

Mantak Chia Mastering Chi - Rob Sidon

Mantak Chia is perhaps the world's most widely known Taoist proponent and is credited for having disseminated much of its philosophy and practices in the West. Although of Chinese descent, Mantak Chia was born in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1944. His grandmother had opened the first Southern Baptist Church in Thailand, and he was raised to be a Biblical scholar. But as a young man, he met a Taoist Master named One Cloud Hermit, who demonstrated extraordinary powers and fully initiated Mantak into the ancient and for century's secretly guarded practices. Years later, as a married householder, Mantak Chia studied Western anatomy and medical science in Germany while managing an offset printing business. In 1979 he opened the Universal Tao Center in New York, which has taught tens of thousands of students (including over 2,000 certified instructors) throughout the world; and in 2000 he opened the Tao Garden near Chiang Mai, Thailand, which now serves as his principal training center for the Universal Tao System and publishing headquarters of Universal Tao Publications. Mantak Chia has authored 24 books, including the best sellers *The Taoist Secrets of Love: Cultivating Male Sexual Energy*, *The Multi-Orgasmic Male* and *The Multi-Orgasmic Couple* (both with Douglas Abrams).

I was granted the privilege of an extended phone interview for Common Ground's "Men" issue.

CG: We are delighted to speak with you. You are quoted as saying, "You can either pray 100,000 hours or you can consciously guide the sexual energy up the spine." That seems like an interesting platform from which to begin a dialogue. What is your meaning?

MC: According to a lot of religious practices, the number-one way of practice is celibacy and to keep concentrating high in order to guide the energy up. Most people don't understand that point. By praying, by thinking high, thinking of God in heaven, celibacy and no sex — eventually one day the energy will rise up to the head. But people have lost contact with the original purpose. So now they just pray and think of going to heaven, and that is the whole thing. In the Taoist way, the whole thing is drawing, or guiding, the energy upward — that is the heavenly way. It's the one that's going to raise your consciousness, raise your energy up into a high center.

CG: Many of our readers, myself included, have a very limited background in Taoism. Is Taoism a philosophy? A religion?

MC: It's both of them. In the beginning, according to Taoist history that goes back to the time when everybody was living in nature and in caves, they discovered the Universal Force, or what we call the Wu Chi, the Nothingness, and the Original Force. So in those times, the Chinese Taoists started connecting with nature and feeling the forces of nature. The religion was only set up when there were many people gathering together, and they wanted something to share and practice together. Eventually, the religious leaders wanted to control the people's minds, and that religion became a religious ritual. So in Taoism there are ten different branches of religious practice. But there is also another kind we call the non-religious, just-practicing Taoists. Most of them do not belong to any group. Most of them are in the mountains, do their practice, and come down to teach and help people. They do not have any religious contact. Usually these people learn from many systems — even systems such as Hinduism, Buddhism, everything. They combine all the things that are effective, and go to the mountains and practice them. They take out what is not necessary, including all the indications of religious contact. I come from this tradition because my master — after practicing for thirty years in the temples as well as in many other systems — finally decided to go to the mountain and practice things in this way. He was practicing and searching for all the masters in the mountains. Finally, he met my grand master, and he learned the whole system that he passed on to me. In the Taoism of my tradition, the origin goes back to the **Wu Chi**, the Supreme Natural Power in the universe. It means "nothingness." Now, in the religious Tao, they use Lao Tzu — the one who wrote the *Tao Te Ching* and is considered the leader. And, for some of the religious Taoists, they regard the Three Pure Ones — actually, three big stars in the universe — as the religious leaders; but there are many, many gods in the universe, all of whom are named after stars and constellations.

CG: You are apparently revered by many throughout the world for being the one to declassify the secrets of the Tao, which had for millennia been guarded by the emperors of China. How did this fate befall you? Has there been an backlash as a result of your opening up this information?

