

Teachings of the Hui-Ming Ching & Liu Hua-Yang - Eva Wong

They are concrete and straightforward. They can straightforward. They can be summarized as follows:

- 1. When we were in our mother's womb, we were filled with the primordial energy of the Tao. In the natal state, original nature and the energy of life are united.*
- 2. At birth we come into contact with the world. When air is inhaled through the nostrils, the primordial breath within is contaminated and the connection with the Tao is broken. Original nature and life energy separate, the former moving to the heart and the latter moving to the kidneys.*
- 3. At puberty, sexual desire is aroused. When the primordial life force is transformed into procreative energy, it begins to leak out of the body. The leakage of life energy is the primary cause of aging, illness, and premature death.*
- 4. If the leakage is stopped and the procreative energy is drawn back into the body, the energy will be transformed into the primordial vapor of the Tao. When there are no openings for the vapor of life to escape, it will circulate through the Microcosmic Orbit in the body. In the Hui-ming ching, this circuit is called the Dharmic Wheel.*
- 5. With time, enough vapor will gather to form a bundle of energy in the lower tan-tien. This bundle of energy is the spirit-fetus.*
- 6. The spirit-fetus is nourished by the primordial vapor until it is mature. This process is called the incubation of the fetus.*
- 7. When the spirit-fetus is ready to be born, it will exit the body at the top of the head. Manifesting as multiple entities, the spirit becomes omniscient and the practitioner can see the past and the future.*
- 8. Initially, the spirit-child hovers around the head of the practitioner. But as it matures, it will travel farther and farther from the shell that conceived it. In its journey to the different realms of existence, it will learn how to return to the Tao.*
- 9. Finally, when the spirit has completed its training, the practitioner willingly gives up the shell to liberate the spirit for its final return to the Tao.*

As a spiritual text, the Hui-ming ching offers profound insights on the meaning of health, longevity, and immortality. The Wu-Lui masters believed that the goal of cultivating body and mind is to prepare for death as well as to prolong life. Thus, the Hui-ming ching is a book on how to live and how to die. Unlike Taoist alchemy of the third through the tenth centuries, Wu-Lui Taoism does not try to escape death or believe that immortality can be attained in the physical body. Accepting that the physical body has a life span, the Wu-liu Taoist believed that the goal of life is to recover the primordial vapor of the Tao and liberate it at death. In this revolutionary redefinition of immortality, the Taoist arts of the health and longevity are not so much a mean to attain eternal life on earth or in other realms as a way to recover our connection with the Tao so that the spirit can return to its original home when our time in the earthly realm is over.

How the child of the Buddha is cultivated, and how the Tao is attained.

The four seven-word phrases read: "If you want to stop the leakage and attain the indestructible golden body, focus on the radiance and do not leave the happy grounds. Practice diligently to temper the root of life. Always keep the true self hidden in its home." The circle in the abdominal area of the figure is the cavity called the Gate of Life (ming-men). The path that leads from the cavity to the outside is called the path of leakage. The One cavity is the root of the void. It has neither shape nor form. When the original vapor emerges, the cavity appears; when circulation is at rest, the cavity disappears. The One cavity is the place where the sacred is hidden. It is the altar of life, and it has many names-the Palace of the Dragon at the Bottom of the Sea, the Land of the Snowy Mountain, the Western Realm, the Original Gate, the Land of Great Happiness, and the Home of the Limitless. If the practitioner of the arts of longevity does not understand this cavity, he or she will wander through thousands of lifetimes not knowing where to look.

Before we were born, we were a fetus, a round shape inside our mother's womb. When the womb is filled with the primordial vapor, the shape inside stirs, the shell breaks, and like a mountain crashing down, the fetus tumbles out. In the infant's first cry, original nature and life are separated. From then on, original nature does not recognize life and life does not communicate with original nature. Thus we go from infancy to youth and from youth to old age and death.

The Tathagata Buddha in his compassion has revealed a method that will help people to return to the womb. Uniting original nature, life, spirit, and vapor and returning them to the one cavity can recover our true essence. It is as if the original vapor of our parents has reentered this cavity to create a fetus.

When the process of firing is complete, the true image will come from the west. This is the key to everything. The secret lies in inhalation and exhalation. The coming and going of the breath are like opening and closing a circuit. The true intention must rise and fall in the internal world. This movement is likened to letting go of oneself and yielding to others. Two sets of phrases accompany this picture. The first set consists of four seven-word phrases that read: "The Patriarch of Buddhism has opened up the road to return to the beginning, revealing the city of happiness in the western realm. Turn the Dharma Wheel constantly to lift yourself to the celestial realm. Make the breath subtle in inhalation and exhalation to return it to the earth."

