minimum" (*Cooking for Long Life*, 36). Similarly, food should not be eaten on the run or while engaged in other activities. Sit down calmly; take time to enjoy the looks, smells, and tastes of the food; eat slowly and develop a sense of peace and wholeness through the act of eating. All this contributes to a greater sense of harmony and will aid the digestion and *qi*-flow of the body.

Beyond cooking and eating consciously, Chinese food cures also recommend the frequent consumption of tea, especially green tea. Mentioned already in texts that go back to around 800 B.C.E., tea has always been a mainstay of Chinese culture. Botanically a member of the *Camellia* family, tea grows as various shrubs that can reach fifty feet in height and commonly bear shiny leaves whose ends form pointed, spear-like tips. Picked and dried or roasted, and occasionally mixed with blossoms or flowers, the leaves are prepared to make different teas. The white or pale green variety uses them almost raw, while black or red tea applies them more roasted or fermented. Tea can contain large amounts of caffeine in all forms, and commonly has been used in religious institutions to keep monks and nuns from falling asleep during meditation periods.

In classical Chinese literature, tea is almost exclusively described as bitter, but it has also been linked with the sweet flavor. Its medical benefits include the ability to increase blood flow, heighten awareness, speed elimination, prevent tooth decay, aid digestion, cleanse the skin, alleviate joint pain, and generally prolong life (Blofeld,



Photo by Sandra Osbourne

Chinese Art of Tea, 144). It is also a way to ingest all five phases in one fell swoop: earth through the bowl's ceramics, metal in the kettle, water as its base, wood in the plant from which it grew, and fire in the heating. Western studies, too, have shown that especially green tea with low caffeine contains antioxidants which bind harmful free radicals. Drinking it regularly can prevent cell mutation in tumors, promote healthy arteries, reduce cholesterol, release toxins, aid digestion, increase metabolism, and control bacteria.

Both food and tea are accorded great importance in Chinese society. Wherever one goes, tea is served, and people carry portable mugs; whenever people come together, there is food. The Chinese tend to spend much money on high-quality food and take hours to prepare dishes and enjoy their meals. Often factories and schools close for three hours over lunch, so that everybody can go home to prepare and eat a proper meal. Food is not bought in advance, but people go to their local market to purchase the freshest local foods, best adapted to the local weather and meant to help their consumer to thrive locally as well. As Kate Townsend reports:

During our last trip to China, we were fed wonderful meals three times a day. Typical meals included twelve or sixteen different dishes at lunch and dinner. The manner in which we ate—as a group, taking moderate amounts of a variety of food over the course of an hour—satisfied not only the five phases of taste, but also the spiritual nourishment of sharing meals with

good company and good conversation.

Despite eating way more frequently than I do at home, in two weeks I probably lost twelve pounds. It was a great opportunity to recognize what food and nourishment really mean. Our food was prepared with the freshest ingredients and had minimal (if any) amounts of sugar, wheat, and dairy. (personal communication)

With their more balanced approach to food the Chinese eat a much healthier diet than modern Americans. As Linda Prout emphasizes, statistics have shown that the Chinese “eat about 30 percent more calories than we do and skip the gym workout, yet they are 25 percent thinner than we are. On top of that, the Chinese have 17 times fewer cases of heart disease, one-fifth the rate of breast cancer, and less than half the instances of colon cancer we do. Their cholesterol levels are about half ours” (*Live in the Balance*, 9).

Exercise: Describe the typical diet and eating habits in your life and society. How does it account for your and your family's health or disease? How could and should it be altered to create more harmony?

Given this situation, it is not surprising that Chinese food cures in various forms have been introduced not only as slimming diets but also as a form of healing in the West. Most popular among them is a method developed in Japan and known as macrobiotics, which literally means “big life,” referring to its broad perspective. Its founder, George Ohsawa (1893-1966), in 1909 contracted tuberculosis and was told that he would die

soon. Trying to avoid this, he studied a book by Sagen Ishizuka called *The Curative Method of Diet* and began to eat accordingly. He consumed only natural foods and beverages and made whole grains the backbone of his diet. After he cured himself, he taught the method to others. His main disciples were Herman Aikawa and Michio Kushi. In 1949, the latter brought the practice to the U.S. where he gave lectures, conducted workshops, wrote books, and founded centers in Boston and San Francisco. He educated wide segments of the population on the relationship between diet, lifestyle, and disease, and with his whole-food nutrition method was successful in curing numerous degenerative diseases, including terminal cases (see www.macrobiotics.org).

Macrobiotics is based on the cosmology of yin and yang in relationship to the Dao, which here is described as Infinity. Infinity manifests itself in the complementary forces yin and yang, which are endless in change and transformation. Yin represents centrifugality; yang represents centripetality. Together they produce energy and all phenomena. They both attract and repel each other and constantly change into one another. Nothing ever is solely yin or solely yang, and one has to maintain the proper balance between them for continued health and prosperity.

To find this balance, one should eat organically grown, whole, and local foods that are in season. One should listen to the body, undertake regular exercise, and keep stress levels low. To eat specifically in the macrobiotic way, one should create meals that contain one part yang to five parts yin. This ratio is found naturally in whole grains, especially in brown rice, which should make up half of one's diet. The next quarter should be vegetables, chosen according to the one-to-five ratio of yin and yang. Vegetables should not be boiled but steamed or lightly sautéed and eaten cooked for the most part (20%); only a small portion should be consumed raw or as pickles (5%). The remaining quarter of the daily food is divided equally among beans, seaweed, condiments/pickles, soups, and beverages (Kushi and Esko, *Holistic Health*).

Macrobiotic practitioners avoid caffeine, alcohol, chocolate, sugar, meat, dairy, mints, and sodas; anything canned, frozen, or irradiated; as well as all artificially colored, preserved, sprayed, or chemically treated foods. They drink comparatively little water on the assumption that a vegetable-based, low-sodium diet allows the body to absorb sufficient liquid from food, whereas too much water will create an excess of yin and lead to unhealthy conditions. Also, once healthy foods are chosen, the preparation should not destroy them. For this reason, macrobiotic cooks prefer natural oils, rice paste, or beans as oils and use only natural utensils such as unglazed pottery or earthenware, wooden spatulas and strainers. Meals are an important time, during which the focus

is entirely on the food. Chewing should be patient and conscious, and a portion of the stomach should always remain empty.

If undertaken as healing therapy, macrobiotics detoxifies the body, supports its self-healing ability, and enhances the immune system. It increases the functioning of the organs and creates natural stabilization. It has been shown to improve or cure arthritis, heart disease, hypertension, hepatitis, migraines, diabetes, digestive problems, autoimmune disorders, allergies, obesity, and even cancer. It is not merely a diet, however, but involves a complete change in lifestyle, spending more time preparing and eating food and becoming more conscious of one's relationship to nature and Infinity. It may sound expensive but is in fact quite affordable, since the amount of food one consumes is considerably less than in a diet that relies on processed foods. The body, after all, eats *until* it gets the nourishment it needs: the more one consumes calories without nutrients, the longer and the more one has to eat.

The third form of Chinese diet is the Daoist way of eating. Traditionally Daoists have divided diet into three levels: eating food, herbs, and *qi*. That is to say, while still in ordinary society, Daoist laymen and priests follow the rules of Chinese food cures and eat everything while paying close attention to energetic potencies and seasonal influences (Saso, *Taoist Cookbook*). Then, as they

develop in spiritual potency or join a monastic community, they gradually move beyond ordinary food, eat a vegetarian diet, and take more herbs and plant substances. Eventually, as immortality practices set in, even the herbs are no longer needed and the body is maintained through the intake

of *qi* alone—through breathing exercises, swallowing the saliva, and meditations.

While most Daoists today are still eating, the goal for ancient practitioners was to move away from food toward *qi*. To do so, they undertook a practice known as *bigu* or “abstention from grain.” *Bigu* begins with an avoidance of meat and alcohol, matching similar Buddhist rules but with a different motivation. Buddhists avoid meat because killing a living being, even if done by someone else, creates bad karma; similarly drinking alcohol leads to intoxication and may cause behavior that is harmful to others and brings about karmic burdens. Ancient Daoists avoided meat and alcohol not because of karma but because of their high yang-quality which would create obstructions to spiritual transformation.

In addition, Daoists in ancient China also avoided the five grains—rice, millet, barley, wheat, and beans—the staple of ordinary people. There are several reasons for this. On a physiological level, Daoists believed that cooking things is a form of processing and thus decay. The word *lan* in Chinese means both “cooked” and “putrefied,” “rotten.” According to Daoist understanding, meat decomposes in the intestines, grain rots in the stomach,

Traditionally Daoists have divided diet into three levels: eating food, herbs, and qi.

and digestion is nothing but a form of decay that causes death. Rather than live on food that decays, they preferred to use herbs and plants that stayed whole and eventually did away with eating altogether and depended on the intake of pure, cosmic *qi*. A more mythological expression of the same idea was that grains in the body supported the continued presence of the Three Deathbringers, the demonic parasites who feed on decay and are eager for the body to die so they can devour it. To attain long life, Daoists contended, the Deathbringers had to be starved, and a good way to do so was to avoid grain.

Ancient Daoists accordingly ate fruits, nuts, mushrooms, and vegetables, then replaced these with elixirs of herbs, minerals, and metals, and eventually lived on pure *qi* through breathing exercises and meditations. Their basic tendency of avoiding cooked food matches the modern trend toward raw food, a movement which proposes a diet consisting of three quarters raw and one quarter cooked foods. Proponents of this argue that cooking or preserving food eliminates large amounts of vitamins and minerals and that any food heated over 116 degrees loses all enzymes and protein structure, so that the food actually takes good agents out of the body. Pasteurizing milk destroys three quarters of the milk protein; altered, partially hydrogenated fats can become lethal compounds, unlike whole fats, as found in nuts, virgin olive oil, and flaxseed oil (Kenton and Kenton, *Raw Energy*).

Exercise: Go to www.livingnutrition.com; www.sunorganic.com; www.fresh-network.com; www.TheRawWorld.com; or www.rawfamily.com and find recipes for a day of raw food. Reflect on how different this is from the macrobiotic diet. If the two were your only choices, which one would you pick and why?

The positive effects of a raw food diet are numerous. Adherents claim that it boosts lymphocyte production, empowers the immune system, and contains enzymes that aid digestion. It also delays the aging process, increases oxygen consumption, and leads to more vitality, energy, and athletic ability. Beyond that, it heightens the senses, increases sensitivity to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and improves sexuality and aesthetic sensibility. It aids weight loss, eases allergies (often caused by food toxins), helps cure addictions, can reduce tumor size, and help cancer recovery. It provides eight of the twenty-two essential amino acids that must come from outside sources (especially through green leafy vegetables, pumpkin seeds, almonds, and fruits), increases flexibility and brain function through essential vegetable fats, and prevents diseases caused by pathogenic bacteria in meats and dairy.

The different schools in the Chinese understanding of diets and health agree that diet is an essential factor in

creating and maintaining good health and that foods can be divided into yin and yang categories and classified according to their energetic properties. They all agree that it is best to use natural, whole foods and that with a healthy diet it is not necessary to drink lots of water. However, they disagree about the use of meat, alcohol, and grain as

well as about the degree of cooking. Traditional Chinese food cures make use of everything and insist on cooking things. Macrobiotics avoid meat and alcohol but insist on lots of grain and extensive cooking. Raw food and *bigu* followers avoid all grain, meat, and alcohol and prefer foods uncooked. The variety of methods allows followers of the dietary path to tailor a specific mixture of foods and cooking techniques suitable to their personal tastes and health situation.

Further Readings

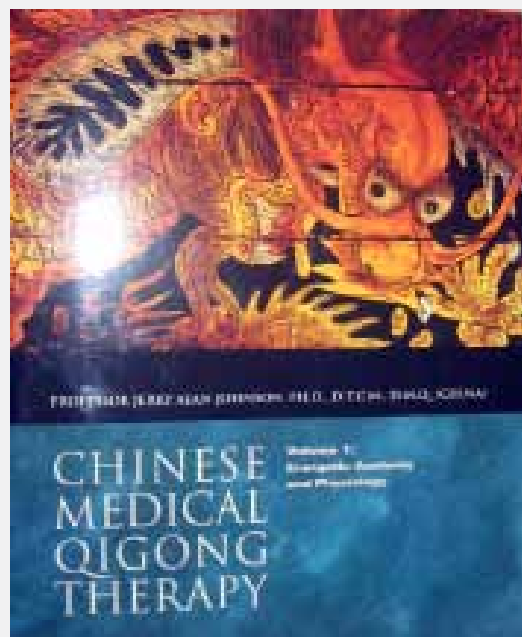
- Arthur, Shawn. 2006. "Life Without Grains: *Bigu* and the Daoist Body." In *Daoist Body Cultivation*, edited by Livia Kohn, 91-122. Magdalena, NM: Three Pines Press.
- Arthur, Shawn. 2009. "Eating Your Way to Immortality: Early Daoist Self-Cultivation Diets." *Journal of Daoist Studies* 2:32-63.
- Blofeld, John. 1985. *The Chinese Art of Tea*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Butt, Gary and Frena Bloomfield. 1985. *Harmony Rules: The Chinese Way of Health Through Food*. York Beach, Minn.: Samuel Weiser.
- Counihan, Carole M. 1999. *The Anthropology of Food and Body*. New York: Routledge.
- Craze, Richard, and Roni Jay. 2001. *Cooking for Long Life: The Tao of Food*. New York: Sterling Publishing.
- Engelhardt, Ute, and Carl-Hermann Hempen. 1997. *Chinesische Diätetik*. Munich: Urban & Schwarzenberg.
- Kakuzo, Okakura. 1956: *The Book of Tea*. Boston: Tuttle.
- Kenton, Leslie, and Susannah Kenton. 1984. *Raw Energy*. New York: Warner Books.
- Kohn, Livia. 2010. *Daoist Dietetics: Food for Immortality*. Dunedin, Fla.: Three Pines Press.
- Kushi, Michio, and Edward Esko. 1993. *Holistic Health through Macrobiotics*. New York: Japan Publications.
- Lu, Henry C. 1986. *Chinese System of Food Cures: Prevention and Remedies*. New York: Sterling Publishing.
- Ni, Maoshing, and Cathy McNease. 1987. *The Tao of Nutrition*. Los Angeles: Seven Star Communication Group.
- Nison, Paul. 2001. *The Raw Life: Becoming Natural in an Unnatural World*. New York: 343 Publishing.
- Pitchford, Paul. 1993. *Healing with Whole Foods: Oriental Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.
- Prout, Linda. 2000. *Live in the Balance*. New York: Marlowe.
- Romano, Rita. 1997. *Dining in the Raw*. New York: Kensington Publishers.
- Saso, Michael. 1994. *A Taoist Cookbook*. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle.



