

## *Chi Nei Tsang Interview - Mantak Chia - By Judi Calvert*

How wonderful are the many ways we can touch and heal each other. There are few limits to the power of the mind, hands and heart to relieve the many kinds of suffering to which human beings are subject. Westerners are just now appraising and acquiring the wisdom of many indigenous peoples whose representatives are now stepping forward to share all that they know. We should be grateful that we live in a time in which we can share in this bonanza. Such are my excited thoughts after years of studying Taoism and working with the Taoist Master Mantak Chia. He is the first Taoist Master to ever teach the inner energetic secrets of that revered spiritual system to westerners. I have learned that Taoist based theory is the source of the great mother lode that has not only given us Lao Tzu's profound Tao Te Ching (300 B.C.) and the popular writings of the playful and inimitable Chang-Tzu, but is also at the root of all Asian healing arts including Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture, Shiatsu, Tuina, Tai-Chi (moving meditation), Chi-Kung (standing meditation) and internal alchemy. Chi Nei Tsang (CNT) and its associated Taoist meditative practices present the art of massage and meditation as a valuable tool in the recovery of vibrant good health and of our spiritual birthrights and abilities. Healing involves a closeness to nature, to one's body and to one's spiritual nature. CNT is a venerable and traditional systematic Taoist bodywork technique that has been reintroduced by Master Chia. The words mean "internal organ energy transformation." It is a massage technique that may be done on oneself or on another. It is applied in the abdomen, especially around the navel center, and directly on the internal organs. Mantak Chia teaches that healing is a personal decision and that the most, powerful massage is self-massage. Taoists discovered that the area behind and around the navel center is the most crucial and powerful energy center in the body. This region generates, stores and distributes an energy (Chi) that powers the entire system. Any disturbances or blockages here hamper and divert the free flow of a most vital energy. The tissues and fasciae below, the abdominal muscles should be as pliable and soft as those of a baby, but this area easily becomes stiff and is hard in almost everyone.

Fortunately, the navel area responds quickly to a variety of CNT massage techniques. When the areas of the small and large intestine are detoxified and the energy blocks are dissolved, it is then possible to clear toxins and harmonize the energy in nearby organs such as the pancreas, spleen, gall bladder, stomach, liver, uterus and lungs. A related benefit is that by the progressive relaxation of deeper and deeper levels of the abdomen, the practitioner is able to reach and detoxify the system's deepest and largest lymph nodes located near the aorta and vena cava and along the back wall of the abdomen. The ability to work deeply in the abdomen also allows one to dissolve knots and tangles in the sacral and lumbar plexus. Energy blocks in this area can be a significant cause of lower back pain. Thus, CNT is a very effective and long lasting remedy. By directly stimulating and manipulating the organs and deep tissues, it is possible to harmonize the emotional life, improve the immune system and bring the metabolism to its full potential. But CNT is more than massage — it is also a meditative system, which allows the practitioner to access and accumulate primal energies (Chi) that can be used in the healing process. Master Chia has also introduced westerners to an ancient meditation known as Cosmic Chi-Kung. It integrates both static and dynamic exercise forms in order to cultivate and nourish Chi that, according to Taoist theory, accumulates in the organs, moves through fasciae, tendons and muscles, and is finally transferred out through the hands and fingers. Besides dissolving stagnation in the abdomen, it is often necessary for a therapist to infuse tissue-forming energies directly into the client to enhance the healing process. Cosmic Chi-Kung teaches this ability. This meditation allows a practitioner to replace any energy passed on and protect his or her body from the intrusion of negative energies, thus avoiding burnout. Chi Nei Tsang is different from many other massage techniques in that it works from the center to the periphery, rather than from the periphery to the center. Although CNT is not in competition with these systems, it has a center and many others don't. CNT can add to these techniques, and offer much more lasting healing.

The interview that follows explores CNT with Master Chia, and includes a short interview with CNT instructor Gilles Marin.