The four five-word phrases read: "Timing is divided into six segments. In one instance you will return to the origin. The Tao emerges from it. You need not look for methods outside."

There are six segments on the ascending part of the wheel (the right half) and six on the descending part (the left half). At the top of the wheel is the sky; at the bottom is earth. These points represent the transition between the ascending and descending segments. Ascent is inhalation and descent is exhalation. The processes of purification and cleansing occur at the midpoints of the ascending and descending pathway of the Dharmic Wheel

The four seven-word phrases read: "The Original Gate and the path of subtle breath are revealed. When all thoughts cease, the Dharmic Wheel will circulate in the hundred channels. Always tend and stoke the fires in the cavity of longevity. Pay attention to the bright pearl and the gate that transcends death." Liu Hua-yang goes on to say that this picture is the same as the previous one (fig. z) and that he is describing identical processes of transformation in slightly different terms so that readers will not miss his message.

This fetus has neither shape nor form. It is created from two substances and is produced by the spiritual vapor within. First the spirit enters the vapor, then the vapor embraces the spirit. When spirit and vapor are united and intention is still, the fetus will emerge. When the vapor coagulates, the spirit will become numinous. The scripture describes the two substances as "coming close and responding to each other " Nourishing one another, the two will grow and mature. When vapor is sufficient, the fetus will become round. Eventually it will emerge from the head. This phenomenon is called the fetus emerging when the form is complete. The fetus of the Tao is also called the Child of the Buddha.

The two seven-word phrases read: "Apply the method without effort and diligently let the radiance penetrate. Forget the form and take care of the internals to help the true spirit grow." The two five-word phrases read: "Incubate the fetus with fire for ten months. Bathe and cleanse it in warmth for a year "

The Hua-Yen Scripture says, "A hundred rays of light came forth from the top of the Lord Buddha's head and a thousand-petaled lotus emerged from the light. On the lotus is the Tathagata Buddha. Ten rays of a hundred sacred lights are seen radiating from his head and spreading to all directions. Everyone who saw it welcomed the light-emanating Tathagata." The spirit described in the scripture is the emerging yang-spirit.

The four phrases read: "The body beyond the body is called the face of the Buddha. The spirit-mind without the mind is the Bodhi. The thousand petals of the lotus are emanations of the vapor. A hundred rays of light will shine on the image when the spirit is gathered."

A "As mind divides and shape emerges, the true form rises from the cavity. Together with the spirit, it is transformed into the void."

B "when there is nothing coming in or going out, the wonderful Tao is realized. The form divides into spirit-bodies to return origin."

The four phrases read: "The spirit fire is transformed into an empty form. The light of the original nature radiates within to return to its true origin. The mind's seal hangs high in the sky like the shadow of the pure moon. The raft reaches the shore in the glow of the light of the sun."

The four seven-word phrases on the right and left of the circle read: "One bright ray of light hovers over the dharma universe. When both are forgotten, stillness is numinous and empty. In the void of the great expanse, the celestial mind shines. The waters of the ocean are clear and the moon is reflected in the deep lake." The pair of four-word phrases above the circle read: "When there is no birth, there will be no death. Nothing leaves and nothing comes."

The pair of seven-word phrases below the circle read: "When the clouds scatter, the sky is blue and the mountain scapes are clear. Returning to life in Chan stillness, the full moon stands alone."

Fire must be accompanied by wind before it can be effective. Moreover, there must be a place for the vapor to be collected and stored. The intelligent ones of both past and present all used the method of wind and fire to cultivate original nature and life. It is a pity that nowadays many are uninformed and only a few know the secret teachings. Most people cultivate original nature but neglect to preserve life. Because they do not understand the principles of movement and stillness, all their efforts have come to nothing. The root of life is in the kidneys. When the kidneys are active, water is produced. The root of original nature is in the heart. When the heart is active, fire is produced. If the fire is immersed in water, original nature and life will not dissipate. Fan the fire with wind to produce the true seed. The method is straightforward, and those who understand it will cultivate the true seed and attain enlightenment. Wait when it is still; gather when it stirs. Put both substances (life and original nature) in the same furnace. This process is called transformation by fire. When the seed of enlightenment is mature, the warrior fire should be stopped and the scholar fire should be used to incubate and gather the vapor of life. To incubate means to preserve. When a bright pearl appears, all the monsters will be dissolved. Gently circulate the pearl through the path of the Great Channel. When the fetus of the Tao is completely formed, your intelligence will increase a thousand fold. For when the Tao has reached the height of stillness, it will move again. The wheel starts to turn at the time of tzu (11:00 P.M. To 1:00 A.M.). The movement of the true substance must be anchored in stillness: this is the key to rebuilding the wondrous way and reestablishing life. When stillness is anchored, the limits of the limitless are reached.