Reprinted, with permission from *Health and Long Life: The Chinese Way* by Livia Kohn, published by Three Pines Press, © 2012

Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy

by Jerry Alan Johnson



Volume 1 - Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy - Energetic Anatomy and Physiology

This first textbook (644 pages) includes a thorough understanding of the creation and development of the body's energetic fields, ancient metaphysical theories of tissue formation, and the evolution of ancient Chinese energetic medicine.

Volume 2 - Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy - Energetic Alchemy; Dao Yin Therapy and Qi Deviations

This second textbook (616 pages) includes a thorough understanding of ancient Chinese esoteric alchemy, metaphysical theories of projecting the Soul, Spirit, and Qi, Daoist Sorcery, Psychic Attacks, and Demonic or Spirit Oppression/Possession, as well as the practical Medical Qigong applications used to treat such conditions.

Volume 3 - Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy - Differential Diagnosis; Clinical Foundations; Treatment Principles and Clinical Protocols

This third textbook (580 pages) includes a thorough understanding of the ancient metaphysical theories of Chinese energetic medicine, including

Qi diagnosis, Materializing and Dematerializing Energy, Discovering and Removing Energetic Cords, Long Distance Scanning (Moving Clairvoyance), Breath Incantations (Mantras) and Medical Talismans, Hand Seals (Mudras), the ancient Daoist use of the Magic Mirror, Advanced Energy Cultivation and Qi Emission Techniques, Vibrating Palm Cultivation Techniques, and other practical clinical applications of energetic medicine.

Volume 4 - Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy - Prescription Exercises and Meditations; Treatment of Internal Diseases; Pediatrics; Geriatrics; Gynecology; Neurology and Energetic Psychology

This fourth textbook (592 pages) includes a thorough understanding of ancient Daoist and Buddhist energetic exercises, secret meditations, advanced energetic theories, the treatment of Stroke, Paralysis, M.S., Parkinson's Disease, as well as other related medical fields of study practical applications of Chinese energetic medicine.

Volume 5 - Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy - An Energetic Approach to Oncology

This fifth textbook (570 pages) includes a thorough understanding of the Medical Qigong treatment protocols and prescription homework used successfully in both China and the U.S. for the treatment of various types of cancer. Written by an internationally recognized Grandmaster and Professor of Medical Qigong training who specializes in cancer treatment.

Price \$65.00 per volume plus \$10 shipping and handling (overseas double postage)

Volumes 1-5 - The Entire Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy Book Series Price \$325.00 plus \$40 shipping and handling. (overseas double postage)

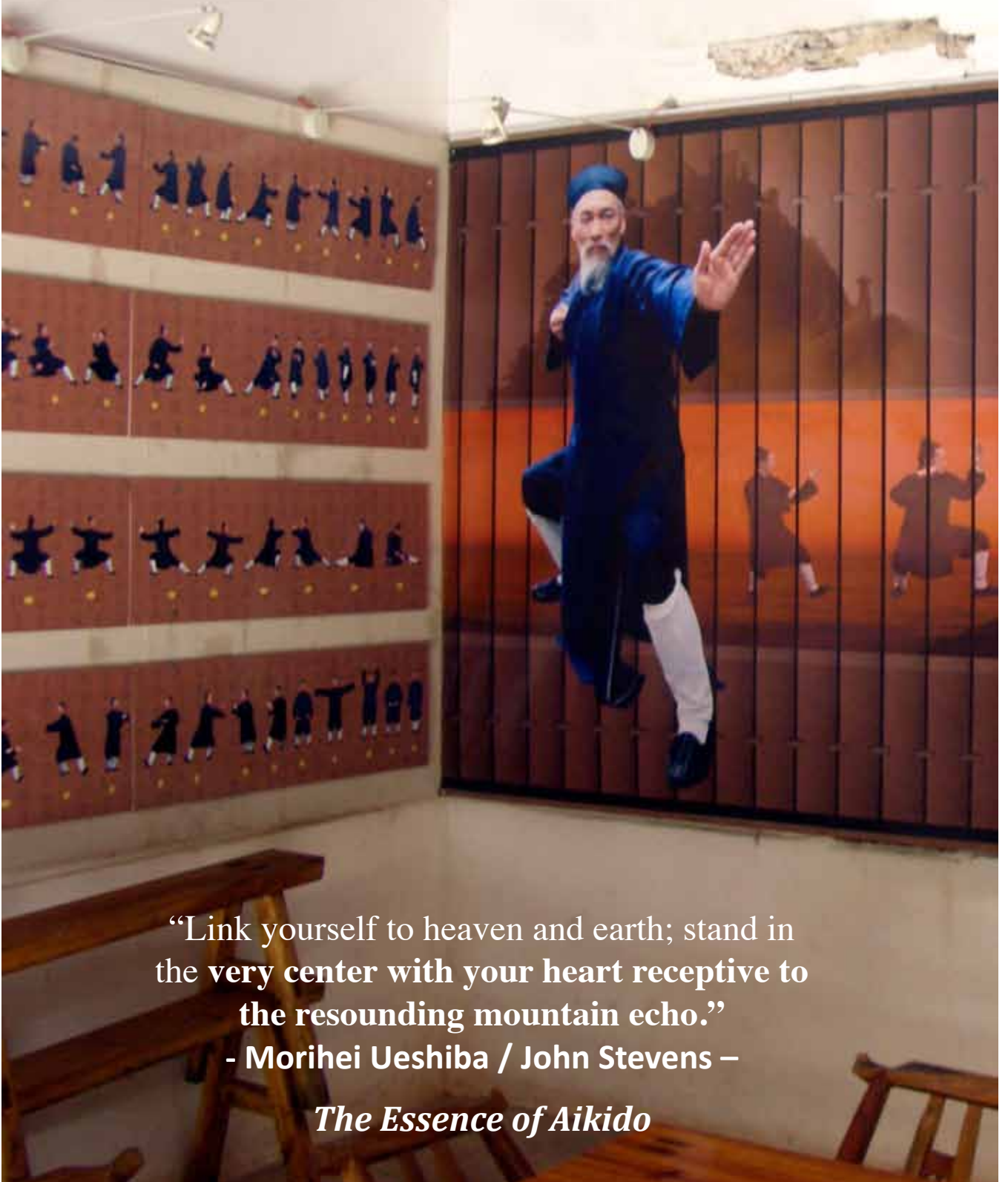
Send check or money order to: Abode of the Eternal Dao

1991 Garfield St Eugene, OR 97405

or call: 800-574-5118/541-345-8854.

The Spiritual Warrior

Robert D. Bessler



“Link yourself to heaven and earth; stand in the very center with your heart receptive to the resounding mountain echo.”

- Morihei Ueshiba / John Stevens –

The Essence of Aikido

A Spiritual Warrior is someone who moves forward in their spiritual evolution and Expansion, even in the face of very difficult choices. They do what they must to follow the path of spiritual advancement, no matter how hard it may be. The Spiritual Warrior lives from a place of non-attachment and will change everything in their life if need be in the pursuit of spiritual Expansion. I have found that once you seriously begin seeking the spiritual path, you will eventually be faced with the decision of graduating from a Spiritual Seeker to that of a Spiritual Warrior. It is only by passing through these stages that you can become a Spiritual Master. The Spiritual Seeker is one who is just starting or dabbling in spiritual or religious teachings. They read and attend seminars and workshops, practice many different systems and techniques and begin to make some real progress. Sooner or later though they will be faced with the decision to remain a Seeker without making any further discernible advancement, or to become a Spiritual Warrior, understanding what it is to rely on their own Divine nature for what they need. The professional Spiritual Seeker continues through life experimenting in this and that, going from one New Age fad to the next, lost in the fog in fear of truly discovering their Divine nature and personal power. They continue to rely on others to make their decisions for them and are easily thrown at the first hint of distress or improvement.

The Spiritual Warrior, on the other hand, forges ahead into the great mist of the unknown, doing what must be done in order to keep making progress. For the Spiritual Warrior, there is no stopping or stalling out, because they know that to stop or stall means to go backwards in their evolution. This is seen as simply unacceptable. They begin to gather all the techniques of value, the ones that really serve them, learning to rely on a base system that serves their greater progress. More than likely they are open to drawing from numerous systems of spirituality and religion as they grow enough to realize for themselves what is true and honestly helping them. Great respect for the truth of all systems is recognized and reflected in their personal practice. These are the people that shine brightly and gravitate toward tranquility and serenity instead of drama and egotism. The Spiritual Warrior develops the personal strength to take full responsibility for all their choices and actions, and applies their skills in ways that allow others around them to feel safe. The Spiritual Warrior diligently practices for their own advancement, as well as to protect others and offer help and healing to those who really need it.

While it is not necessary to be a martial artist or to even care about swords, the lessons from these practices can be applied by and be of great assistance to everyone. One translation of the Japanese term known as *Bujin* is "Divine Warrior." This is seen in the martial arts organization of the Bujinkan, headed by Grandmaster Masaaki Hatsumi. This type of warrior never tires in their pursuit to create a clear connection to their Divine nature, their Higher Self, and their sense of oneness with the Universal

Source. The symbol often used by these warriors and the ninja shadow warriors of Japan is the kanji or ideogram for *Nin*, which is loosely translated to mean patience, perseverance, or to endure. This Japanese character consists of two individual characters placed one on top of the other. The upper character is the kanji for blade, or more specifically, the sharp edge of the sword. The lower kanji means heart. Jointly, this refers to a sword being held over your heart.

One way to look at this is that together it refers to remaining strong and true to your heart when someone attempts to keep you from your path, even with a sword. To remain true to your heart is to remain true to your spirit. While there are a great number of interpretations of this, I have come to know it as the ability to keep a pure, sincere heart, even in the face of adversity; to remain true to what you hold in your heart, the seat of the original spirit, even under the threat of death. Here lies the paradox of needing the heart to be both immovable and free at the same time. Furthermore, I feel this speaks of the resolute strength that is required of the heart in the journey to spiritual growth and Expansion. Through my own training in martial arts and various spiritual systems, I personally hold the meaning to be found in the methods of *muto dori* (no-sword capture— to evade, counter and capture the sword of an attacker when you are unarmed). When practicing the methods of being unarmed while another person attacks you with the sword, the challenge is to be able to evade the sword cut, neutralize the threat, and maintain a constantly open heart center filled with joy and love while you do so.

As you may well imagine, this is a monumental task, as the heart center typically closes upon threat of danger. In many esoteric systems the heart is referred to as a flower. Just as there are flowers which close in the darkness of the night, only to reopen again in the morning light, so too does the heart center react. Through spiritual training and growth it becomes possible for the heart to stay open even in the darkness, shining its light upon the world. To have the heart center remain open under potentially dangerous circumstances necessitates a supremely pure and unshakable heart. This is teaching the warrior to have the ability to move freely without tension, to receive without resistance, to evade without anger or the need for revenge. It is keeping the Divine connection at all times, no matter the circumstance, and living from your heart center without allowing it to be affected by negativity. Would you be able to remain light-hearted as you stared death in the eye? Could you smile a sincere smile even as someone was attempting to harm you? Would you be able to remain compassionate even though someone else meant to do you harm? I have come to know that the heart must come first. Even for the warrior, the heart is the most precious of gifts and developing the heart center is more important than developing the weapons skills. The warrior must establish inner balance by having solid spiritual practices in place alongside their fighting skills.