*The eight-sided Pakua is a Taoist symbol that is similar to the Medicine Wheel used by many North American Indian tribes. The Yin-Yang figure in the center represents the unity of Nature, the Great Spirit-the Tao. The broken lines or trigrams surrounding the center portray the manifestations and compass direction of the Tao's energy as it "steps down" in order to create the Cosmos, the Earth and human beings. The Pakua is a talisman and is also used as an energy transformer in many of the meditations taught by the Chias.*

### **What is Chi Nei Tsang?**

**Chia:** "Chi Nei Tsang is directly massaging the organs in order to balance their energies. When you practice CNT you are able to increase the energy and blood flow to and from the organs."

### ***How do we get unbalanced?***

**Chia:** “Through neglect. When a patient comes to a therapist to be treated oftentimes therapists neglect to correct the problem from the root or source. They just have not been trained sufficiently. Most massage therapists start their massage with the hand or leg or back or head. “We start massaging in the navel area. The navel center is the major energy and communication center of the body. In Taoism we believe that as embryos we grow from our navel and maintain this connection. Any time the navel is out of balance and is tight or twisted it will affect the rest of the organs. “Much that goes wrong starts in the navel first. Therapists and acupuncturists say to their patients that your lung or liver energy is not balanced so they go to the extremities and attempt to work the energy in the organ from far away. The acupuncture points and channels are important because they reflect and affect what is going on in the organ. But you need to work the navel area as well. “The navel area and the organs are the body’s energy generators. The channels are like the wiring and the points are like the light bulbs. You can keep on changing the light bulb when it goes out, but if the problem is with the generator(s) you have to go back and fix it and then more electricity will go through the wiring. That is how the practice of CNT works. We concentrate on the energy generators. “Thousands of years ago most people did not have an understanding of the body like we do today. They did not know the anatomy. In the past, touching the organs was mysterious. “People were afraid of touching the abdominal area. They could not see in there. Only a master could touch and feel that something was wrong and then he or she would correct it. They thought it was hard to teach people. So they would withhold a lot of information. It was easier to teach how to massage on the back head, leg or go to a point. That is why knowledge has been withheld. Through time, a lot of changes have occurred. “Today, everybody can work on the body because of technology and the understanding of anatomy and physiology. We now have an understanding of the body.”

### ***How did you develop the CNT system?***

**Chia:** “I learned from my master. He was very good in CNT. I met my master when my uncle got very sick. He had a spinal cord problem. My uncle went to the hospital first and the doctors wanted to operate but my uncle and I did not want the operation. We heard about this master so we went to see him. “I thought that this master would massage my uncle’s back neck and shoulder but he massaged around the navel area and stomach instead. My uncle felt a great release right after that. I asked myself how can the shoulder and back be involved with the navel? I wanted to learn more from this master.”

### ***Do you know of this work in any other cultures, work that focuses on the abdomen?***

**Chia:** “Many. China, Thailand, India and Japan. In nearly every Asian culture. But none is as systemized as CNT.”

### ***When did you bring this work to America?***

**Chia:** “About 12 years ago.”

### ***Does America provide more of an opportunity for you?***

**Chia:** “I think that every single system in the whole world has an opportunity in America. All of the Indian masters come here. Now all of the Chinese Chi Kung masters want to come here.”

### ***In your book, Chi Nei Tsang, you say, “The organs contain the essence of the spiritual force of a human being.” What do you mean by that statement?***

**Chia:** “In Taoism we believe that every organ contains part of the soul and spirit. This is where humans store that essence. When that essence becomes stuck or weak or too hot or too cold, a human becomes out of balance physically, mentally and spiritually. Healing the organs is very important. When massage therapists massage the hand or the leg it can primarily affect the organs if the channel is not blocked or if the organs function well. Again you must work on the navel area.”

### ***Is there a relationship between the emotions and the organs?***

**Chia:** “Yes. In the Taoist system, we believe that the organs generate and store the emotions. The whole practice in the Tao is how can we balance these two emotions of negativity and positivity. We can’t get rid of negativity because it will always be a part of our life. We believe that finding a balance is the most important part.”