Wind and fire must be used together. Inhalation and exhalation must work in synchrony to fan the fire and transform the energy into vapor. The intention must be directed to the vapor's cavity and the breath must be used to reverse the flow. It is important that these two functions be performed together

If you do not understand the function of movement, your meditation will be unproductive. Practicing the incorrect method will not only hinder progress but also cause you to regress, so that all your efforts will come to nothing. Life energy is primordial vapor. When vapor stirs, it becomes water. Original nature is the true intention. When intention moves, it becomes fire. The heart's intention must be directed to be united with the vapor of the kidneys. When the vapor is attracted to intention, it will not flow outside. Wind is breath and fire is intention. Although the leakage is curbed when vapor is attracted by intention, there may be remnants of untransformed life energy left in the body. If you follow these methods, your desires will disappear naturally and the mind will be still. This is what is meant by "using the Tao to tame the mind and using the mind to connect with the Tao." With practice, the celestial movement will be initiated in the body. Substance will emerge from non-substance, and the true seed pear. Tao is in your lifetime. However, if you do not receive the transmission, you will not be able to intuit the teaching no matter how hard you try. Many Ch'uan Buddhists only teach people how to empty their minds and sit

in stillness. The method that I am expounding, however, will teach you how to gather the true seed, refine it, and transform it into the Child of the Buddha. The key to this method is, before movement occurs, you must abide in stillness and wait for the movement to happen; when movement occurs, you should use intention to hold it.

When life energy moves, intention moves. When life energy is still, intention is still. The shadowy monsters in the body are the dark vapors of untransformed energy. Appearing as hallucinations or dreams, these vapors can block bodily functions and cause illness. In meditation they appear as monsters, and in dreams they appear as wild animals. The dark vapors are dangerous because they can dissipate life energy and harm the seed of the Buddha. If you sense their presence, you must increase wind and fire to refine and temper yourself. Burn the monsters with fire, drive away the shadowy ghosts with wind, and you will not meet with danger. When the monsters no longer appear, use intention to incubate and care for the seed. Initiate the movement of the Dharmic Wheel. Use the warrior fire to control the rise and fall of energy and use the scholar fire to bathe and purify it. The flow and the ebb of fire also have their warrior and scholar components. Although your teacher may reveal the secrets of these functions to you, you will need to use your intuition to grasp the subtleties.

This is a critical time in your training and you should be extremely careful. When the seed of the Buddha is conceived, stop the breath of the warrior fire and use the scholar fire to draw the sacred light inward. Simultaneously, use the true intention to nourish it and protect it from danger. When the proper foundations are built, the seed of the Buddha is ready to be born. The seed is the bright pearl. When it is mature, it will have a definite shape and form. When the bright pearl emerges, the hundred monsters are driven away. This process is called absolute extinction.

When the seed enters the Central Palace, white hair will become dark, fallen teeth will grow again, and intelligence and intuition will be enhanced. You will know the past and the future, and your wisdom will be limitless. At this time, if you use the scholar fire to steam and bathe the seed, nothing can go wrong. Once you have understood the procedures, the knowledge will always be with you.

If stillness is stagnant, there will be no breath in the fetus and you will be trapped in unproductive meditation. If stray thoughts arise, the fetus will wander off, the fire will cool, the vapor will dissipate, and nothing will be accomplished. Whether stillness can be maintained in the womb will depend on the state of mind. In the ten months of incubating the fetus, the intention must be focused on the womb. When thoughts cease and the breath is still, the fetus will mature. The Hua-yen Scripture says, "When absolute stillness takes hold, Ch'uan will anchor knowing." This is what is meant by "not entering the path of death."

If you see snow or flowers fluttering around while you are meditating, you will know that the fetus is mature. At this time, images of the emerging fetus will begin to appear. It is important that you allow the fetus to come out. If you keep it in the womb, the spirit will not become numinous. Thus, although the fetus is mature, it will not accomplish anything.

Liu Hua-yang said:

When you first learn to cultivate life, you should practice your meditation in a quiet room. The body should be like a tree and the mind should be like cold ashes. Let the light of the spirit be your guide. Put original nature and life in the same place. This is the first step in cultivating the Tao.

When stillness has reached its height, movement will begin. This movement is the root and leaf of the Tao, the creator of all things. When energy swirls in the One cavity, draw it in and do not let the life force flow outside. Hold on to it, let it grow, and then harmonize and dissolve it within. In this way, the foundation of the fetus of the true seed will be strong. These are the teachings of the True Way.