The methods of *muto dori* (no-sword capture) are

said to be extremely high-level techniques. It doesn't take much to comprehend this, as truly having the skill to live through a real sword attack by a highly trained sword master seems to be the stuff of fantasy. It was, however, a real skill that was utilized by ancient warriors. I experienced the essence of having the blade over my heart both literally and figuratively by needing to go under the blade for emergency open heart surgery. A bit ironic isn't it? During my period of recovery, after my brain began to reconnect to my body and my nervous system adjusted, I drafted a letter to Grandmaster Hatsumi. I shared a couple of things with him from that experience that I have never shared with another living soul. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart for giving me the skills I needed to survive that experience. He responded by sending me a hand drawn picture of Kurikara, the sword of the esoteric Buddhist deity *Fudo Myo-O* (the Immovable Light King) along with a blessing of good health. It is now one of the great treasures in my collection of Divine artwork. This is the meaning of a spiritual or Divine Warrior. This is how I have come to know it through my own life experiences.

I didn't realize it at the time, but that experience was just preparing me for what I had to do next as a Spiritual Warrior. During my recovery, my perspective on life began to go through a major shift. It was here that I heard the voice of my Higher Self and the need to evolve spiritually to all new levels. It was clear to me that this calling was to take place now or never. Such a thing would require a complete alteration of my life; everything would have to change in order for me to experience the spiritual transformation that I needed. I recognized that this calling, this need to become the person I might be, was a direct result of the planetary evolutionary shift that is happening. After a few years of inner and outer turmoil I made the conscious decision to move forward, to answer the call of my Higher Self and to expand into who I might become. I know better than most that change is difficult, but I also know that it is the path for growth and the rewards are well worth the effort. Making serious changes in your life also requires the strength and resolve of a warrior.

Another aspect of the Spiritual Warrior is reflected in the twenty-second chapter of the *Tao Te Ching* written by Lao Tzu and is also reflected in the King James Version of the Bible. This idea is phrased well in the Bible (Matthew

5:5) and contains the most widely known expression, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." While there are many ways to interpret this statement, I would like to share my understanding of it. The "meek" are those on the spiritual path who have overcome their ego. Meek does not mean to be "weak" as many interpret it, but instead it actually refers to having spiritual strength, with the ability to live one's life in authenticity from the heart center.

As the Spiritual Warrior rises ever higher in energetic

vibration, reaching upward toward that of the Divine, those around him with low vibration will be threatened by his very presence. Feelings of insecurity from their false beliefs and anger from being shown their shortcomings will consume their hearts, closing the hidden door even further. They are trapped in a vicious cycle where their lower vibrations cause negative emotions, and those negative emotions perpetuate the lowering of vibrations even further. In the mirror of the Spiritual Warrior's heart, her bliss reflects their unhappiness, her love reflects their fears, her gratitude reflects their intolerance, and her divine truths reflect their ignorance. It is through the distaste of their own reflected image that they must decide to accept change and embrace

growth, to allow their vibrations to rise and their hearts to open fully and completely, to be filled with true freedom, love, bliss and appreciation. After all, this is how the Spiritual Warrior began his quest too. This is the love and service of the Spiritual Warrior.

Develop The Strength Of The Warrior, The Compassion of a Healer and The Spiritual Wisdom of The Sage

The Warrior, the Healer and the Sage—these are the three facets of a human being who has become complete. Most people fragment themselves to focus all their intention purely on one area of life. The truth is that human beings, men and women alike, are made to be all three at the same time. The development of all three areas of Being is a sign of a complete, open and honestly shared system, whether it be martial arts, a healing system, or a religious or spiritual system. The ancient fighting systems contained healing techniques, as well as spiritual teach-



ings to help balance the warrior. Over time, these things were splintered; today people believe they are getting a complete system if they learn just one of these areas. The unfortunate truth is that they are not.

The healer learned their methods could be used to harm someone if the need was to arise; they referred to this as “reverse medicine.” Healing was directly linked to the Divine, so these ancient healers were generally spiritual in nature and had spiritual practices intertwined with their healing practices. Some spiritual practitioners, such as monks and priests, remained as purists and refused to fight as they knew it could lower their vibration to do so, but they usually had healing skills. These healing skills manifested as a by-product of many of the spiritual practices; examples of such things can be found in the monastic circle walking methods of many religions. The same circle walking methods can be found in certain schools of *Pakua Chang*, a Chinese martial art. Other monks were fierce warriors when need be, utilizing their fighting skills to protect the ancient teachings and the temples that housed them. Finding a balance in all three aspects of Healer, Warrior and Spiritual Sage allows you to live through the trinity and see the world through the three-fold lens. It also develops and gives free reign to your potential and power as a fully actualized human being.

In order to succeed on your spiritual journey, you will need the heart and spirit of a warrior. This will enable you to keep forging forward, even when life challenges your very core beliefs. As soon as you think you understand what’s going on and what to believe, you may be forced to change those beliefs once again. That’s just how it works. In order to help you I will present tactics and techniques for transforming yourself into a “Spiritual Warrior.” Not as someone who goes out and fights to prove their way is the one right way, but to transform you into someone who simply does not know how to give up or quit. You will be powerful enough to keep moving forward and overcome any walls that rise in your way. Remember you will need to hold the compassion of a healer in order to be easy on yourself, evade frustration and allow your Self to heal. You will also learn to hold compassion in your heart for others around you. Once you let go of such judgments, your vibration will rise, as compassion is a product of the emotion of love. Throughout the process, you will be gradually unfolding the spiritual wisdom of the great sages within your Self. You will begin to understand the depth of the words of the world’s great spiritual masters throughout the ages. You will come to feel the truth of their teachings and embody them within yourself.

Overcoming the Symptoms of Change

Earlier I spoke of the symptoms people are experiencing in this time of great change and transition. These symptoms are signs that things are changing. All of these symptoms are present to tell you changes are required in yourself and your life in order to effectively pass through

this shift. Physical tension and resistance, negative emotions and internal energy blockages are just some of the afflictions that will make passing through this shift a very challenging experience. After my surgery I felt depressed and unsettled; I couldn’t shake the feeling that the life I was living was not meant for me. Through the ability to hear the guidance of my inner voice or Higher Self, I came to know I needed to change. I’d developed several poor behaviors requiring reversal if I were to make this transformational shift into a spiritually-based life. It is difficult on family and friends when they cannot possibly fathom the depth of what is happening, but I summoned my Warrior Spirit and did what I had to do. I hope after all the smoke clears and the dust settles, these people will be able to let go of undeserved blame and accept the truth of what has happened. This was necessary for me to become a better person and evolve as someone walking the path of personal transformation, in order to serve as a messenger to others in the world at this time when messengers are needed.

Many people are experiencing different varieties of symptoms at this very moment. The types of stress on the physical body are similar to the stresses on the mind from the amount of common computer usage. I will share some of the “symptoms” that I have encountered over the years with myself and others. You may argue these are things people commonly experience; however, there is a noticeable increase in their occurrence and they are happening for no detectable reason. I do recommend consulting your health care professional should you experience any of these effects. Do not merely dismiss them as energy symptoms that will subside in time; some of these things do, but others may manifest into or already be something much more tangible and potentially harmful. This is not medical advice or a diagnosis of any sort, but is offered as a way to understand what could be happening if any of these things are unusual for you. I’ve often heard the phrase, “The tests came back normal, we don’t know what’s causing this,” when I’ve pursued medical care in the doctor’s office. The exercises in this system will help you to alleviate these types of symptoms, assuming they are energy related. You need energy practices to counteract the effects of energy-based symptoms.

Human Health Symptoms of Impending Change: Physical Symptoms

- Increase in headaches, migraines, brain tumors, brain cancer
- Increase in body aches, fatigue, and feelings of being drained of energy
- Fibromyalgia
- Increase in vertigo
- Increase in sinus pain and pressure in the face and head
- Seizures or seizure-like activity
- Dizziness, sudden disturbances in equilibrium, passing out

- Pressure and pain in the joints; joints crack and pop excessively
- Difficulty moving quickly; walking is slow and labored
- Restless, irritating feelings in the extremities

MENTAL SYMPTOMS:

- Difficulty with mental focus and clarity
- Difficulty with memory
- Difficulty making choices and decisions
- Notable increase in mental illness and functioning mental illnesses
- Notable increase in violence for no apparent reason, followed by aimless wandering

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS:

- Increase in depression and depression-related illnesses
- Increase in emotional breakdowns, meltdowns and other emotional instability
- Feelings of needing to find your life's purpose and live it
- Feelings of being easily overwhelmed, having too many choices
- Feelings of general uneasiness, uncertainty, being lost, empty, disconnected and unfulfilled
- Feelings of needing more from life

Planetary Symptoms of Impending Change

- Instability and unpredictability of the Earth's electromagnetic field patterns and strength
- The feeling of familiar environments changing; things just don't feel the same
- Extreme weather pattern changes, global warming
- Fish, sea stars, abalone, birds and insects dying in large numbers for unexplained reasons
- The sky being washed out instead of bright blue in certain areas and times
- The loss of vibrancy of color in trees and plant life in certain areas
- The various alignments of planets, magnetic poles shifting, and other galactic events

Myths, Legends and Half-Truths

In this section I will present you with certain myths that are floating around disguised as the truth. I intend to expose some of these myths to illustrate the new reality, preventing the deception that is so commonly accepted as truth in our world. Most of these myths or half-truths are perpetuated by the media; after being placed in front of the eyes and ears of the general public long enough, they become accepted as truth. This does not make them true; it merely creates and spreads false beliefs. After stepping outside the box of the "accepted norm" and separating myself from the herd mentality, I was able to see how these types of "memes" are spread and the danger they pose to everyone. A meme, in case you are not yet familiar

with the term, is basically a thought, belief, or behavior that is spread throughout a culture from person to person. A meme can travel through thought, belief, gossip, media, social media, and other forms of human interaction. The awakened individual is able to think more clearly for themselves and not follow the mass control and cultural beliefs of the herd.

MYTH #1 – You Have To Have A Near-Death Experience In Order To Awaken

No, of course you don't. Experiencing a near-death trauma is absolutely unnecessary to achieve substantial spiritual growth. Spiritual Expansion is about the celebration of life! While undergoing a near-death or severely traumatic experience may act as a catalyst in the awakening process, it is not needed or recommended. The challenges provided in the Expansion Mastery System will, when performed correctly and consistently, guide you through the process of rapid spiritual growth. Many of these exercises are designed to serve as a metaphorical death experience as well as a resurrection. Most spiritual systems have this concept in place in some safely guided form of symbolic practice. The simple nightly act of falling asleep is meant to serve this same idea.

The ancient Egyptians were very spiritually advanced, knowing how to take a person through a process that mimicked death in order for them to better and more fully appreciate life. The Egyptians had a set of rites they were taken through that were designed to allow them the experience of death and resurrection. The functions of such rituals were to open the person's heart and ignite their passion for life. It is of interest to point out, that within the pyramids there are three chambers that are aligned in the very centerline of the pyramid. The middle chamber is the one that resonates with the heart center when you chant the syllable "Ah."

I have been taught that martial artists are supposed to experience a similar effect every time they get thrown to the ground, only to rise again and continue training (living). I set up a particular event for my martial arts students in a way where they had the opportunity to experience this and then apply that feeling to their daily practice. There seems to be something in our being that changes when we go through a truly life-threatening experience. It's much deeper than the simple recognition of our own mortality. Something shifts in the core of our being; a sort of mental-emotional, vibrational shift that allows us to see things differently, as if an encounter with death allows us to more vibrantly appreciate life and find our life's purpose.

MYTH #2 – In Relationships, Opposites Attract

Yes they do, in magnetic poles and in a larger sense to human beings. The Law of Polarity is a universal truth, applying to the grander scheme of the relationship concept as far as the attraction of male and female, or two different human beings. However, when we drill down into the actual details of a relationship, we see the

Law of Attraction applies more readily. The concept of a harmonious relationship is then accomplished through the Law of Attraction, or like attracts like. The old world reality of Opposites Attract is simply no longer valid. Working hard at a relationship, engaging in arguments and speaking to one another in harsh, aggravated tones, putting up with the other person; none of these things have a place in a truly healthy, happy, and harmonious relationship. This may have been okay in relationships of the old paradigm, but it certainly does not apply any more. We are learning more and more how the concept of “like attracts like” is the way to best achieve the ability to manifest, as well as to create healthy, long-lasting relationships.

MYTH #3 – It Takes Lifetimes of Meditation to Achieve This Type of Change

While meditation is extremely valuable and serves a great purpose, there have been very few people who’ve attained enlightenment by sitting on their butt. The ancient Chinese knew this, which is why they applied circle walking and other moving meditational techniques. For the diligent practitioner, success will come in this lifetime if you are consistent in your efforts and have a great practice. I have found that sometimes this idea of impossibility is placed in front of a practitioner to help them let go of impatience. If you think that it cannot be attained, then you will not be impatient about achieving results. However, if you believe that it will not happen in this lifetime, chances are it won’t.

MYTH #4 – You Are Supposed to Stay Close to Family and Spouses, Even if They Are Toxic

This is completely unreasonable and untrue. Blood is thicker than water, right? Not when it is toxic. Remaining in a toxic family environment or toxic relationship is never good; it drastically lowers your vibration. There is no law saying you have to remain with relatives who treat you disrespectfully or behave badly. There is no good reason to remain in an environment where you are subjected to mental, emotional or physical abuse, nor should you remain in a relationship where you are kept

from growing spiritually. While it is always a sad situation, separating yourself from toxic relatives or spouses is often the right move to make. Every single person has the right to be happy and to advance spiritually.