MC: Yes, I have had some of that. Some people come from a background of what they call their Tao lineage. They have come out from China and started teaching in the West, and they attacked me by saying that I have no lineage and no religion from a Tao Master — or any of the things they do to any person. I answered them that I don't care. I just do whatever I can; I just teach people. If the People like it, they come to me — if the people don't like me, they go. So I said, "I don't care about whether you have a big hat and a big robe on you or a scepter in your hand — or if you come from however many

generations of the lineage of the Tao master: I just told them that I am not a Master: I just say what ever I have to people. If it is useful to people and if people like me, they support me. That's all. It's just like anything — a baker, or a person from a very poor family can be a president of America. Like President Clinton — he had no father to bring him up. He just made himself, and he became the President. What's wrong with that?

CG: In many religious and mystical traditions, observances of celibacy are considered a byway towards the attainment of God, or God-Realization. What would you say to sincere spiritual seekers who might argue that putting so much emphasis on sexual energy is a detour, a “trap” of sorts?

MC: This is a very good question. Celibacy — no sex — and the Tao sexual practices: are they the same or not? In the Tao practice we conserve energy and transform it up to a higher level by not losing the sexual energy. Now, celibacy — or pray and no sex — is the same practice as what we've been doing. But we Taoists discovered it's not just celibacy. If you want to have sex, you can; if you want to have children, you can; if you want to have celibacy, you can. Whatever you do, learn how to transform your energy. So, the Tao sexual practice is that if you want to have sex, or make love, then learn to control, conserve and transform your sexual love-energy, because love energy is the best energy. Love and sex-energy is the most important energy in our cells. Without these two energies, the cells will not split and divide properly. Every day we need love, and every day we need sex. But when sex and love come together, a very special condition arises. Scientists have discovered that when people are feeling love, the frequency in the cells is about 8 Hz (Hertz) — and when you feel orgasm, it's also 8 Hz. This frequency is the frequency that will make the cells start to divide and split properly to form new cells. When the cells divide to form the next cell (two cells become three cells), we call this the original split. We are born from sex, and the first sex cells, male and female, receive the love and orgasm energy into the cells. Then when they split, they split the same energy out. That's why love and sex are so important. Without learning how to conserve and multiply the sexual energy, we have no way to do the higher level of practice. That's why the celibacy-with-no-sex practices and the sexual practice in the Tao are really the same.

CG: Your recent book titles, *The Multi-Orgasmic Man* and *The Multi-Orgasmic Couple*, are rather appetizing in their promise. Can you describe the premise of the Multi-Orgasm, particularly for a man? It is really in the grasp of, well ... a basic guy, someone like me for example?

MC: The whole thing is this: the orgasmic feeling, and bliss or ecstasy — they are the same. Only the names are different. When people are religious, they have no sex, they pray to God. And if they successfully pray to God and are channeling the sexual energy up, they feel the blissfulness, or what we call the orgasm. Some people say that it is different when we have sex and we have the orgasmic feeling of bliss. But in the Taoist practice, when you boil it down, it is the same thing. When both people are making love, you feel love and orgasm come together, and you channel this orgasm upward, rather than letting the orgasm go down, or outward. It's better not to let the love and orgasm energy go down and out of the body. Then we lose that orgasm, we lose that blissfulness. Now, orgasm and ejaculation are two different things. If you learn how to control and learn how to make love longer, you feel the orgasm. You learn how to contract the perineum/anus and draw this orgasmic energy upward into the brain. Then you start to have cell orgasm, brain orgasm and organs orgasm. This orgasmic energy is the most important energy in our cells and organs because it rebuilds them. It creates new cells and heals them. That's why the orgasm is important. If you ejaculate very quickly, there is nothing to multiply — the orgasm doesn't exist, and the loving energy doesn't multiply at all. So that's why the whole purpose is to teach people how to prolong sexual love longer and learn how to draw the orgasm energy upward. Then you feel the orgasm longer, and you feel the orgasm many times together.

CG: But it seems that the forces of biology are ferociously stacked against us. As you know, the male ejaculation has approximately 200 million frenzied sperm cells programmed to explode outwards, in the direction of the ovum, and if you add emotion or passion to the equation, well.