The rise and fall of the fire in the furnace is controlled by intention. When intention is still, the precious substance will be born. This is what the Tathagata Buddha meant by "lighting the fires of the furnace." If you see the image of the Shakyamuni Buddha before you, do not be afraid. When movement begins, you must be careful. Do not allow the substance to leak outside. After the movement has penetrated the mouth of the Ganga River, it will climb to the top of Mount Sumeru. When it enters the Flower Realm of the Southern Splendor, you will find yourself seated in the sacred hall of the Buddha of Light. Suddenly flurries of snow, falling like spring rain, will swirl around in the Central Palace. This is a sign that you have conceived the fetus of the Tao. Now you must sit in peace, contentment, and stillness. Cultivate the fetus by not thinking about it. Help it to grow by incubating it in stillness and bathing it in light. When stillness is absolute, you will suddenly see a bright moon suspended in the sky. Hold on to the round moon and wait. Soon a shaft of light from the red sun will rise toward the center of the moon. At this time you should gather the light and hide it within. When all is still, you should practice the method of dissolution by returning both the substance and non-substance to the undifferentiated chaos. This is called wu-wei. The meditation room should be located in a place where you will not be disturbed. When you meditate, you must let go of form. Attain stillness but do not attend to the mind. Draw the light inward and let original nature enter the palace of life. In this way, original nature and life will be cultivated simultaneously. When true stillness takes hold, movement will begin. This is not conscious intention or activity in the mind but the movement of vapor in the tan-t'ien. When the external kidneys [the testes] are drawn in and the mind is like clear water, how can there be sexual desire? When the seed is directed inward by the wind, how can there be desire in the mind? These things are part of the natural way of the Tao and are the forces that move the sky and the earth. Everything must happen naturally. The mind must not be engaged. This is the key to transforming the ordinary into the sacred. Everything hinges on the secret of the clockwise and counterclockwise movement.

Breathing consists of inhalation and exhalation. However, if intention is not present, the breath in the tan-t'ien cannot be regulated. The correct method of breathing involves steaming and incubating. When the life energy has returned to the place of its origin, the breath will be soft and intangible. At this time the true intention must be used to guard the energy. Treat it like sparks in the furnace. When intention and vapor are united, they will be transformed into the true seed. Out of nothingness, a substance will emerge. This is how life energy and original mind are cultivated simultaneously. If you stray from this path, your efforts will come to nothing. Life energy

originates in the tan-tien. From there it flows up the back and down the front of the body. This circuit is called the Dharmic Wheel. Both internal and external breathing drives the movement of the life energy. When the external breath descends, the internal breath rises; when the external breath rises, the internal breath descends. Moving in synchrony with the breath, the energy first swirls to the top of the head and then drops into the abdomen. This is what the Sixth Patriarch [Huineng] meant when he said, "I have a substance. Upward, it supports the sky. Downward, it sinks into the earth."

If you want to return to the original ground, you must contain and gather the vapor. Let the energy rise and fall. Steam it and incubate it. When you have understood this method and practiced it, the cavity of life will gradually be filled with vapor. If you can maintain your stillness, the celestial movement will begin. When the vapor circulates through the body, the yang substance will be full and numinous and you will feel happy and harmonious. When the substance becomes numinous, it should be gathered and circulated. Let it flow through the three gates and direct it into the Central Palace. This method has been kept secret for a long time because no one has dared to talk about it.

Virtue is the structure of the Tao, and original mind is its function. If you follow a teacher but do not cultivate virtue, the teachings will not take hold. Virtue is related to the Tao as feathers are related to a bird. If either is missing, nothing will be accomplished. Knowledge of the method, hard work, and charitable deeds are all required for the true intuition to take hold. There are many people who, while claiming to cultivate the Tao, are attached to power, fame, recognition, and wealth. Do not be deceived by them. You must acquire the Buddha Body before you can master the way of the Buddha.

The furnace is in the tan-t'ien and the intention must be directed to it. The Tathagata said, "If you do not know where the mind and the eyes are located, you cannot conquer the dust and sweep away the troubles." Whether or not the substance will emerge from the furnace will depend on the strength of the true intention. The substance is the primordial vapor. The Tathagata of the Purple Light tells us that when the fire is warm and movement is initiated, the Child of the Buddha will be conceived. Internally, you will experience sensations of warmth; externally, you will see images. These images can make you anxious if you do not understand the true teachings. When images appear, do not be afraid. Maintain stillness regardless of what you see. If the mind is stirred or if the spirit is dulled, the seed of the Buddha will dissipate.