When separating yourself from someone, I have learned to always leave the door open for them in case they become willing to change their toxic behaviors and begin treating you with respect. At this point I do everything I can to welcome them back with open arms. In most cases, this will allow both of you to expand in the ways that each of you needs but cannot accomplish when your energies are closely linked. There is a saying that “time heals all wounds,” but I believe it should be stated that “time and space heal all wounds.” Allowing some

space opens the gateway to the potential of the energy field all around us.

MYTH #5 – You Should Think With Your Head and Not With Your Heart

This is true to the extent that you should do your thinking with your head. Leave the heart to do the feeling. The mistake made here is believing the brain in the head is the only source of intelligence in the body. Science has proven this to be untrue. Every one of the trillions of cells in our body has intelligence. The heart is considered to be a very intelligent organ and is also the seat for our sense of feeling. Your original spirit is connected to this center and listening to your heart is actually great advice. The key is to know when to use each of these. I hear some people claim that following your heart and emotions will get

you into trouble; this is true only when you have no conscious connection to them and they are controlling you.

I cannot stress enough how significant it is to live from your heart center. It is essential to develop your sensitivity to the subtle energies around you. In the same way, you can feel if you should trust someone or if a certain place just feels bad to you; you should hone this ability to guide you. It is far more accurate than your intellectual reasoning. Making decisions based upon how you feel instead of what you think is the true approach of the human being. This sensitivity is designed to keep us safe and guide us to our life’s purpose. Always thinking without feeling will push you away from your purpose, back into the mentality of the herd.



Spiritual Speed Bumps: Obstacles Along the Path of The Spiritual Warrior

You will most likely discover the need to become a Spiritual Warrior as you walk the path of your own truth. This does not mean that you will have to practice martial arts or become a soldier, but it does imply that you will need to be resilient and stay true to yourself. All too often people around you will not be comfortable with you making advancements in your spiritual quest. This is not always a malicious objective, but simply due to fearing you might change and they might not have you in their life in the exact same capacity that you have been up until this point. Be as gentle as you can with the people in your life, but do not allow them to halt you on your journey. You must be strong enough and focused enough to keep going.

I have helped guide thousands of martial and meditative students around common mistakes that can result in lengthy delays and plateaus for long periods of time. It is common for the person doing their best to raise their vibration and become a unified being to not initially notice the effects it has on those around them. As you go through this process of self-actualization and unification, your vibrational frequency will begin to rise. This will not go unnoticed by those in your life, and you should expect two very different types of feedback. Eventually, you can expect random statements from friends and family members that you have changed, and hopefully they state that it's for the better. They may praise you for the transformations they notice and may even encourage you to keep doing what you are doing, even though they don't understand exactly what you are going through.

It is a wonderful situation when you have a spouse or special person in your life who desires to expand with you. It must be noted though that if you do not have a similar spiritual foundation and your partner does not desire to grow at the same time, they cannot be coerced or forced to do so. You cannot force another to grow, they have to want it in their heart and desire it for

themselves; and indeed they may not be ready for it. The person resisting growth will usually become angry and seek blame as the life they've become comfortable with crumbles around them. While this is a difficult period for both people, it is important to stay true to yourself and keep going. Hopefully, such a scenario plays out to allow the other person to experience necessary life lessons to spark their Expansion while freeing you to experience your own. The common mistake is reconciliation out of guilt, pity, or to take the path of least resistance. Going back to that spouse or significant other will instantly halt your progress and ultimately result in an unhappy home

life for you both. Once you acknowledge and commit to your call to expand, it is devastating to stop the process, and it is impossible to move forward with someone constantly pulling you back.

This same situation applies to family members. They may also give you positive feedback and support. If they have higher vibrations themselves, they will be thrilled for you and more than eager to support you. If you lack spiritually evolved siblings, parents, or children then you may run into a difficult situation. They may react out of fear as the family dynamic changes, feeling they are losing control over you and the family model they have created. This can cause siblings to exert their control and influence over you in an attempt to put you in your place. It may result in parents increasing their dominance,

and when they realize they can't control you, they back away altogether to avoid dealing with it. The mistake here is the same. Giving in to the demands of your family members will stop your growth in its tracks. You need the freedom to walk your own path, and you know what is best for you better than anyone. Do not give in to the pressures that family members may place on you, but make sure they know you love them, keep them in your heart and always leave the door open for the future.

Be aware of distraction that may cross your path. The information age has presented people with a wide array of mindless distractions as a way to ease mental fatigue. These distractions, such as surfing the web, will prevent you from being as productive as you can be. Television and other forms of perceived relaxation will also serve as distractions, as does talking on your cell phone con-



stantly or playing video games for hours on end. Beware of things that suck the life out of your productivity.

You will most likely find yourself going against the grain of the “accepted” social convention. This should not be a surprise when you look at the mentality of the herd. Are they spiritual expanding? Of course not, they are caught up in the mindless drama that keeps them from making any progress or even noticing what is happening around them. To me, it is reminiscent of the blinders they put on horses. Once you step outside the circus of mass control, you may initially find life to be a bit lonely. It is important to keep on your path and eventually you will attract other like-minded people to you that will encourage mutual support. Breaking free from social convention is quite an eye-opening experience; it can be a bit frightening at first, but soon you will be amazed how the world looks when you can see clearly and distinguish truths for yourself.

Fluid Beliefs, Fluid Nervous System, Fluid Mind, Fluid Breath

The higher levels of achievement in martial and spiritual arts include a sense of what the Japanese call *nagare* (flow). This sense of fluidity is extremely important and a quality held dear by masters and grandmasters. The ability for one to achieve a sense of continuous, relaxed flow in their physical movement is a desired level of accomplishment. To do this one also needs to develop kinesthetic awareness. To move your body this way is to flow with the energy currents that move the wind and water. The sharp, jerky style movement of most hard-style martial arts is a direct contrast to this concept. *Tai Chi*, *Pakua Chang*, *Aikijujutsu* and *Budo Taijutsu* are examples of martial arts that use this form of flowing movement. Some forms of dance and ice skating also rely on this fluid motion to display their grace and beauty.

Here I will be addressing the fluidity that you can't see, unless it is reflected in someone's physical movement. I am going to address the fluidity of the mind, nervous system, breath and beliefs. Developing a fluid mind is crucial to your spiritual advancement. This mindset allows the mind to move freely about while retaining a sense of focus. Your mind does not focus so intently on one thing that you become oblivious of everything else in your immediate environment. The fluid mind allows you to move seamlessly from one position to another or one movement to another without pausing. It allows your mind to stay in a greater state of Expansion and respond to multiple points of attention instead of just one singular point. You are also able to clear and still the mind more quickly in order to hear the voice of the Divine. Achieving a level of fluidity in the mind allows you to mentally adapt to situations more quickly and easily as they unfold. This is extremely beneficial for martial, healing and spiritual applications.

The concept of a fluid nervous system is quite an in-depth topic. The fluid nervous system allows you to

physically move without the tension that would result in hesitation or stuttering within your movement. A fluid nervous system permits you to physically flow with a relaxed sense of grace from one position to another. Today, it is common for people to suffer from a completely shorted-out nervous system. With all the over-stimulation, information and computer work, it's no wonder that people are overly tense and easily overwhelmed. Moving with this sense of freedom is very difficult to attain, as there are only a handful of techniques that I am aware of which actually work to release the buildup of “tension” in one's nervous system. It is easy to tell when someone is suffering from an over-stimulated nervous system by checking the eyes. The eyes are said to be a gateway to the soul, but they also serve as a gateway into the nervous system. You can observe the tension through the hardness of the eyes or if they have become wide and protruding.

The breath serves as an activator for the nerves, so developing methods for breathing fluidly serves to assist the nervous system in becoming and remaining fluid. The first step in creating fluid breath is to avoid holding your breath. Try to notice when you experience any form of stress and observe your natural tendency to hold your breath. This is a good practice to learn to recognize when your breath is being held, to release it and breathe deeply to relax. The next step is to coordinate your breath with your body movement. Many top-rated professional speakers also learn to coordinate their breath with their speech patterns in order to flow and pause at the proper points in their dialogue. Learn to be able to move, jump, punch, and speak while coordinating your breath with those movements to act in a naturally synchronized manner. It is important to allow the body movements, the nervous system and the breath to work in conjunction with one another without needing to place conscious thought on the process. Once resistance is eliminated you will not only feel that you are moving more lightly and with purpose, but with a new level of grace, awareness and natural power.

I would really like to focus more on fluid beliefs. It is imperative for your beliefs to remain in a fluid state, open to alteration with new knowledge or experience, in order for you to grow and expand. Because your beliefs will be constantly challenged when you are involved in a true spiritual awakening, it is imperative to break persistent patterns of thought. Therefore, you cannot afford to have your beliefs be immovable; this will make certain you do not change, grow or expand. When a new experience or reliable knowledge renders your current belief obsolete, you must be able to adapt and flow with the new belief in order to make this transition less traumatic on the mind. Allow your beliefs to take form, yet not to become concrete and unchangeable. It is actually natural that your beliefs should change as you expand spiritually. There are so many things that we just do not understand, even through science. Fluid beliefs are important in both science and spirituality. By keeping your beliefs fluid you will find your mind can remain open, making your

Expansion much easier. A closed mind results in contraction, as it keeps a person small and prohibits growth.

If a different perspective is offered and you become agitated or resistant, then your beliefs are not in a state of fluidity. You will immediately feel your nervous system, mind and breath become stressed. A belief is the result of a person's formed perception; their interpretation based on their current level of understanding. It only makes sense that a person's life experiences would bring about change in their beliefs as they continue to learn and grow. Beliefs should constantly require "updating" if you are learning new things. Just as the gentle river flows, bending and winding around the banks without interruption even when it encounters obstacles – so too should your beliefs flow, with the same gentle, constant motion and ability to change freely.

In order to assist in keeping your thoughts fluid, it is imperative to keep a broader perspective and forming opinions based on your need to control and keep the ego feeling secure. It is more beneficial to realize that upon hearing something for the first time, you may only understand a small degree of the depth of the topic and you need to keep your mind open to new or additional information. The need to feel as though you know it all is nothing more than a cheap trick being played on the undisciplined mind by the ego. Beliefs can be very challenging to change once you form them. Be mindful of this.

There is a concept within the ancient martial and spiritual traditions, including Zen Buddhism, called *shoshin* (beginner's mind). Tracing this concept back we see that it had the original meaning of "heart-mind." In Taoist practice, the heart is considered to be the seat of the spirit as well as the cognitive mind. The character for *Xin* (in Chinese) or *Shin* (in Japanese) literally means, "heart-mind." This mindset teaches us to hold on to the desire to learn new things, to retain that insatiable thirst for knowledge that one has when they just begin something new and exciting. To keep this open frame of mind will help you to remain capable of growing and learning new things, even once you have become very accomplished. All too often in these traditions, *shoshin* is viewed as a beginner's level concept. This is definitely

not true; *shoshin* requires self-observation and a constant mindfulness of one's mental and emotional state. This aids in keeping the ego at bay and allows the practitioner to enjoy even those methods they have performed tens of thousands of times through keeping a fresh perspective on the exercise. It also serves to continue an excitement for learning so that you do not lose the enthusiasm you had when you first stepped foot on the path.

The beginner's heart-mind is very helpful in creating a fluid mind and fluid beliefs, because you do your best to make no assumptions that you already know all the

layers to everything. One popular statement that I hear thrown about is "Been there, done that." This is an example of the opposite of *shoshin*. The mind that has "been there and done that" is closed and unable to grow, forever locked in its shallow understanding. In martial arts, the use of *shoshin* allows the warrior to move naturally and respond instead of reacting. It is this state of mind that promotes extended daily practice without the ego arising to either stop your progress or take credit for what has not yet been accomplished.

I learned through more than three decades of martial arts training that your level of understanding and sense of knowing will change dramatically from year to year, especially in the beginning. Look at how many things we have been taught to believe, only to

find out later that they are incorrect. Everything that was believed to have been "scientifically tested" seems to change with time. As technology improves, we learn that the limitations of the previous technology did not allow us to make the valid discoveries that we thought it did.

I find it fascinating how various organizations – from corporations to churches—attempt to influence and control our interpretations, perceptions and beliefs in order to control the sheeple herds. I am using the term "sheeple" here as a humorous yet accurate way to describe the masses who, out of fear and lack of knowing who and what to trust, mindlessly follow the trends, fads and whatever they are told to think or feel, without taking responsibility for themselves. Of course not everyone is being underhanded; our families, friends, teachers



and others are simply sharing the best knowledge they have with what their perceptions and beliefs have to offer. In this manner, even though what they may have offered was not fact, it was well meaning and not at all maliciously deceptive. It is crucial to understand the difference. This is why it is extremely important for human beings to once again learn how to think, and more importantly, feel for themselves, stepping outside of such blatant misinformation.

No Mind

I would like to present a brief look at the concept of *mushin* (no-mind), which has been addressed earlier in this book. No-mind is a different state than beginner's heart-mind. No-mind is usually understood as bringing the mind to a point where the thoughts become still. It is a moment when the mind is not thinking, not allowing the uncontrolled random thoughts generated by the ego to run rampant. When there is stillness of the mind, when it is void of thought, the ego is quiet and the heart can begin to be heard. It is during the suspension of thought that the consciousness of the heart-mind is free to assume the leading role. This is a good basic understanding, but it has layers of deeper meaning and greater skill. It is at this basic level that one beings to experience moments of inner peace and tranquility. This can be a highly profound event in itself, as so many people are burdened with the constant chatter running wild in their mind.