### ***What are these emotions that are associated with the organs?***

**Chia:** “The negative emotion of the heart is hate, impatience and hastiness. Stubbornness can be caused by an imbalance of the heart energy. The positive emotions are love, joy and happiness. The negative emotion of the liver is anger and arrogance. The positive emotions are kindness and righteousness. “Fear and nervousness are stored in the kidney along with gentleness. Sadness and depression are stored in the lungs and the positive emotion is courage. You can melt the negative emotions of worry and anxiety in the spleen and pancreas away with fairness and consideration, which are also generated by the spleen. “It feels like a lot of major energy when you deal with it. It seems like the major thing that we take care of in our lives. It is hard to be balanced with the better energies of love, joy, happiness and kindness when we are dealing with the negative emotions, too.” It is so amazing to me when I watch little

children. Some children have no fear and others have a lot of fear. Is the emotion of fear within the child's kidney when he/she was born or is there too much energy in the navel area after they are born?

**Chia:** "This is going back to the pre-natal energy. It could be that the parents, when they were preparing for the child, had a lot of fear. It can affect the baby. That energy can be transferred from parent to child. "In Taoism philosophy, we teach the parents that if they are happy during the pregnancy, then the child will be happy. If you like to read a lot, then your child will read a lot. We have what we call womb education, educating your baby when it is just a fetus."

***When should you start working with children?***

**Chia:** "You can work with children right after they are born. Children are so easy. When you touch them they are so soft, like cotton."

***Is there a time limit that you should work on babies or children or is it individual?***

**Chia:** "No, you just touch them very softly and find the area that is tight. It is important that you work very lightly. We call it the one-finger technique. You just find the knot or tangle and work on it with one finger until it is gone. You can be very specific. When you touch adults their abdominal areas are so hard. You can reach all the tension from the front of the body. All of this is causing problems as well as the lymph system, which we also work on."

***Physiologically, what is the tension around the navel and beneath the abdomen? Is it the fasciae, muscle, Intestines? What is it that you are working on?***

**Chia:** "We work on everything. Fascia, tendon, muscle, intestine, organs, lymph system, nervous system, ganglions. Stress puts pressure on the systems so they become tangled and tied together in a knot."

One of things that I read in your book and learned from Gilles in the CNT class that I attended was that it is so important that the massage therapist or body worker take responsibility for their health so that their energy can be higher than the person they are working on. I have taken many massage and bodywork classes and workshops and nobody has stressed this point like you do in your teachings.

**Chia:** "This is very important. I see that there is a great healing and teaching in the massage world that needs to take place. In the business of massage there is always give and take. No matter who or how good you are or how well you are. In the healing you give and take. "It is just like water pressure. When I, as the therapist, have higher pressure (energy), I can flow to you. If I have lower pressure I cannot flow to you. You are going to flow to me. So instead of healing the sick person you are draining that person. "The healing is not just a technique. The technique is just one part of it. The health and vibration of the therapist counts a lot. When you go to one massage therapist for massage you may feel good afterwards. Sometimes you can go to another therapist and you don't feel good after the treatment. It is because the vibration and energy is different. As a practitioner, practice meditation and keep your body healthy. Then when you help heal the patients they will get better. "Second, in the healing of CNT we really emphasize that you are not a healer. When people come to you for treatment and you say you're the healer, and then right away people put a heavy load of responsibility on you and don't want to take responsibility for them... "People keep coming to the healer time and time again but they don't seem to get much better. In CNT we are not healers. We are teaching you to heal yourself. We are helping you a little bit but the rest you have to do by yourself. Therapists think if they teach all the patients how to heal themselves what will they be living on? They never think that the more they teach their patients, the more patients they will get... "I only want people to come to me one to three times. I teach them everything that they need to learn to heal themselves. If they call in and they have not practiced what I have taught them, I tell them not to come in until they have practiced and feel better. In that way they take responsibility for their own health. "They are not dependent on you. They will not be emotionally attached to you. When you have 100 patients and they say that you are an incredible healer, they are draining on you little by little every day. These people do not last many years in the business. I see this a lot. They disappear. For me, healing is two ways. The students have to take care of themselves 90 percent and the therapist only has to help them five to 10 percent."