MC: You know, there is always the traditional way of thinking that you have to do that. You have “quickie” sex and the Western way of doing that, and the Western doctors say that you must have ejaculation. Otherwise, they say, it's not healthy for the prostate gland, and you'll get trouble — this and that. But this whole thing is the wrong perspective and the wrong practice. First you have to learn how to contract the perineum and contract the prostate gland, practicing what we call the “power lock” and the orgasmic upward draw. So, you learn how to contract your love muscle. You can learn how to control the prostate gland and control ejaculation. You can actually reverse the ejaculation backward and stop it there. Another thing: when people make love, the 200+ million sperm actually vibrate at a

very fast speed, creating the sexual energy. That is what we call orgasmic energy. This energy, if we know how to draw it up, will give us more energy. Now, if the sperm vibrate, and we let the sperm out, we lose the energy, and we have to rebuild the sperm again. Many of the holy men, monks and nuns know these things. By conserving the sexual energy and keeping sperm inside, they accumulate so much — so much! Then one day, the vibration of the sperm creates so much energy that the sexual energy rises up the spine with a sensation of blissfulness and comes up into the highest center.

CG: Are there any harmful effects of reversing the male ejaculate inwards and upwards and not out?

MC: The problem now is that a lot of monks and holy men have lost the understanding of what the sexual energy is. Because they think sex is bad, they don't want to talk about sex at all. All they do is just suppress, suppress, suppress, and they think that one day they will get it. Now we have so much sexual abuse in all the monk-hoods (Christian, Buddhist, etc.). Everywhere, there has been sexual abuse of children by monks; and many monks in Thailand also try to abuse and have sex with women — almost every week we get it in the news. There is nothing wrong with having sex. The major point is not to suppress sexual feelings, but you have to control them. And, if you can control your sexual energy without ejaculation and have many, many orgasms, you can harvest all the energy produced by the sperm into a higher center.

CG: There must be stories — perhaps you have your own — of men whose self-mastery of chi is the stuff of legend. It seems that true Tao Masters attain supernatural abilities, like Moses parting the seas! Am I exaggerating?

MC: To stop the Red Sea, is that right? Ha-ha. Actually it is not that difficult at all. We just have to practice a little bit of what we call the Power Lock, the Orgasmic Upward Draw, and massaging of the sexual organ. That's all. It just takes practice. It's just a circulation of energy. There have been a lot of reports now that say the monks have the highest rate of prostate cancer. It's because they never do anything with the sexual organ — I mean the unlucky monks. But the lucky monks do masturbation in the place they live (who's going to know that?); they don't suppress, and their prostate glands work, and they don't get the prostate problems.

Massaging, or exercising, the sexual organ will make you less sensitive by what we call the Indian rope-burning method: by pulling the sexual organ with the oil and by massaging the sexual organ every day. That is one thing. Learn how to strengthen your love muscle — or what we call the chi muscle or the PC muscle. Learn how to contract a little bit, lock, and go deeper into the prostate gland. Also learn to do simple abdominal breathing. Just get some practice that you need. You know, in the West, you spend a lot of time learning in order to get a doctor's degree. You spend a lot of time developing skills that you need for a sport. You see? Likewise, these skills can be compared to a doctor's degree or a sport skill. I think it is more important in my life than any other thing. So, you just have to do some practicing in the right way. That's all.

It's easier than you think. It's simple: Relax. When you're near ejaculation, relax, smile, relax, smile — and you control. Sometimes it's that easy, you know. Just try it out. Now, the next time when you make love, when you're near ejaculation, you just calm down, stop, tell your partner to relax, hug your partner, rest for a while and just smile. And when you get control, you lightly contract, contract, contract the perineum/anus, and finally you feel the energy go to your brain. That's all — simple. And you feel more energy after you have sex.

CG: Are Taoist adepts supposed to abstain altogether from ejaculation? Or is it OK on occasion? What is the right way?

MC: When you can control your ejaculation, you decide. It doesn't matter how long in between — some Taoists withhold for weeks, or months, or years. It depends. Sometimes you just go ahead and say: "OK, I want to have ejaculation."