Another level of no-mind is to understand that once you still the mind, it is then possible to hear the Divine voice of your Higher Self, or of Universal Source. Martial artists may see it as a challenge to still move from this mindset, but when you drop the consciousness down into the lower abdomen, it happens as if on auto-pilot. Most spiritual practitioners do not have to address the issue of moving while in this state because they are most likely seated in their practice. Once the continuous, uncontrolled thought patterns are slowed down and brought to a still point, the loud voice of the ego becomes barely audible and the voice of the Divine can be heard. This level is all about communication with your Higher Self.

I want to share another, even deeper level that I have attained with this concept. When you clear your mind, still your thoughts and move with a more divinely inspired flow, you may find yourself aware of an entirely different plane of consciousness. I have experienced this several times with various masters, and it has allowed me to receive teachings that others do not normally receive, as well as special privileges. I have encountered this type of "no-mind dimension" while training in Japan with Grandmaster Machida, the result of which was to be the first recipient of an award regarding this skill. I also encountered it in China while practicing push-hands with Grandmaster Zhong Yun Long. Grandmaster Hatsumi is most often within this realm while he is demonstrating his incredible movement. It's difficult to put into words, but it is like moving in two dimensions at once. It's as if your physical self is moving in the time and space reality,

and your consciousness and energy body is in another reality. It is here that you have the ability to fully understand someone else's intentions without the hindrance of language barriers or miscommunication. One way to know if this experience is real for you is that it happens to both people; it cannot be claimed by one person while the other is unaware of what just happened.

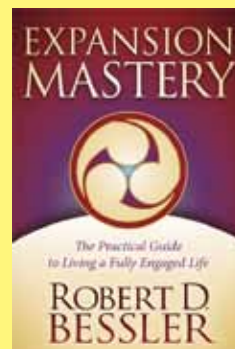
The level we are discussing allows for a teaching method that is referred to as *jikiden* (direct transmission). Grandmaster Machida refers to me as his *jikideshi* or direct transmission disciple. This application of direct transmission takes place from heart to heart, mind to mind, and consciousness to consciousness. Obviously, the student of the martial or spiritual arts must be open and receptive to this form of transmission in order for it to be effective. This level of teaching is rare to find, but it is the most effective form of transmission from one person to another.



Reprinted, with permission from *Expansion Mastery* by Robert D. Bessler, published by Morgan James Publishing, © 2013

Photos pages 17 & 19 by Sandra Osbourne. Photos pages 22, 23 & 25 by Dahlia Gordon.

Robert D. Bessler's Book Expansion Mastery: The Practical Guide to Living a Fully Engaged Life

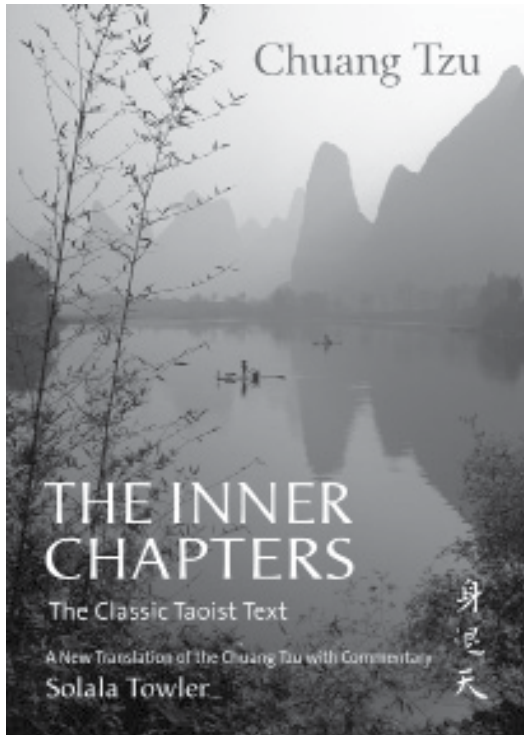


Practical methods for utilizing Taoist and Spiritual practices in your daily life. Empowering you to live with energy, enthusiasm and excitement.
Learn to live a fully engaged life!

To order, or for more information, please visit our website and download your FREE e-book,
Reinventing Yourself Through Re-Alignment

www.expansionmastery.com

or call 415-747-9975



Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters by Solala Towler

A new version of this ancient and timeless classic *with commentary*. Profusely illustrated with photos from China, printed in black and silver on glossy paper.

Through its many stories, odd little passages and discourses we can find illumination on how to live in the world as free and spiritually independent beings. 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.

192 pages \$22.95 + \$5 p&s
from Abode of the Eternal Tao
1991 Garfield St. Eugene OR 97405
541.345.8843/www.abodetao.com
solala@abodetao.com

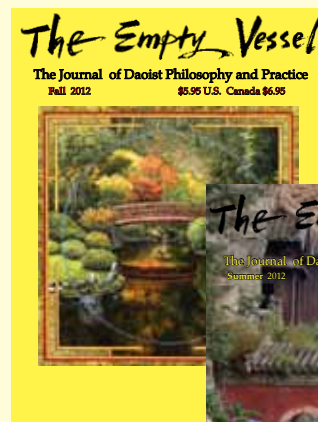
Three Ways You Can Help The Empty Vessel

Donate • Shop • Share

Donate: Help us introduce and support the philosophy and practices of Daoism in the West. Your support can help us become more financially independent and allow us to expand our magazine and website to better serve our readers! Call us at 541.345.8854 or write to The Empty Vessel: 1991 Garfield St. Eugene, OR 97405.

Shop: Visit our website at www.abodetao.com and purchase books, videos, music and back issues of The Empty Vessel. We have items that cover a wide variety of subjects including Daoism • Chinese Medicine • Qigong • Sexual Yoga • Feng Shui • Yijing and much more!

Share: Give a gift subscription to a friend, family member, teacher, clinic or taiji school. Expansion of our mailing list is a high priority to not only stay in business but expand into more areas!



The Empty Vessel Editing Service



Do you have a book you want to write about your teaching, your life experiences or anything else you want to share with the reading public? Do you need help with organizing, research, editing, design or even co-writing?

We are here to help! With years of experience in writing, editing, publishing and design we can help you make your publishing dream a reality!

Are you interested in creating a cd of your classes, lectures, guided meditations etc? We can also help design and record original background music for your cd. We can even introduce you to a low-cost and professional way to print your cds.

Call us at 541.345.8854 or write to solala@abodetao.com and let us know how we can serve you!

MEDICAL QIGONG CERTIFICATION



PROGRAMS BEGIN IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

- ~ Designed for non-local students ~
- ~ Multi-level certification programs ~
- ~ Highest standards and limited class size ~
- ~ Emphasis on theoretical and practical applications ~
- ~ Approved by the Chinese Ministry of Health and Education ~
- ~ Approved for NCCAOM and California L.Ac. CEUs ~



Dr. Bernard Shannon, DTCM, DMQ (China)
Internationally recognized doctor and teacher

- Founder, International College of Medical Qigong
- Ordained Daoist Priest
- Shifu (Master Instructor) of Baguazhang and Taijiquan
- Former Chairman, National Qigong Association



Please visit www.MedicalQigong.org or call 800-848-0649 for more information

The Empty Vessel Interview:

Formless Daoism with Ted Cibik



Ted Cibik, has been passionate about Chinese medicine, meditation, martial arts and healing since early childhood. Having survived two near-death experiences and “crossing over” both times, he has unique insight to the spiritual world of energy. He was awarded the title of Zhong Yi or Doctor of Chinese Medicine and is a Taoist Priest. He is a level IV QiGong Teacher and Advanced Clinical Therapist in Medical QiGong from the NQA. Dr. Cibik teaches Inner Strength QiGong and Formless Taoism forged from Classical Chinese Medicine and Taoist roots at his clinic and retreat in Leechburg, PA.

Empty Vessel: I am interested in your approach to Daoism.

Ted: In my mind Daoism is one of the most important concepts that you could ever grasp or try to grasp, in order to lead a complete life. To me, and this is all my opinion, which is based on my experience, I don't think of

it as a religion. I am more drawn to philosophical Daoism, Daojia. I really think that it is so important for people to have these concepts, such as using nature as the model or the model to look at, and to figure out what is going on with themselves and to understand and manifest their own destiny. I think Daoism is much more important today than it's ever been.

There is so much information out there but what I am seeing is more confusion. Daoism is so simplistic, it gets to the heart of the matter. I get so many people who come to train with me that are very schooled and very intellectual and can reiterate verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* and Rumi, They're monks, laypeople, health care professionals and priests or other titles and they're still searching for something that they can relate to daily that empowers them to lead an authentic life.

So what I am finding is that it is so important to go back to the simplicity of Daoism in its humble origins and really using nature as the model and utilizing that and using it as a tool. I think this is so important for the 21st century.

The tools that we receive from Daoism...like the work you are doing with healing using qigong, taiji, meditation, Chinese medicine... all these kinds of things that can have a real effect on people's day-to-day life, not to mention when people get sick, which is often when you see them.

Well, it's complicated. Sometimes people come to me because they have cancer, then they realize that the cancer is the surface of the water and when we really go into the depths they realize that they have really been dealing with depression their entire life or they have been dealing with their own demons. Then, once we start working with the demons their cancer goes away.

So what I am finding is that the concepts or the precepts of Daoism can help people to heal as much as the manifestation of Chinese medicine, which came out of Daoism. To me there's not any separation at all. It's really about taking what is needed by that person to continue on their journey or to learn from their trials and tribulations and then to be able to step forward into their own destiny, which takes a lot of courage. What I do is act as the coach for that.



I'm not really teaching them anything. I believe that everything is within you and you just need to peel away the veils and come to your own clarity. But this is often really hard to see clearly by yourself. Some people search long and hard for clarity or enlightenment and they read books, they go to classes and they do different things to unlock themselves but, it is often not in a really consistent stable manner, which then leads them back into their place of darkness where they started.

I'm real big on uncovering that place of darkness, going into that which scares you. It's going into your own internal depths, the depths of your kidneys, the darkness of the kidneys and finding out just exactly what's inside of you and not being afraid of it but embracing it. You cannot run from your own mind. In other words, embracing the subconscious mind so that the subconscious is not foreign to you. In this way, instead of battling it you are actually making friends with it and then it and the conscious mind can become one. Like in the Daode Jing where the three become the two and the two become the one. Then you can truly have peace.

It's not really a meditation; it's not a practice. For me practice is your daily life and how you take the concepts of qigong or taiji and use it when there is conflict, whether that be external or internal. That's practice. Your practice is your life; it's not something that you do. It is like with everyone that you come into contact with and who cause you difficulty, who crush you and stretch you and cause

you to think different ways or upset you – they're really your teachers. In Buddhism they call them "treasures."

So you need to be at peace enough and to be willing to accept the lessons that come your way. And that really means that you need to get down into that dark part where the demons of your mind live and come to understand them and, why they are there and, why you have put them into this seclusion rather than bringing them out into the light. That to me is en-light-en-ment, when you bring those things out, and you start to look at them, not with fear, but you start to look at them with loving kindness and you embrace them. That's when you begin to glean the wisdom of why certain things were put in your path and that, to me, is really the essence of what we are trying to teach here, whether I am doing that with someone who is coming in with fibromyalgia or cancer or MS or spiritual confusion or whatever it is, it's really getting them to be at peace with themselves. Regardless if this whether this is their final journey or if they still have decades of journeys to embrace.

Now I am curious about how you coach or guide people into these pleas, what kind of tools do you use for this?

It's really interesting because I guess I have the ability and a gift and where it comes from I don't really know. Maybe it came from when I passed on and died and came back. I always say that for me to understand the spiritual world is easy but for me to understand humans is difficult. I'm



able to see through a lot of the veils and ask the pertinent questions that they may be afraid to ask and, I pose that to them and that becomes their meditation.

I can't really tell them what they need to do because most people are repulsed by that. Nobody wants to be told what to do. But if you discover it for yourself through your own epiphany then it becomes very wise and becomes very much something that opens up your world.

In the Formless Daoism class that we have everyone has one-on-one time with me and that is when I will pose the question to you of where you need to go and what you need to do. Obviously with each person it's different because everyone comes in with his or her own experience or his or her own baggage. That's how I do it, it's not a White Tiger meditation or something like that, that is going to release the Yellow Court and free up these emotions and therefore you are going to be clear. I have found that it needs to be much more specific than that. In most medical qigong practices people begin to do purgations and things like that and they come away with a much clearer way of seeing but the ball and chain that is holding them are their own little inner demons – those are very personalized. There's a storyline behind that which they have developed and we need to get to that. Once we get to that then they can begin to work and fulfill their life's mission and do what they want to do or need to do or were destined to do.

I am curious about what are the tools that you use that are different than say someone going into psychoanalysis or seeing a counselor about their emotional issues.

Well I'm working with energy psychologists all around North America now. I am actually teaching them. Psychologists and psychiatrists are all coming into these seminars that I am doing. I am using Chinese medicine and Daoist concepts. I am changing the language so that they can understand it. But I am using the concepts of Daoism with them.

And the practices?