The spinal column is sometimes called the Ganga River or the Tsao stream. If its course is blocked, you must direct the true intention to clear the river mouth and open the pathway that leads to the top of the head. The top of the head is called Mount Sumeru. The throat is called the many-story pagoda because it is divided into twelve segments. Wisdom emerges when the circuit is connected to the origin. It is said that when the Discourse on the Dharmic Law was first expounded, the Dragon Lady presented a pearl to the south, transformed herself into a man, and attained Buddhahood. The south symbolizes the cavity of the mind. In its mundane state, the mind prefers movement to stillness. It wants to be excited by new things; it shifts and stirs; it enters and leaves the cavity casually; and it does not know how to return to its original home.

The cavity of the Sacred (Central) Palace is located below the heart. It is where the fetus of the Tao is nourished. When the Child of the Buddha enters this place, the body will feel like floating clouds and falling rain. The hundred channels will be open and circulation will flow to the four limbs. When this happens, you must immediately rotate the mind's eye left and then right thirty-six times. Next, rotate it right and then left twenty-four times. Finally, you should let it settle in stillness. Original nature and life will now be gathered in the Central Palace to nurture the fetus of the Tao. Once you have reached this stage of development, you will never lose what you have attained. You will be in a state of bliss and happiness because you have now entered the true stillness of ch'an. When the fetus of the Tao is first conceived, the post-creation breath is still tangible although elusive. This state is called forgetting the form. At this time you must direct your intention to the spiritual womb and maintain absolute stillness. Do not become sleepy or bored. Be alert and awake at all times. This state is called illuminating the form.

When you see the moon rise from the tan-t'ien, use the true intention to hold it. Unite the sun and moon, gather them, and hide them within. Remain in the absolute stillness of the void and let no thoughts arise. When everything has returned to the origin, the Great Tao will emerge. Movement will begin again when stillness has reached its limits. The pure yang substance will rise from the Bubbling Spring and enter the Central Palace to embrace the fetus of the Tao. After this substance has merged with the fetus of the Tao, it will descend to the lower tan-t'ien and flow to the base of the spine. From there it will rise to the top of the head and then drop into the Central Palace again. This precious substance is the source of nourishment for the fetus. When nostril breathing becomes faint and intangible, supreme stillness will take hold and the circulation in the six channels in the arms will be at rest. When you see flowers falling, you will know that the fetus is mature; if not, the fetus is still incomplete. When you see images of falling flowers, you should let the intention emerge from stillness. Direct it to leap out of the Central Palace; channel it to the crown of the head; and then guide it down to the Life Gate. These are the sensations that accompany the emergence of the Tathagata, and they are described by the Hua-yen Scripture as "rays of light emanating from the World Honored One."

When the spirit first leaves the body, images of Bodhisattvas may appear. If they talk to you, do not answer them and do not let your intention wander. Let the spirit leave and enter naturally but do not allow it to travel far. The emerging spirit should not be attached to the ten thousand myriad things. When a wheel of bright light appears, move your Dharma Body toward the light. Merge with it and draw it into the mundane body. Once the mundane body and the Dharma Body are united, feed it with the energy of life. Gradually the mundane body will be transformed into vapor. If the mundane body is not nourished by the golden light, impurities will settle, and the body will not be transformed into vapor. The amount of impurities collected will depend on the amount of virtue and merit you have accumulated. The secret teachings of the celestial wheel have now been completely revealed.

Liu Hua-yang said:

In the way of the Tao and the Buddha, the dragon symbolizes original nature and life and the tiger The dragon represents movement and the tiger represents stillness, and the cycle of movement and stillness is the key to the secret work in the body. The ancient Buddhas said that the great Tao cannot be attained without the knowledge of original nature and life. All the Buddhas and the patriarchs attained enlightenment by cultivating and refining original nature and life according to the principles of stillness and movement.

If you sit in silence but do not understand the unity of original nature and life, you will be trapped in unproductive stillness and will never find the true seed. When movement stops, stillness is manifested as non-differentiation—this is called ch'an. At the height of stillness, movement will begin again—this is called chi. At this time you must hurry and gather that which is round and spinning about. Initiate the movements of opening and closing and set the primordial workings of the Dharmic Wheel in motion. In this way the true precious seed will return deep into the roots. The ancient sages called this the way of recovering life and returning to the origin. Gather the seed of the Buddha by exchanging action for non-action. Illuminate it in silence and stillness. Where the heart and the eyes meet is where you will find the pearl of Shakyamuni. The pearl shines like cinnabar and is shaped like a snowflake. It tastes like thick soup and is sweet like honey. Active and playful, it flows everywhere. You must not be anxious or suspicious when you are practicing the secret work. Wait patiently for the circulation to occur. This is a most wonderful and effective way of gathering the essence of life. When energy moves, it will penetrate the three iron gates. This is called transcending mortality and entering the sacred.