CG: "The Million Dollar Point" is described in your teachings with regard to preventing ejaculation and raising sexual energy. What is this?

MC: The Million Dollar Point is a very useful intermediate step for men in the process of gaining control of ejaculation. It is used when the man realizes that he has reached or is close to "the point of no return" in the process of sexual arousal. It is important to understand that it must be used in combination with the Power Lock and the Orgasmic Upward Draw. The point is located in the perineum area just in front of the anus where a depression, or "hole," can be felt by pressing that area. That is where the prostate gland and what Taoists call the Chi muscle are found. When you contract, you actually squeeze the prostate gland. If you contract the prostate gland every day, you will have a strong and healthy prostate gland. That is the most important part of the whole practice.

CG: Let's say that this path intrigues me. What do I do? How do I become a student?

MC: A lot of people can master the practices through the books, the tapes or the videos. If you have problems, we have what we call certified instructors. Now we have many instructors practicing all over the world. Many monks read the Universal Tao books — this is the way they have to practice, and I have many monks that come and study with us now.

CG: Is Taoism taught like in ancient India, through a lineage (guru kula) master-student system? Is it typically taught in an abundant environment or an austere environment?

MC: In my tradition of Tao, you always say student and master if the teacher or master teaches you. But it isn't worshipping. He teaches as a guide and helps you. And I teach people like a teacher teaches students. You're not devoting yourself and giving up yourself. It's not "I'm the only way to guide you to heaven." It's not that kind of relationship.

CG: You lived the traditional path of a householder with your wife, Maneewan, raised a child, and made your living in the printing business.

MC: Yes ...Yes ...Yes, in the press/ printing business! Before that I practiced the Tao, but I never thought I would be teaching this full-time. So that is why I had a job as a manager for Gestetner offset printing machines, duplicating machines and copiers in Thailand. But I think that the knowledge that I gained from being a manager is helping me now to do my own publishing of my own books.

CG: So you kept your management job until such time as you could devote your entire life to teaching these practices?

MC: Right. After that, when I came to the West, I discovered that I could teach the Tao practice full-time. It has become my profession now, and many Westerners have now become full Time Universal Tao instructor/practitioners also.

CG: Can you tell us something about the masters who taught you?

MC: My master? Yes, the original one that I learned from was called One Cloud Hermit. One Cloud Hermit went to study in many temples, and after that he decided go to the mountains and search for the Taoist masters who practiced there. That is what I tried to search for, and I found him. The master gave no initiation, no celebration, nothing at all — just pure practice. I met him when he was eighty-something. He was still walking around, and he could still do everything by himself. I studied with him when I was young, then I left Hong Kong to come back to Thailand. We lost contact a little bit, and by the time when I was able to go back, he had passed away at about 95.

CG: I'd like to ask you about Tantra. That word seems to be everywhere these days. What are its origins and how do they parallel those of Taoism?

MC: They are actually the same. The Tantric practice is in India, but it's the same power as with the Chinese practice. The sexual practice of Tantra and the Taoist secrets of love and sex in ancient China were at one time practiced a lot. All of the great Masters practiced it. But later on, some people used it in the wrong way by using sex to drain other people's energy by drawing their sexual life-force out. These people misused it and mislabeled it, and it became a very bad practice.

So, at that time, the true Tantric and Taoist sexual practices went under- ground — for a long, long time, up until now. It's still underground. In India, they don't talk much about the Tantric, practice. In China they don't talk about any sexual practice at all, because they think that this is not the right way. They are only doing Chi Kung and never really transform it. You see? But in my lineage, every Master has to master their sex first before they can go into the higher level of practice. So Tantra and Tao are the same, parallel practices — because these are from two countries with very long histories. China and India share a border. So the practices are interchangeable with each other.

CG: In your workshops, how do you guard against the misapplication of the principles?

MC: I always teach that sexual energy is like fire: either you put it in a stove and cook your food, or you put it in your house and burn the house down and kill people. So, how are they are going to use their sexual energy in the right way? The way I teach in the class is that sexual energy can either multiply the virtue energy or sexual energy can multiply the negative energy — like anger, frustration and hatred — many, many, many times, because sexual energy is the only energy which can multiply so fast and so quick. It can multiply into a human!