Yes, the practices as well. Such as timing. When you are counseling or coaching people you want to use the energy, which you can feel. To do the kind of work we are doing we need to cultivate an enormous awareness of energy and of the energy that people give off and their shifts of energy. I am teaching people how to understand those shifts and what it means.

This is one of the really interesting things about Chinese medicine and Daoist medicine is that emotional states are seen as energetic states, rather than merely psychological states. In this way you are not just working with their mental states but are able to change the energetics of those states. I would think that would be a much deeper level of healing.

It is. And they are embracing things like Emotional Free-

dom Technique and things like that but what they are coming to me and telling me is, that is not always permanent. So what I am trying to educate them about is that the mind is the most powerful tool that we have available and that the first thing that you must do is learn how to discipline your mind and how to work with your mind.

It's almost like going into a martial art. You have to learn how to discipline the body but really, what you are learning how to do is to discipline the mind. And then, through a series of exercises and things like that we can get the person to have discipline in their mind. And then you start to change the thinking patterns. We're using the energy to be our guidelines, not a set of preordained techniques or thought patterns. We're really using the energy that is coming off of them and how that person has interpreted that energy.

So what you are doing would call for a different approach for each person, depending on where their energetic state is.

Exactly, it's always customized. So when I train my students, I am teaching them how to read their clients energetic state and to work with the person instead of, 'this is liver, this is anger, frustration, resentment,' all these kinds of things. Because that is still slotting and being stereotypical. The important thing is to look at how that person is using their mind to deal with say, frustration and how they have internalized it and what are the storylines that are being told in that person's mind by the subconscious. I like to call them Mpegs, like mini YouTube clips that automatically begin to play when your button is pushed. Then what I do is unravel that Mpeg and give the person the ability to retell the story in a completely different way. Then they can look at their situation in a completely new way rather than through the eyes of their liver or their past.

It's really very simple. That's why I love this, because it is simple. It's simple but it's very effective. I always tell my students, 'energy doesn't lie.' But what the mind does with the energy is often tell an enormous amount of lies to itself and to others. People can tell you all kinds of things in therapy. The therapist can be misled by the person's words or even their body language. But if they are able to read the energy they will not be misled and it's a much more effective process, regardless as to what other tools they're using.

It's true that people in the West tend to live in their heads quite a bit. As you were saying, people can talk a really good game but it's obvious that they are suffering. I love this idea that if you approach it from an energetic point, you bypass all those intellectual barriers that they put up themselves to fool even themselves.

Right, and once people are no longer hanging on to those preconceived ideas that have given them the foundation

for living the life that they have chosen, it is very interesting that all at once they begin to question themselves as to, 'now what am I going to do? I've lived my last twenty, thirty years believing this and now that I can see that there's another option I'm scared, I don't know how to approach life. This has been all that I've known.

That's when you start to rebuild them. You teach them the practice of qigong, taiji, meditation, things like that, so that they have a toolkit of their own. And you start to build them up and give them the self-confidence not to rely upon me or anybody else and to give them the ability to transcend.

So it's about getting them out of their head and into their bodies and their dantian.

It's all about the three treasures – the jing, qi and shen. And it's all in the blood and the communication that blood offers in energy. Because obviously, the qi and the shen are in the blood when embodied. If you want to access the spirit you have to go with the blood. But what gets in the way of the spirit or the shen is all the ways you've manifested your qi and your qi deviations.

So when you begin to practice qigong you should be cleaning yourself up. Let me ask you this, how many kinds of qi have you heard described?

Many. In China the weather is described as a kind of qi. The mind is a kind of qi.

Yes and what I teach people is that qi is like tofu, it can take on any flavor it wants. It can be that pliable. So the idea is to get back to the place where there is not so much judgment because once you start judging you are back in the world of yin and yang.

Of duality.

Right, and that is what causes people's suffering. 'I was wronged. I was deceived. I was betrayed. I was this, I was that.' You've created polarity or duality. But when you get to the place of not being so judgmental about your own mind and of others, that's when you can be at peace.

I like this image of you thinking of yourself as a coach rather than the master who is bringing the light to the people.

It's all about getting people to see their own divinity and their own light within themselves, to get out of their own way. What that really requires, in our world, is to clean up our qi. Not to cultivate the same qi over and over, which causes us so much dysfunction, but to do the alchemy that creates a place within us of openness and light where we can see and feel our own shen within ourselves.

There are a lot of people who practice qigong and taij who are



still amazingly screwed up. They're used to running their qi in certain ways, which aren't really helping them. So what you do is help them to run their qi in a different way?

I teach them to run their qi in a way that is going to balance them. What I am trying to do is look at that person, read their energy, and say, try this; this may be what you need at this particular time. This may not serve you in the future but right now this may help you.

Now if they do this, their energy is often changed the next time I see them and they are going to need a different kind of qigong. Things change. This is why I call what I do Formless Daoism. There's no form to it, there's no script. There's no twelve-step program, there's no initiation, there's no sect. It's about the individual cultivation of development for each person.

So your many years of training and your own personal experiences in your own life, some of which have been pretty extreme, allow you to be able to look at them and see why their practice is not working for them.

Yes. The goal is that through your practice, you have cultivated enough peace, you've cultivated enough confidence in yourself, and you have cultivated enough so that you can handle yourself in life, regardless of what happens. And you have the mental strength, your physical strength and your spiritual strength – the three treasures – every day, in everything that you do, with everybody that you meet, every circumstance that comes up, that is your practice.

You need to look at it that way instead of, 'I'm going to go and meditate for 45 minutes to start my day.' That's great but the practice doesn't end there.

I'm sure you've seen this in many of your clients and patients where people feel that they are evolving and they're not so judgmental about other people and they really feel that they're getting somewhere but they're still incredibly judgmental about themselves.

Yes, and I think that's the worst. It's insidious because many people are not even aware of how often they're criticizing themselves in their mind. It's almost like they're creating these computer programs that run in the background of their subconscious. And they're constantly supplementing them with qi. Every time they knock their shin into the coffee table and they say 'Oh, you stupid,' talking to themselves, they are constantly reinforcing the program instead of being aware of what is going on, embracing it, loving it and letting it go.

I think there is a difference between self-critical and self-responsible. There are a lot of people who don't want to be responsible for their own spiritual, energetic or emotional state. They would rather blame someone else, or their guru or a teacher or a partner. That is something that my teacher, Ni Hua-Ching talked about early on in his books – that you need to be self responsible for your own energetic, spiritual and emotional balance. That is a tough one.

Recently I was thinking of just how to define nature, because Daoism is about nature. And I thought that the

energy of nature is just to create. And sometimes that means that in order for something to be created something has to be destroyed.

Yes, the plants grow and then they die to be reborn in the next cycle.

Yes, it's all cycles, which we are always looking at in Chinese medicine. The nature of energy is to create things. The mind is what gives it the flavor. You can create total chaos within yourself or you can create total peace. You make that choice. It takes a certain amount of self responsibility to say, 'I have a choice here, I could blame so and so or I could blame my teacher.' Or you could say, 'You know what, I learned something here, even if it's about how *not* to do something.'

That could be a valuable learning right there.

Oh yes. I had a Muy Thai teacher who was so brutal to his students that everyone just walked away crippled. He was a great teacher. He had excellent technique and I learned from him how *not* to be a teacher.

I love this idea of Formless Daoism.

Thank you. I knew that perhaps a lot of people would not embrace it but it's really nice when you get to place in your life when you're not doing things for other people but you're doing it for yourself. And you're doing it with peace and compassion. I feel that this is my lineage. This is the lineage that I am creating. I ask people, 'What are you leaving behind? Are you leaving something behind that is going to foster compassion and peace and love and perhaps a different way of thinking?'

It's a funny thing but most qigong practitioners and even instructors in this country have no knowledge of Daoism or the philosophical and spiritual basis of these practices. They're just teachings the movements and maybe some of the qi.

And it's so hollow and the true power of it is not being demonstrated. I find that now that I am working with social workers and psychologists and people like that – a lot of them are starting to add what they have learned from breathing practices and qigong practice into their patient load but, until they understand the essence of qi and their shen, it's still not going to be as effective.

So, introducing to them the concepts of Daoism, the concepts of how we as Daoists look at energy, and how that energy creates things in a person's wei qi and how they then carry themselves in thought and action in the world.

This is very important. You can sit and do talk therapy for years and years, rehashing the same stories and going over the same things, rehashing the same emotions and

never really moving out of that stasis. This is because you are not working with the qi aspect, you're working with the jing form of it, how you've used words to define it, and often there is no longer any connection inside of you with that story that you have told for so long. To get through or past that you need to start working on the qi level.

For people who are working with a therapist, when they get stuck the therapists send them to me, I work on their qi and then they're ready to go and talk about something different. This is how then they make progress.

As far as Daoism in the West, I think that the way that many people have interpreted the term Daoism may be some of the things that are inhibiting people from really embracing it.

How's that?

Ted: Well, for many people it sounds very esoteric. Then when they go to Barnes and Noble and they pick up the *Daode Jing* and read it and I don't think they really understand what it is saying. It's hard to find a teacher to explain it to them, whereas Buddhism has lots of teachers out there giving interpretations of Buddhism that sound very modern. The Dalai Lama is all over the news all of the time and he is talking with psychiatrists and psychologists, which is what gave me the idea to begin approaching that group of people.

Now a lot of these therapists have read some of the Buddhist books that are out there and a lot of them have read the *Daode Jing*. But what I have found that is when I go to a conference and teach the *Daode Jing* or, when I take a piece of it and try to explain it, they've never heard that before. And so, they really didn't get the gist of it. The power of it is missing and, I think that is a lot of what is happening with Daoism, that the power of it is missing because of the esoteric language.

Well the Daode Jing is a perfect example because it is full of practices – meditation, nei dan and shen practices but most people think of it as a little book about philosophy and living a natural lifestyle.

I'm one of these people who like to take words and break them down. When you say a 'natural lifestyle,' I don't think a lot of people even know what that is.

I think people don't realize that you can live a very modern, engaged city life and still live a natural lifestyle.

Yes, I think they are afraid that we will have to take some kind of oath or something that will be very conflictive with their job as a computer programmer in the big city. That is what I am trying to debunk. No, this is something that we really need for today. Sometimes, just to create balance, we need to take a walk in a park or into

the woods and just feel, listen, be and you know what, the energies that pervade you are the same energies that created you. You can start to understand the Dao just be being in the Dao and being in the Dao is being in nature.

At the same time, people can do that in their own living rooms, they can go within and find that space.

Yes, they can do it anywhere because it's available to them.

These concepts from the Daode Jing like wu wei, watercourse way, pu (the uncarved block) – all of those things are the ones to use in learning how to live a natural lifestyle. What's natural? What may be natural for one person may not be for another person.

Exactly. That's why this whole concept of being formless, of finding what works for you, and not being afraid of finding out what works for you, is so important. People like to fit in and they like to be accepted. But sometimes...I like to think of Einstein, he was a weird dude. But had he not been true to his own nature who knows, maybe we wouldn't have his discoveries today.

It takes a certain amount of courage and a certain amount of belief in oneself and a certain centeredness to begin to walk and to follow your own path or destiny. That is what I mean by a celebration of uniqueness. And that's why it has to be formless. Because nobody is going to walk my path. And it takes a certain amount of courage to walk that way.

Yes, that's why it's good to have a coach! Thank you so much for spending this time with us and for doing the wonderful coaching and healing that I know you do back there in Pennsylvania. How can people get in touch with you about your classes and healing practice?

They can just go to formlesstaoism.com and there they can read about my classes and trainings, some of which are done on skype, so it really doesn't matter where you live. If you would like to come and study in nature with me privately, join me on my 30 acre retreat, where you can come and stay in a modern farmhouse in the serenity of nature and break those repeating mpegs. I lead customized meditations several times a day with the guest and work with them to obtain peace and a centeredness that they can take that back with them into the world. Please call for details.



Do you want to develop a inner strength and self confidence that cannot be shaken,
to understand your destiny, and to overcome the things that are holding you back from truly enjoying life?

FORMLESS TAOISM

is following the spiritual path,
to unite body, mind and spirit.
Heal yourself at a deep spiritual level,
and learn to assist others as well.

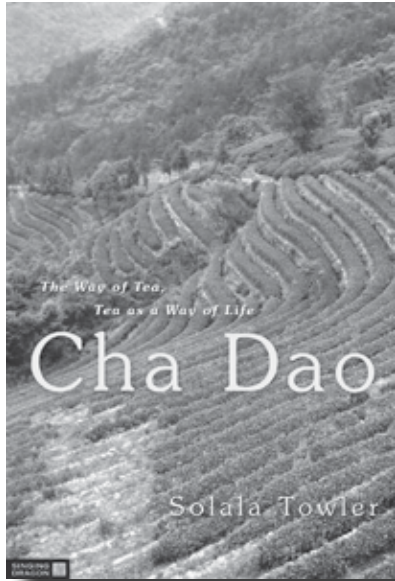
New Certificate Program begins August 2013
Attend one weekend a month
2 year program near Pittsburgh
Class size is limited to provide the
OPTIMUM LEARNING EXPERIENCE

We now offer PRIVATE TAOIST STUDY RETREATS
Stay at our Retreat house and connect with Nature
through qigong and meditation on our 30 acre
farm and woodland center
with daily coaching & Taoist study with Dr Cibik.