When the sacred pearl of Shakyamuni has returned to the center, you should hold on to it gently and let it glow—this is ch'an. In the stillness of ch'an, you will feel a deep sense of happiness and bliss. However, in the center of non-action, suddenly there will be action—this is chi. If non-action is not named chi (or movement), people will not know that such a wondrous thing exists and will only focus on the womb of the fetus. When the wonderful substance has run its course and is guided back to the womb to settle in prolonged stillness—this is ch'an, or the process of extinguishing birth and death. When stillness is absolute, a substance will suddenly appear—this is chi. Waiting for it to gather—this is ch'an. When it emerges—this is chi. Gather and hide it, letting it glow softly while holding on to it—this is ch'an. When it is illuminated in stillness, two substances will flow out of the Bubbling Spring cavity—this is chi. After gathering it, there is a period of stillness—this is ch'an, or the process of dissolution. When everything is dissolved, snowflakes will be seen fluttering around—this is chi. At this time, you should come out of stillness without delay. If you let the seed stay in the womb, the mysterious transformation will be lost. When the fetus emerges, it will be liberated from the three realms. Waiting in stillness for it to emerge completely—this is ch'an. When a shaft of golden light is suspended in space—this is chi. Gather and direct it inward, letting stillness settle in stillness—this is ch'an. After a long period of stillness, form and spirit will both dissolve?

When we were born, we were endowed with original nature and life. To attain the Tao is to recover the original nature and life that were once a part of us. The dragon and the tiger symbolize original nature and life, and the natures of the dragon and the tiger are manifested as movement and stillness. Movement is called chi and stillness is called ch'an.

The nature of mind is described as ch'an and the nature of the kidneys is described as chi. When we are conceived in our mother's womb, the vapors of our father and mother are joined. A point of numinous light, which is original nature, is enclosed in the fetus. This is what the ancients meant by "harmonizing the three families to produce the body." At birth we scream and tumble out of the mother's womb onto the ground. Original nature moves to the heart and life enters the kidneys. The two are separated by eight and four-tenths inches and for most people, original nature and life remain apart through old age to death.

At about fifteen or sixteen years of age, the primordial vapor of pre-creation hidden in the tan-t'ien begin to stir. When the way of post-creation directs the order of things, the vapor of pre-creation is excited. If this vapor is not cultivated when it first stirs, it will force open the gates of yang, be transformed into its post-creation form, and dissipate out of the body.

When chi [movement] occurs, images appear internally and the testes are stimulated externally. The patriarch Chi-wu [Absolute Emptiness] said, "Direct the spirit into the cavity and the vapor will return to its cavity naturally." The World Honored One said, "Where the heart is, there are the eyes." To unite the heart and the kidneys is to direct the heart to the kidneys. When the flow is clockwise, the vapor becomes procreative energy and will leak out of the body. When the flow is reversed, or counterclockwise, the vapor is transformed into the primordial vapor, which is the precious substance of life. Chi is movement. The primordial vapor is the life force. When the vapor is stirred, it will dissipate. When it dissipates, life is lost. Those who cultivate the Tao must not let the life force dissipate. They must contain it within so that they can realize the Tao. This vapor is the energy that creates life. There, fore it is called the precious substance.

When movement is at rest, the yang force will not be excited and the life energy will not stir. When movement ceases, you should draw the light inward and stop all thoughts and action. This state is called ch'an, or stillness. If you collect the substance at the appropriate time, you will be able to gather the true seed. Draw the substance into the Central Palace and apply the method of closing and opening. Closing and opening refer to internal and external breathing. When inhalation and exhalation are in synchrony, the primordial gate will open and the true seed can enter the path of the jen and tu meridians. Because the breath is used to chase the seed through these channels, this technique is called the Method of the Primordial Movement of the Dharmic Wheel.

The seed is hidden in the lower tan-tien. When it circulates, it will return to the original cavity of life. All this is accomplished by turning the Dharmic Wheel. The Child of the Buddha is produced when original nature and life are refined. Wind is used to fan the circulation and draw the light inward. The inward gaze must be sustained for seven days. The mind and the eyes should be directed to the Child so that the three are intertwined. The womb inside is red but the light emanating outside is white. When the tan-tien becomes warm, sweet nectar will collect

in the mouth. The intention must be still when the Child emerges from the furnace. After the Child is conceived, the fetus and intention must be circulated together. Use softness to subdue hardness and collect that which is flowing with movement. In the cultivation of life, there is no other method than this.