***Can you describe this sick energy that you talk about in your book that the patient can give to the therapist?***

**Chia:** "Sick energy does a few things. The negative emotional energy, such as anger, burns out the life force. Fear contracts and squeezes out the life force. This kind of energy is not promoting a good healthy life in our body... "Therapists who practice CNT often on themselves and meditate are very sensitive and have a higher energy and a higher vibration. When you touch your client you can feel a lower or a negative vibration. It is very different from the normal life force. If a client has been angry, when I touch the abdominal area near the liver I can feel a very hot, fresh, burning energy coming out. The liver energy should be a little bit damp, moist and warm. When there are a lot of negative emotions stuck in the liver, the energy begins to get blocked. The circulation does not flow. The liver overheats. "The life force begins to rust. The energy is stuck in a particular area and does not move. When the therapist has a higher energy and touches the patient, it is like opening a window. The wind blows and the sun comes in. The stale energy will be gone. When their energy is high and they know techniques to move the energy

and how to open the channels they can chase the sick energy out. "One law of sick energy is that it always goes to the therapist. It always wants to stick to some kind of living thing. The Taoists discovered that the sick energy will go into a living human thing first. Second, the sick energy will go down into the earth. Third, it will go down into a tree. "Since the person's sick energy has nowhere to go it will go into the therapist. If the therapist practices CNT and meditation, he or she can take in the sick energy and then burn the energy out of his or her system. "When you are young and healthy, you can afford to drain yourself for a few years. It is just like if you take no calcium or vitamins for one or two years your teeth and health will not deteriorate a lot. But if you don't take calcium or vitamins for five or 10 years, then the teeth will slowly fall out one by one. That is the part of healing industry that nobody really understands. Sometimes people don't understand what they are doing. They are draining their life force and immortality over a period of years. "A lot of younger people learn techniques in one or two days and they think that they are healers. They are not. In Taoism we emphasize that therapists must learn to do many meditations. They are the microcosmic meditation, the practice of fusion, the sexual practice and Chi Kung. It is a must. If you offer a healing technique to a patient, and you do not learn how to replenish the energy given out, you will just drain yourself over a period of years."

**Where did you learn about all of the meditations? From many masters?**

**Chia:** "Yes. I also spent five years with Master White Cloud. He taught me the most sacred of the Taoist teachings:"

**Can you tell me more about Master White Cloud?**

**Chia:** "Master White Cloud is my main master who taught me all the esoteric practice formulas from the beginning level of how to heal yourself, strengthening the self for the body, mind and spirit and taught me how to give birth to my new self, which is known in the Tao as immortal fetus. I learned how to raise that body and return to the source, which is regarded as the highest spiritual practice."

**Is your master still teaching?**

**Chia:** "No. When I met him he was very old, nearly 80-something. He passed away before I came to America, more than 14 years ago."

**Was he your spiritual master as well?**

**Chia:** "No, but he did meditate..."

**In your book you say that I the secret technique of Chi Nei Tsang is healing from the heart. Can you talk a little about this?**

**Chia:** "When the heart is open you can take in energy from the environment. The first thing you need in healing is love, then joy and happiness. When you see people sick you really want to help them. With that kind of love or feeling you are opening the heart. When the heart is opening up, it also opens the crown area in the head. The pulsing of the heart is involved with pulsing of the crown. "You are opening yourself to a higher and universal energy which descends from the heavens. In a religious way, when you open your heart you have love and you are opening yourself to God. God is coming down and healing people. They claim that if you do that you will not drain your energy. There are a lot of healers who can open themselves but they don't do a lot of physical exercises and meditation. Eventually the body will get drained. "When the heart is open it is very easy to connect with a higher power. You open yourself to the universal energy and you can take those higher forces coming in and the heart has the ability to transform the energy. It is just like digesting the energy."