Instructor: Ted J. Cibik
Founder of Formless Taoism
PhD, Doctor of Medical Qigong
724-845-1041



www.formlesstaoism.com www.inner-strength.org



Cha Dao: The Way of Tea

by Solala Towler

In China, the art and practice of drinking tea is rooted in Daoism, and emerged from a philosophy that honored a life of grace and gratitude, balance and harmony, fulfillment and enjoyment – what the ancient Chinese called Cha Dao or the Way of Tea.

Cha Dao takes us on a fascinating journey through the Way of Tea, from its origins in the sacred mountains and temples of China, through its links to Daoist concepts such as *wu wei* or non-striving and the Value of Worthlessness, to the affinity between Tea Mind and the Japanese spirit of Zen. Interspersed are a liberal helping of quotes from the great tea masters of the past, anecdotes from the author's own trips to China, and traditional tea stories from China and Japan. The unique health benefits of tea are also explored, and a chapter is devoted to the history, characteristics and properties of 25 different tea varieties.

This book will interest tea lovers, as well as those who want to learn more about tea culture, Daoist and Zen thought and practice, and Asian History and culture.

A reviewer says: *Cha Dao is not only a wonderful book on tea, its history, and the joy of appreciating its warmth and its many flavours, but is also an excellent primer on Daoist thinking and living. I loved this book. It informed me about tea and the customs surrounding it, lifted my spirit, and sharpened my mind. For those who enjoy tea, it deserves a place on your bookshelf.*

\$17.95 + \$5 s&p

Abode of the Eternal Tao

541.345.8854

www.abodetao.com

(autographed copies available)

Digital Editions of The Empty Vessel Now Available

Now you can get The Empty Vessel without all the paper. Our full color digital edition is simple to use, easy to read, and you have the freedom to buy single issues or sign up for the entire year.

For Ipad, I Phone and other Apple products go to:

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/the-empty-vessel/id498271146?mt=8>

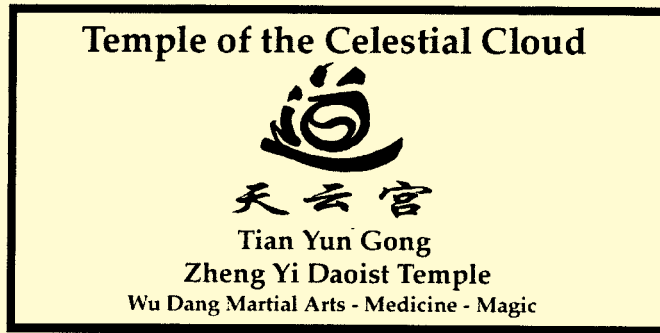


For Nook devices through Barnes and Noble go to:

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/s/the-empty-vessel?keyword=the+empty+vessel&store=periodicals>

You also access our full color digital version through our websites at www.CommunityAwake.com and www.abodetao.com.

(Go to either website for a free download of an issue of
The Empty Vessel!)



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!

Magic Talismans. This amazing book contains a comprehensive Introduction to Magic Talismans, Applications of Magic Talismans, Types of Magical Talismans, The Origin of Magical Talismans, The Secret Teachings of Magic Talismans, Constructing a Magic Talisman, Mao Shan Protection Talismans Used For Fighting Against Black Magic and Psychic Attacks, and much more! 421 pages. \$175

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

Daoist Exorcism: Encounters With Sorcerers, Ghosts, Spirits and Demons History of Exorcism, Three Realms of Daoist Mysticism, Interactions with the Spirit World, Two Schools of Daoist Sorcery, Understanding Psychic Influence, Principles of Psychic Interference, Psychic Attacks, Types of Psychic Attacks, Symptoms That Indicate a Psychic Attack, Defending Against Psychic Attacks, Encounters With Ghosts, Self-Defense Against Spirit Entities, Protecting Children, Closing the Ghost Gate to Protect against Ghosts and Spirits, Encounters With Demonic and Evil Spirits and much more. 427 pages. \$175

Daoist Mineral Magic The Study of the Realm of Minerals, Introduction to the Alchemical Transformations of Minerals, History of Magical and Medicinal Rocks, Formation of Minerals and Crystals, Minerals in Traditional Chinese Pharmacology, Absorbing the Healing Properties of Gems, Creating Gem Elixirs, Cleansing the Crystal With Sunlight, Moonlight, Flowing Water or Earth, Ritualistic Cleansing and Incantations, Charging a Stone, Storage and Care of the Gem Elixir and much more. 162 pages. \$50

Daoist Plant and Animal Magic Introduction to the Alchemical Transformations of Plants, Superior, Medium, and Inferior Herbs, Gathering Energy from Nature, The Magical Properties of Trees, Gathering Qi from Trees, Locating Tree Power Spots, Precautions, Tree Spirits, Forest Spirits, The Magical Properties of Plants, Visionary Plants, Gathering Qi From Plants, Daoist Celestial Animal Totems, Animal Shapeshifting and much more. 239 pages. \$85

Daoist Magical Transformation Skills, Dream Magic, Shape-Shifting, Soul Travel & Sex Magic Transformation Skills of Daoist Sorcery, Two Types of Magical Transformation Skill, Weather Magic, Divination Magic, Corpse Magic Introduction to Daoist Sex Magic, Three Stages of Relationship, Levels of Intimacy, Applications of Sex Magic, Using Sexual Magic for Energy Cultivation, Sexual Postures and Techniques, Sex Magic Rituals, Deity Magic and Sex Magic and much more. 248 pages. \$85

To order these books send check or money order along with \$5 s/h for each book to: The Abode of the Eternal Tao 1991 Garfield St Eugene, OR 97505 or call us at 541.345.8854

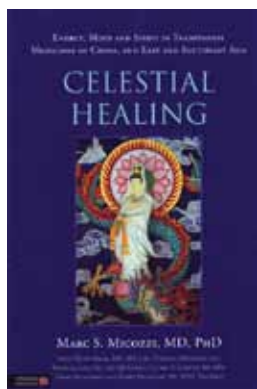
Reviews

Celestial Healing Energy, Mind and Spirit in Traditional Medicine of China, and East and Southeast Asia.

by Marc S. Micozzi

Singing Dragon 2011

Softcover, 222 pages, \$18.95



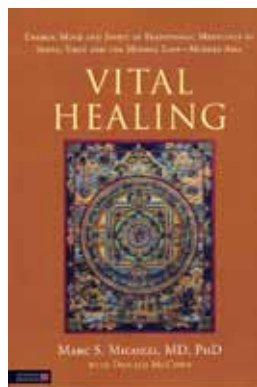
This book is a great overview of natural medicine that is found in East Asian cultures, including China, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and Japan. The author is clearly well educated in many approaches to medicine, all heavily influenced, of course, by China. The reader is given a solid foundation in classical Chinese medicine before moving on to Korea, Japan and the rest of Southeast Asia, including a chapter on traditional Shamanic healing. There are even chapters on macrobiotics, reiki and shiatsu. I especially enjoyed the later chapters on Chinese Medicine in the Twentieth and Twenty First-Centuries and Chinese medicine in Europe and America. Like the lovely image of Guanyin on the cover of the book there is much beauty, knowledge and experience with Asian medicine contained within these pages.

Vital Healing Energy, Mind and Spirit of Traditional Medicine of India, Tibet and the Middle East- Middle Asia.

by Marc S. Micozzi

Singing Dragon 2011

Softcover, 231 pages, \$18.95



This book, another from the good folks at Singing Dragon, takes us on a journey through the medical traditions of India, Tibet and the Middle East. Early chapters discuss the idea of "vital energy," both in the West and

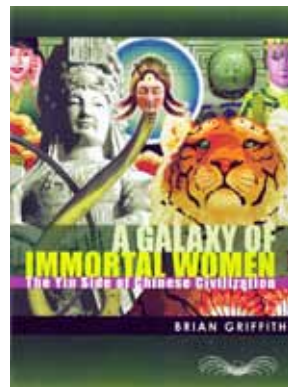
the East, ayurvedic and siddha medicine of India and Tibet (which, while owing some influences from both Chinese and ayurvedic medicine, has also come up with some ideas and practices unique to Tibetan thought and culture). I found the chapter on Quantum Healing and Sufism very enlightening and the last chapter on Ethnomedicine and Vital Energy equally fascinating.

A Galaxy of Immortal Women: The Yin Side of Chinese Civilization

by Brian Griffith

Exterminating Angel 2012

Softcover, 317 pages, \$16.95



This book is a great resource for anyone interested in learning more about women's roles in the religion, society and mythology of China. Chapters such as Goddess Realms of Pre-historic China, Women's Powers in Popular Daoism and How Women Changed Buddhism in China and Tibet are all fascinating. From the cover: "This book ties mythology, archaeology, history, religion, folklore, literature and journalism into a millennia-spanning story about how Chinese women—and their goddess traditions—fostered a counterculture that flourishes and grows stronger every day." This book is a great addition to a subject that is often overlooked in the history of both Daoism and Buddhism.



Yang-Sheng

(Nurturing Life)

A network for health, happiness & harmony

養生

Yang-Sheng (養生 Nurturing Life) is an e-magazine & network for health care professionals - complementary medical practitioners, Qigong, Tai Chi, Yoga, Reiki & other mind-body & spirit cultivators. It promotes methods of self-healing, positive mindfulness & health preservation. Yang-Sheng merges traditional knowledge with modern scientific research & clinical evidence; & combines ancient wisdom with modern experience to support health & well-being.



Publisher/Editor: Kevin W Chen, Ph.D., MPH
Editor-in-Chief: Rebecca Kali
Associate Editors: Christina J. Barea, Master Mantak Chia, Helen Hu, OMD, Roger Jahnke, OMD, Joy Staller, BA, Solala Towler, & Michelle Wood

www.Yang-Sheng.com
 Email: Editor@Yang-Sheng.com




Ying Yu Chinese Jade
 Gua Sha Tools and Liniment
 Jade Rollers and Health Tools
 Jade Eggs and Ben Wa Balls
 Jade Bangle Bracelets, Pendants
 Jade Pillow Covers, Teapots,
 Jade Malas and Carvings
 Unique Chinese Art and Culture
www.yingyujade.com

Calm Spirit
 Counseling
 Chinese Health, Wellness
 Qigong and Reiki Resources
 Chinese Herbs, Tea, Ginseng
 Jade Therapy
www.calmspirit.net



SunDo Taoist Yoga & Meditation Retreats



Taoist Master
Hyunmoon Kim

SEASONAL RETREATS
 See our retreat calendar for dates

More than just yoga...
 healing and transformation
 through the breath.

For more
information:
860.523.5260
questions@sundo.org
www.sundo.org

SUNDO RETREAT CENTER
 BARNET, VERMONT



SUN DO
 MOUNTAIN TAOISM

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. Qigong, sustainable gardening, meditation for self cultivation. Chinese herbs, 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.tidewater-taichi.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.

Qigong & Daoist Training Center, Shifu Michael Rinaldini Qigong Certifications, local/distance: 100 hours, foundation in qigong studies and Daoist practices. 200 or 350 hour certifications, includes above 100 hour program, plus more, and an intensive retreat in California. Instructor: NQA Level 4 Certified Teacher, and founder: American Dragon Gate Lineage. Details: www.dragongateqigong.com.

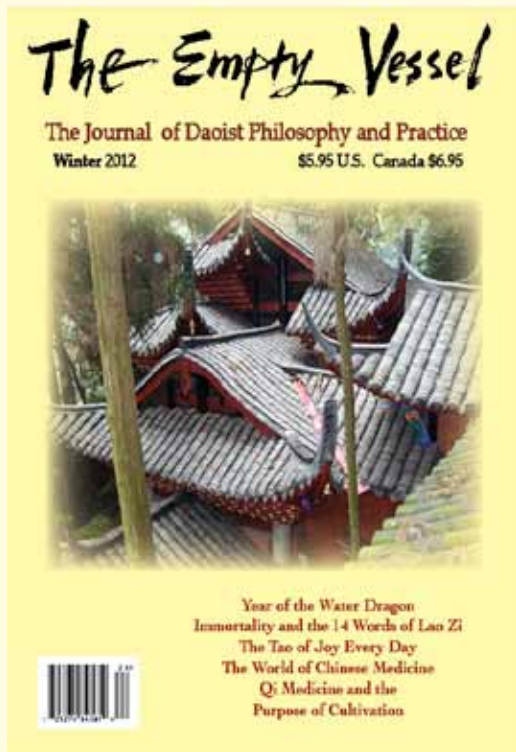
The Taoist Institute offers studies and services in Chinese qigong, tai chi chuan, Daoist weddings, shamanic energy & Reiki healing. Director: Dr. Carl Totton. 10630 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA, 91601 (818) 760-4219. www.taoistinstitute.com.

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

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.

Directory/Classified \$25 for first 30 words, \$1.00 per word thereafter, 15 word minimum.



Our website has been completely overhauled and has many new features!

We have hundreds of books, cd's and dvds on Daoism • Qigong • Chinese Medicine • Feng Shui • Taiji (Tai Chi) • Martial Arts • Sexual Cultivation • Healing Music • Tao of Wellness Herbal Formulas • Yijing (I Ching) • Internal Alchemy and more!