Water can float a boat, and water can also sink the boat. So the Tao says: "The sexual energy is neither good nor bad. It depends on whoever multiplies it." So, when somebody uses it in the wrong way, we say, "Oh, it's bad." It happens all the time. One bad apple makes the whole basket bad, right?

CG: We haven't spoken much about mastering chi energy as it relates to women. Do the same principles apply? Do women lose vital energy via orgasm as men do?

MC: Yes, the women's practice is the same thing, but instead of the sperm, they are involved with the egg: The women's eggs are produced once every month, and women lose their energy through 'menstruation or by bearing a child. But sometimes in menstruation they also can gain back their

energy faster and be stronger — or having a child may actually change the lady to be stronger also. So there are two ways of looking at the situation. In the women's practice, it is the same energy practice. The egg practice [an exercise for conditioning vaginal muscles and for enhancing control of sexual energy by inserting a jade egg in the vagina], breast massage and drawing up sexual energy are very similar to the men's practice. It's only the anatomy and the softer energy that are different. In the woman we call it yin energy, and in the man we call it yang energy. So, they are different in yin and yang, water and fire. We always have to talk about water and fire: they have to come together, either producing steam or extinguishing — or destroying — each other. Those are the two energies we have to understand properly. It's the oldest enemies, water and fire — or the best power in the whole world.

CG: And how would the Taoist approach to harnessing chi affect women as a result of menopause, when the egg is no longer a factor?

MC: Women at this stage in life are lucky, energetically speaking. Since they are not menstruating, they do not lose their energy or blood that way. The ovaries still produce energy, so they can have more energy for their life. If they practice Ovarian Breathing and/or the Orgasmic Upward Draw, such as we teach in the Universal Tao, they can cultivate, harvest and circulate the sexual energy to enhance their life. They can use it for good health in body and brain, emotional peace and balance, creativity, spiritual development — and for a fulfilling sex life with good quality sex, the multi-orgasmic way.

CG: Do you have any parting words of wisdom for the men reading this interview?

MC: When men get up into their forties, they start to feel a drain in their body when they ejaculate. When they start to learn “Oh, I don't have to ejaculate every time, and I can multiply the energy and draw it up,” they start to realize “This is one thing that can give me more energy.” That's what the Taoist believe. When we do the practice of cultivating the sexual energy and when we make love, we get more energy.

A very important part for men is you have to spend a little- bit of time to be conscious about your energy. In Taoism they say, “Men have extra energy they can tap into forever — it is non-exhaustible.” It's the sexual energy — because we keep on producing sperm. Every sperm has a tremendous potential of energy because every sperm can create a very intelligent human. But, people don't think; they just say, “Oh, the body produces sperm and keeps on producing sperm.” They just keep draining it away, ejaculating everything out — and this is considered the normal way!

CG: Do you have any parting words of wisdom for the women reading this issue?

MC: For women, in Taoism, you have to be conscious about your own energy also — about menstruation, the eggs, and the breasts, which every month are going to become swollen up for producing milk. Those are potential energies that the ladies can take back and conserve. In the Tao, we believe that if women learn how to transform the blood that causes the swelling into chi, they lose less energy.

When male practitioners want to do spiritual work, they have to stop the ejaculation of the sperm in sex. Women have to stop the menstruation, or lose less energy through menstruation, so it's the same.

CG: When do you next plan to visit the San Francisco Bay Area?

MC: In the beginning of June 2003, Dr. Angela Wu is organizing the seminars and workshops. She has my schedule.

CG: I hope many our readers will attend. Thank you again for your time.

Rob Sidon is the principal of High Ground Consulting, a marketing firm specializing in the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health & Sustainability) markets. He is an occasional contributor to Common Ground as well as its advertising sales consultant. Common Ground gratefully acknowledges Dennis Huntington, a Universal Tao Instructor at the Tao Garden, for his contributions to this interview.