**Healing with love from the heart.**

*This drawing symbolizes Taoist Energetics. The practitioner uses his or her intention to draw in the Heavenly energy through the crown and the Earth energy through the feet. They are blended and distributed throughout the body via an internal energy route called the Microcosmic Orbit (the internal lines and points shown). This blended, the Chi Nei Tsang practitioner to the client may project healing energy, which sustains all life by an act of intention, concentration and compassion, as in, "I love you and wish you well, with all my heart." (Reprinted with permission from Chi Nei Tsang)*

"The universal force is always around us. Why is it that some people cannot take it? Because they don't want to open their heart and mind. The energy from outside coming in has to transform to be usable energy. "You take in energy, you transform it to usable energy and you give it to the patient. The more that the heart and mind are open, the more healing power you can have."

**If you just open your heart and give to people without doing the meditations will you drain yourself?**

**Chia:** "Yes, you will drain out yourself terribly. You cannot just open the heart alone. That is what a lot of systems teach. We call it the way of no return. If you give out energy you need to take energy back in. I think that it is a bad thing that I see in America. Some people just don't know. They need to be taught these secrets. Meditation is the most powerful way to gather new energy. "I have so many people come

to me. Some of them have been drained so much. This is how they have learned, just opened up the heart and the palm and done the healing. After five or six years, a beautiful man or woman is totally drained. I don't know how to recharge them. I don't know how to help them. They are burned out."

***How often could you meditate every day to be able to keep your vibration at a high level?***

**Chia:** "You just have to spend a little bit of time each day. Until you can get to a level and be aware that you are in touch with the force. Pretty soon you will feel instantly recharged. You can practice any time anywhere. You will feel the heart open, the crown open, the perineum and soul open to mother earth force. Just sit quietly and you will feel the energy come to you. Try it, you'll like it and it will become a part of your life."

***Is diet very important in this work that you teach and practice?***

**Chia:** "Yes. But everything is a piece of everything. Diet is one piece of health." ***Do you have children?***

**Chia:** "Yes. I have one son, Max, age 12. I am teaching him all that I know. It pays off. This year he passed the instructor test. He takes the classes with all of the instructors. He started learning when he was three years old. So you can teach CNT to your children."

***How do you think CNT will be received by western medicine?***

**Chia:** "I think that it will work perfectly. The major part of western medicine is that if the organs don't work well, the medicine you take in the body will not be accepted. It is like a dead battery. "Massage will work. Any kind of massage will work because it is a human life force. Touch on the point and make the body or cell energized. If the therapist has a higher energy or biomagnetic field and they touch the patient or part of the body where the energy is not flowing, well, they will move the energy flow and the body will reactivate again so they can take in medicine. When you do CNT massage you can speed up the recovery of the patient and then they can reduce their medicine intake."

***Have you taught many doctors?***

**Chia:** "Yes. We have more and more doctors that are interested."

***What do you do when you are not teaching?***

**Chia:** "I am writing. If I am not writing, I am practicing. I always can find something to do...In our society we need people to entertain us because we have lost the ability to find joy within ourselves. We need to find another way of entertaining ourselves to be happy."

***What satisfaction do you get out of your work?***

**Chia:** "When I see people who are doing healing and people are getting well, I feel good. When I train people how to do it and they teach the others how to help themselves, it makes me feel proud. Money is not an issue. You see the people get the benefit."

***What do you see for the future for Chi Nei Tsang?***

**Chia:** "CNT is a good healing system if people want to learn this. But it will not replace all the different types of healing in the world. It will not replace all massage, but if people will learn how to do the CNT first on their patients, then whatever kind of massage or bodywork they do after CNT will help their patients. CNT's major healing process is that you are untying the knots and clearing the blockage in the abdomen and organs."

***Is there anything else that you would like to share with our readers?***

**Chia:** "Healing is the gift of God. People have to learn in the right way. With a lot of the healing techniques that we have now, people don't do it in the right way. What I mean is that they only learn the techniques on how to heal, but they have not learned how to heal themselves. They have not learned how to channel the energy. "In the Universal Tao we have a whole system. You must learn the basic meditations before you do the massage. It is a lot. Your mind, body and spirit are all one. The west is beginning to understand this. The massage we teach is much more systemized. People don't have the patience to be a good healer. So please practice the meditations and you will learn patience."