Download free articles from past issues • watch video from China • download free guided meditations • listen to healing music • join our reader's forum • enjoy the quote of the week as well as our Yijing (I Ching) reading for the week • read Solala's blog • learn about our qigong training courses • see information about our yearly trips to the sacred Daoist mountains of China

Just go to www.abodetao.com

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 45 issues available for \$225 plus \$25 p&h! (U.S. postage only) For overseas orders please contact us at solala@abodetao.com.



Fall 1993

Premier Issue

Teacher of Natural Spiritual Truth:
an interview with Hua-Ching Ni
The Value of Worthlessness

Fall 1994

Cultivating the Physical Body
The Risks of Cultivating Internal Power
Zhuangzi Speaks Comics
A Taoist Abroad

Winter 1995

"Nothing Special":
an interview with Kenneth Cohen
The School of Auto-Idiocy
Sitting Still: Meditation

Spring 1995

"Cultivating the Garden":
an interview with Maoshing Ni

Winter 1996

Myth of Myself by Alan Watts
Achieving Harmony in a World of Conflict
Jing Hwa: The Golden Flower of Tao Mentoring

Spring 1996

Surfing the Wu Wei
Taoism for Children and Teenagers

Summer 1996

Stillness in Motion: Joi Eden and Betty Sun
Guidelines for Practicing Movement
Fall 1996
Curing Cancers Naturally
12 Steps of AAA Adapted for Use with Taoism

Winter 1997

Eight Immortal Days with Kwan Sai-Hung
Refining the Mind
Exploring the Terrain of Taoist China

Spring 1997

Qigong Cautions
Invoking the Heart of Compassion
Interview with T.K. Shih

Winter 1998

Tao and the Great Mother
Qigong Mysteries and Practices
Tao Yin: Meditation in Movement

Summer 1998

Working Out, Working Within
Taoist Psychotherapy
The Power of Internal Martial Arts with B.K. Frantzis

Summer 1999

Special Taoist Medicine Issue
Eight Branches of the Healing Arts Before TCM
Reiki and Qigong

Spring 2000

The Eight Immortals of Taoism
Five Elements and Taoist Feng Shui
Health, Illness and Healing in the Inner Tradition

Summer 2000

Trusting Your True Nature
Understanding Chinese Medicine

Fall 2000

Qigong and Unconditional Love
The Valley Spirit (Living Taoism)
The Taoist Antidote to Stress and Illness

Winter 2001

Lao Zi's Instructions for Spiritual Practice
Creating a Field of Healing Qi

Summer 2002

Longevity and the Eight Brocades
Daoist Sitting Meditation
Interview with Zhongxian Wu

Summer 2003

The Feminine and the Dao:
an interview with Ursula K. LeGuin
Daoism and the Classical Chinese Arts
The Daoist Roots of Zen Buddhism

Spring 2005

The Inner Smile
21st Century Strategies for New Daoism

Summer 2005

Teachings From the Dao
Wandering on the Wind:
Two Chapters from Zhuangzi

Spring 2006

The Death of Chuang Tzu
The Dao of Consciousness
The Yin Convergence Classic

Winter 2006

A Daoist Tea Ceremony
Dao and Qi
Wandering on the Wind:
Two Chapters from the Zhuangzi

Spring 2006

The Death of Chuang Tzu
The Dao of Consciousness
Qigong Prison Ministry

Summer 2006

Transforming the Energy of Negativity
Spiritual/Mental Qualities of the Organs
EV Tour to China & Tibet

Spring 2007

Gardening with Qi
A Taoist View of Enlightenment
Interview with Eva Wong

Summer 2007

Discovering the I Ching
Shen: The Celestial Storehouse
Lu Yu Meets a True Tea Master

Fall 2007

Daoist Lower Dan-tien Psychotherapy
Medical Qigong
Qigong Master Wan Su-jian

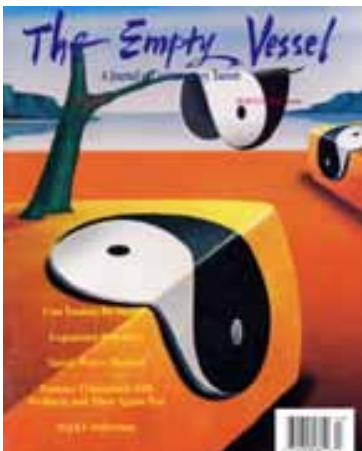
Winter 2008

Looking for Daoists in China,
Mortal and Immortal
Huan Yang Qigong: Tracing Life to Its Roots
Qigong Fever

Spring 2008

Special I Ching Issue

The I Ching:
The Motherlode of the Chi Revolution
Introduction to the Guidance of the Sixty-Four
Hexagrams
Flying with the I Ching
Methods of Divination
Symbolism and Prediction with the Yijing





Summer 2008

The Secret Training of Daoist Magical Incantations

The Making of an Immortal

The Crocodile and the Crane

Fall 2008

Return to Wuyi Mountain with

Chungliang Al Huang

The Chinese way of the Sword

Sexual Qigong

Chicken Soup for Daoist Alchemy

Winter 2009

Returning to Essence Through Shamanic Qigong and Sacred Sound Healing

The Spirit of Tea

Dao at the Beach: Searching for Dao in Daily Life

Fall 2009

Qigong and the Dreamtime

The Natural Process of Internal Alchemy

Zhuangzi: The Inner Chapters

Winter 2010

A Daoist Master's Search for his Chinese Ancestry

Daoism in the Korean Mountains

The Daoist System of Lao Zi: Part One

Spring 2010

The Liezi: Forgotten Daoist Text?

Bagua and Tai Chi: Sophisticated Health Exercises

A Taoist Master's Search for His Chinese Ancestry Pt. 1 by Chungliang Al Huang

Summer 2010

Bagua: Why Practice This Old and Obscure Art?

Mystical Wudang Mountain

Guidelines for Setting Up a Daoist Altar

A Taoist Master's Search for His Chinese Ancestry Pt. 2

Fall 2010

Chuang Tzu: The Way of Nourishing Life

Nudan Practice and Modern Women

Taoists, Doctors and Shamans

A Taoist Master's Search for His Chinese Ancestry Pt. 3

Winter 2011

Chinese Astrology and Inner Cultivation

Wu Wei: The Daoist Art of Happiness

A Taoist Master's Search for His Chinese Ancestry Pt. 4

Spring 2011

Daoism in America: A Conversation with Xuan Yun (Mysterious Cloud)

Pu the HEART Back Into LOVE

Speical Section on BiGu (Avoiding Food and Eating Qi)

Summer 2011

The Ox Herding Chart of Chan Buddhism

Global Warming: A Meta-Physical Perspective

The Master of the Mountain: A Conversation with Master Zhong Yunlong

Fall 2011

Qi Cultivation and the Dao

Taiji and Spiritual Cultivation

Cracking the Matrix

Winter 2012

The World of Chinese Medicine

Qi Medicine and the Purpose of Cultivation

Immortality and the 14 Words of Laozi

Spring 2012

Free and Easy Wandering: A Western Daoist Manifesto

The Tai Chi Sword and Spiritual Swordsmanship

Introduction to Classical Feng Shui

Summer 2012

The Three Treasures and the Golden Embryo

Shen, Hun and Po in Chinese Medicine

Tai Ji and Dimensional Learning Persepctive

Fall 2012

Big Dipper Meditation

Eliminating Pitfalls in Qigong Practice

Embracing the One: Daoist Meditation

Winter 2013

Lao Zi - The Hidden Dragon

Taoist Sexual Meditation

Art and Practice of Tai Chi



SINGING DRAGON

authoritative new and classic books on Daoism, Qigong,
Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Alternative Health

New from Master Zhongxian Wu and Dr. Karin Taylor Wu . . .

HEAVENLY STEMS AND EARTHLY BRANCHES

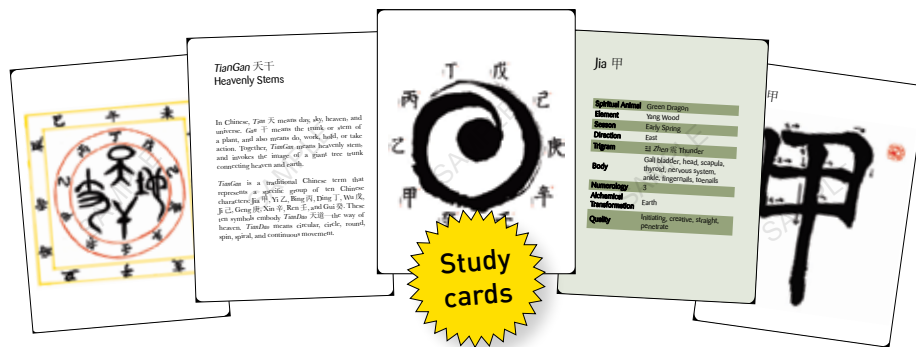
— TIANGAN DIZHI

The Keys to the Sublime

Master Zhongxian Wu and Dr. Karin Taylor Wu

37 cards • 978-184819-150-1 • \$25.00

The Stems and Branches are fundamental to understanding much of the Chinese medicines and arts. This set of study cards decodes some of the fundamental messages from the 22 GanZhi symbols. The Chinese character and key characteristics of each Stem or Branch are shown, providing invaluable insights into their symbolic and numerological meanings. With the stroke order clearly illustrated on separate cards, this set is essential for practitioners of Chinese medicine, acupuncture, Feng Shui, Chinese astrology, Daoist studies, and inner cultivation practices (Qigong, Bagua, XingYi and Taiji) and anyone studying Chinese calligraphy.



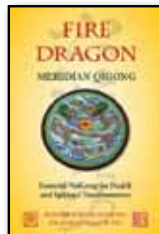
Additional recent and bestselling titles from Master Wu . . .

FIRE DRAGON MERIDIAN QIGONG

Essential NeiGong for Health
and Spiritual Transformation

Master Zhongxian Wu
and Dr. Karin Taylor Wu

200pp • 6x9.25 • Paperback
163 black and white illustrations
ISBN: 978-1-84819-103-7 • \$24.95



CHINESE SHAMANIC COSMIC ORBIT QIGONG

Esoteric Talismans, Mantras,
and Mudras in Healing
and Inner Cultivation

Master Zhongxian Wu
112pp • 5.5x8.5 • Paperback
24 black and white illustrations
ISBN: 978-1-84819-056-6 • \$19.95



Best
Seller

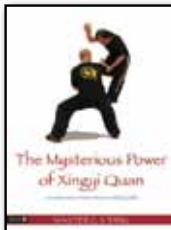
More new titles from Singing Dragon . . .

THE MYSTERIOUS POWER OF THE XINGYI QUAN

A Complete Guide to History
Weapons and Fighting Skills

Master C. S. Tang

352pp • 7.5x10 • Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-84819-140-2 • \$49.95



WARRIOR GUARDS THE MOUNTAIN

The Internal Martial Traditions
of China, Japan and South East
Asia

Alex Kozma

352pp • 6x9.25 • Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-84819-124-2 • \$35.00

"A wonderful book and destined to become a classic reference for anyone interested in the lineages and practices of any of the internal martial traditions of Asia."

—Red Pine/Bill Porter, author of *Road to Heaven*



CHINESE MEDICAL QIGONG

Editor in Chief:
Tianjun Liu, OMD

Associate Editor in Chief:
Xiao Mei Qiang

May 2013 • 472pp • 7x10 • Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-84819-096-2 • \$29.95



New
Paper
back

"Chinese Medical Qigong is the definitive work on this ancient medical system for the English-speaking world. It is an important addition to our understanding of the contribution of Chinese culture, tradition, and science to the art of healing."

—Larry Dossey, MD, author of *Healing Words*
and *The Power of Premonitions*

New from Damo Mitchell . . .

HEAVENLY STREAMS Meridian Theory in Nei Gong

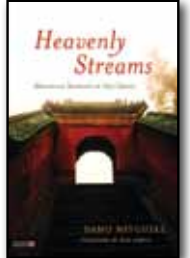
Damo Mitchell

Foreword by Rob Aspell

304pp • 6x9.25 • Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-84819-116-7 • \$29.95

"Delivered with an informal familiarity that has already sparked so many imaginations at Damo's course lectures across Europe and the United States, *Heavenly Streams* peels away Daoism's persistently obscure mystical dogma to put today's practitioners in touch with internal arts and the energetic realm."

—Steve Galloway, Taiji Teacher and
Owner of the Taiji Online website



DAOIST NEI GONG The Philosophical Art of Change

Damo Mitchell

Foreword by Dr. Cindy Engel

240pp • 6x9.25 • Paperback
ISBN: 978-1-84819-065-8 • \$24.95

"This book drills down into the golden core of the ancient Chinese art and science of internal self-cultivation known as 'Chi Gung' or 'energy work', and after reading it, you'll understand why Chi Gung is the best way on earth to protect your health, prolong your life, and clarify your awareness of both aspects of the 'Three Treasures' of life — mortal body, breath, and mind; and immortal essence, energy, and spirit."

—Daniel Reid, author of
The Art and Alchemy of Chinese Tea



Best
Seller

*See Damo Mitchell at the NQA Conference
in Valley Forge, PA, July 26-28, 2013*



SINGING DRAGON

to order, call toll-free: 1-866-416-1078 or visit our website: www.singingdragon.com