There are three openings along the spine. On the left and right of each opening are three cavities that are aligned on top of each other. The Child of the Buddha is tempered in the area below the navel. Once the Child is mature, it must leave its magical environment. If it does not leave, it will have been conceived in vain. When you apply heat to incubate the area below the heart and above the kidneys, you will be enveloped by a bundle of the great harmonious vapor of the celestial realm. You will be in a state of bliss and feel as if you are intoxicated. The Buddha called it the three flavors of ch'an stillness. The Taoists called it the sweet dew that hangs suspended in the middle of space.

When the primordial and mundane vapors are at rest, something will emerge from the tantien. Glowing brightly and suspended in the middle of space, this thing is shapeless and formless. After two or three cycles of inhalation and exhalation, something else will emerge in the tan-tien. Formless and glowing, it is the same substance that appeared earlier. At this time, you must use the secret method of the celestial order to gather the light into the womb. Empty your thoughts and cease all actions. Be absolutely still but remain alert. Two streams of the yang substance will then rise from the Bubbling Spring cavity to the top of the head and fall into the Central Palace. When there is no breath coming from the nostrils, the six meridians are at rest. When there is no coming out and going in, you have attained the true reality. Do not let the fetus come out too quickly. When the fetus emerges from the top of the head, it will hover a foot or two above the body. The methods of ch'an kept secret over hundreds of years have now been completely revealed.

The First Step in refining the mind is to tame the impure mind. The impure mind is filled with thoughts and idle chatter. Thoughts come from desire, and idle chatter is born from ignorance. When you first practice meditation, you should set aside desire and sever your attachment to the world. Stop the wandering thoughts and the idle chatter. Use the method of observing stillness to dissolve everything into nothingness. Focus on the area behind the navel and in front of the Life Gate. Below it, inside, there is an empty circle. This is where you should direct your inward gaze. Illuminate the mind and suspend it in the sky. Gather it with energy and keep it within the limits. Let the coming and going hover within the square in the circle. Let every breath return to the root to be united with the natural act of creation. You must be firm and still or the mysterious work within will not be clear and clean. The ray of internal light must be connected to the true breath and stay in a state of non-differentiation and stillness. This is the preliminary work of refining the mind and cultivating the vapor.

The Second Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the mind of stillness. If the ray of internal light is united with the true energy, it will penetrate the primal darkness and emerge through the mysterious opening. If the mind is unstable, the knowledge spirit will lead it astray. If mind and vapor are separated, we will not be able to see our original face. The important thing here is not to let knowledge and sense drift when the mind and the breath are in union. Keep the mind within the energy but do not attend to it. Let the energy embrace the mind but do not think about it. In chaos and non-differentiation, let them become one. This is the work of refining the mind to unite it with energy.

The Third Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the mind to return it to its proper place. In the previous stage, you have experienced the all-embracing undifferentiated oneness. When yin sinks to its lowest point, the first ray of yang returns. This phenomenon is called the emergence of the mind of the sky and the earth in the One Mysterious Cavity. At this time, generative [ching], vital [chi], and spiritual [shen] energy are in the state of pre-creation. In the primal beginning, the three energies are not differentiated, and if the mind is still, this primal energy can be gathered and circulated. When the energy is gathered, you will see things you have never seen and hear sounds you have never heard. But if the mind is not still, everything will fail and the energy will fall into the realm of post-creation. The undifferentiated vapor will be separated into mundane generative, vital, and spiritual energy. The important thing here is that when the Mysterious Gate [or One cavity] first appears, you must step onto the cloud of fire immediately and chase the vapor to the Tail Bone cavity. Calm the mind, soften the breath, hit the iron drum, penetrate the three gates, and let the vapor rest at K'un-lun. This is the work of refining the mind and chasing the vapor.

The Fourth Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the hidden mind. In the previous stage, you have stepped onto the cloud of fire, penetrated the three gates, and directed the mind and vapor to enter the Mud Ball cavity. However, if the knowledge spirit is active in the Mud Ball cavity, the vapor will chill and it will not be transformed into the true water. As a result, all the work accomplished in the Three Palaces will come to nothing. The important thing here is to know what should happen on the top of K'un-lun. Use the mind to direct the breath upward so that stillness can be united with the vapor when the vapor becomes sweet nectar, it will flow from the palate of the mouth down the tongue into the throat. Running down the Descending Tower, it will enter the Yellow Palace and empty into the Primal Ocean. Roaring like thunder, it will sink to the bottom of the sea to wait for the Mysterious Gate to appear again. This is the work of refining the mind to attain the vapor.

The Fifth Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the mind of good foundation. In the previous stage, the vapor has entered the Mud Ball cavity, the life force has returned to the vapor's cavity, and the waterwheel has been initiated. From now on, you should have only one concern—and this is, do not let the circulation get idle. The foundation is built in one hundred days. If thoughts and desire arise, the foundation of the elixir will not be stable. Building the foundation requires gathering generative energy and uniting it with the spirit. If you do not work hard, generative energy and spirit will dissipate and you will not be able to lengthen your life and attain the Tao. The important thing here is to initiate the circulation in the hours of tzu (11:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M.) and wu (11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.). Replenish the fuel daily. Use K'an to fill Li. Store the generative energy and make the belly firm. This is the work of refining the mind and binding the breath.

The Sixth Step in refining the mind is to cultivate its realized nature. In the previous stage, the movement of the waterwheel has been initiated, the generative energy has been collected, and the spirit has been gathered. The root of the spirit is now steady and firm. From here on, the nectar of the heart will descend when the breath of the kidneys rises. This is the interaction of K'an and Li. In the undifferentiated chaos, you will hear the sound of waves rushing and roaring. One half of it is the breath of water; the other half is the breath of mist. This is the first stirring of metal and water. If the mind strays when it is time to cultivate the jade nectar and circulate the elixir, all previous efforts will be wasted. The important thing here is that metal and water must separate when they first emerge from the tan-tien. Their pathways must diverge before they flow to the Bubbling Spring cavity. When they are gathered at the Tail Bone cavity, true breathing will stop. When the breath is at rest, you must initiate movement immediately and let the energy flow up to the Celestial Valley cavity. Then you must swallow the vapor down the throat and let it sink into the Yellow [Central] Palace. If you nourish and moisten it constantly, the mind will be cool and clear. The blood will become thick, and intention will be gathered into the earth. Inside earth, mercury, which is the bright circle of the mind, is born. When the mind is round and clear, the spirit sword will be secure in your hand and you will be able to cut your attachments to the world. Mencius described this as penetrating the mind and knowing original nature. The Taoist immortals described this as cultivating the yin elixir and the internal pill. This is the work of refining the bright and original nature of the mind.

The Seventh Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the brightness of original nature. In the previous stage, you have tempered the metal, gathered the water, and initiated the waterwheel. These processes are all part of the internal refinement. Now you must work on external refinement and the union of the external and the internal. When the true mind is centered, it will not stray. However, although the internal body is bright, the mercuric substance can still escape, and although the internal refinement is complete, the yin elixir can still be ruined. If the purity of the vapor is not preserved, original nature may be lost. The important thing here is to put the clear and empty mind, the wondrous principles, and the right amounts of cinnabar and earth in the other's home. Let the other's home be empty and let yours be full. Let there be nothing in the other's home and let the substance be in yours. Use substance to attract nothingness and direct the substance into the void. When the mind is still as death, nature and life. This process is called the Great Return of the Elixir Its nature is fire and its number is seven. Life is associated with the element metal. The numeric of metal is nine, and when the nine returns to its origin, the "circulation of the seven and the return of the nine" is complete. From here on, lead will control mercury and the mind will always be bright and firm. This is the work of refining the mind to attain the spirit.

The Eighth Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the tamed mind and unite it with the spirit. In the previous stage, the seven has returned, the nine has been circulated, and the mind has attained perfect stillness when mercury has been subdued by lead. However, steaming and incubation are still required to transform the vapor into the spirit. The spirit resides in the body, but now and then it must travel outside. In the twelve months of the year, the months Mao [fourth month] and yu [tenth month] are used for bathing, and the remaining ten months are dedicated to regulating the flow and the ebb of energy. This process is called the ten months of incubation. If you mistake this to mean ten months in chronological time, the mind will not become numinous even if you have attained absolute stillness. If you refine and temper the mind, the spirit-mind will emerge. When the spirit moves, transformations will occur and the spirit will emerge from the body. At this time you must remain absolutely still and not be distracted by feelings of attachment. This is the work of refining the mind to penetrate the spirit.

The Ninth Step in refining the mind is to cultivate the mind already joined with the spirit and let it return to the void. In the previous stage, the spirit has emerged from the womb and is in a state of stillness. Now it should follow the movement of intention and travel without obstruction. Let it float with the clouds, wander to far-off places, or let it stay in a state of bliss. If the spirit-mind is not empty, however, it cannot embrace the ten thousand things. This is why the void needs to be cultivated. In cultivating the void, the heart should be empty and completely open. In clarity and stillness, the mind knows intuitively that it is at one with the sky and the earth. It knows that self is not self and emptiness is not empty. The world may be defiled but emptiness is untainted. The universe may be incomplete but emptiness is complete. The spirit fills the void and the Law of the Dharma embraces the illusory world. This is the culmination of the process of refining the mind.