

Taoist North Star Meditations (Fire Practice) - Eric Yudelove

I have been fortunate for a number of years now to live just a few miles from Mantak Chia's home. Over the years we have remained good friends and I was provided with the opportunity to learn and explore the very highest formulas of Taoist Internal Alchemy. Chia has never publicly taught some of these advanced formulas. So much of what I write here will be new to even his long time students. Again, these advanced formulas find a remarkable correlation in the Sepher Yetzirah and the work of Franz Bardon and even Aleister Crowley. It is with great humility that I even attempt to put this information down in writing. Mantak Chia encouraged me to write this book and bring his teachings to students of the Kabbalah. I note with personal sadness his moving back to his native Thailand to establish a permanent Taoist Retreat Center in Chiang Mai. I will miss him. I look forward to the day; sometime in the future that I will again be able to spend time with him.

The Intermediate Formulas: Kan and Li

Taoist Yoga as taught by Mantak Chia is an orderly system that builds upon itself as the student progresses. It cannot be learned overnight and takes many years to work up to the highest levels. There are many reasons for this to be so. On one level it is a weeding out process. Those not capable or worthy of receiving and understanding the higher levels will drop out and no longer pursue the study. Also the body goes through a series of internal changes that take some time to absorb and adjust to. These changes can be quite profound and awe inspiring. They can also be frightening. It is important to have a teacher available to guide you through the intricacies of higher internal alchemy. This is why I was so lucky to have Mantak Chia nearby. He now teaches the more advanced levels, beginning with Lesser Kan and Li, only in Thailand where he and other advanced teachers are available to give guidance. The lower formulas such as the Microcosmic Orbit and the Fusion of the Five Elements do not require the same type of personal attention. They can safely be practiced by anyone, anywhere. Even Lesser Kan and L is relatively safe. Beginning with the Greater Kan and L formula, careful monitoring of the student's progress is really required. These formulas are often referred to as the Lesser, Greater and Greatest Enlightenments. In Lesser Kan and L' the stove and cauldron are established in the lower Tan Tien, behind and slightly below the navel. At this level, we are only working with energies that exist within the body. The Fire energy is drawn from the adrenal glands and the heart. The Water energy is drawn from the kidneys and the sexual organs. As previously mentioned, the location of the Fire and the Water energies are inverted. Fire is drawn below to the stove, a cauldron is visualized, and Water energy is raised above and deposited in the cauldron, where it is heated by the stove and begins to steam. This is the basic formula; there are about twelve sub-formulas. Doing the Fusion exercise wherein the five elements are gathered together in the Pa Qua behind the navel, harmonized and then moved through the Creation cycle to transform negative emotions into positive emotions, should precede a Kan and L session. Clearing the Thrusting Routes, which travel up and down the center of the body, and the Belt Routes, which travel around the body, the main Belt Route circles the body at the navel level, follows this. This should be done in the morning at least two hours before the Lesser Kan and Li exercise. Some of the twelve sub-formulas include steaming the glands and organs, steaming and increasing the pulses, steaming the lymphatic system, opening twelve additional channels (acupuncture meridians), creating the inner eye, steaming the thymus, pituitary and pineal gland, self-intercourse and steaming the spine and nervous system. The Lesser Kan and Li is concluded by collecting the refined energy at the Tan Tien below the navel. The two eyes are used to "turn the wheel." The eyes are first rolled down toward the perineum. They direct energy into the Microcosmic Orbit. The eye muscles are then pulled in slightly and the genitals are pulled up as the eyesight turns inward and upward and direct the Chi up the spine and into the brain. This was also called the Backward Flowing Method. It is as if you were rolling your eyes 360 degrees. Although this is of course a physical impossibility, you actively imagine that this is exactly what is happening. With a little practice you get it. With each rotation, the refined Chi is poured into the Cauldron behind the navel as it moves downward. In the Greater Kan and Li, the cauldron is moved upward, from the Tan Tim behind the navel, to the Tan Tim at the level of the solar plexus. This creates a more powerful steaming agent. We begin to work with external energies at this level. The energies of the Sun are combined with the adrenal and heart energy to provide the Fire for the stove. Moon energy is combined with kidney and sexual energy to provide the Water to fill the Cauldron. Cold Water energy is raised to the level of the heart and lowered into the cauldron, while hot Fire energy is lowered to the navel Tan Tim and then raised to the solar plexus region just below the cauldron. The temperature in the cauldron is controlled by "seasoning" it with cool energy drawn from the lungs (the White Tiger) or warm energy drawn from the liver (the Green Dragon) to keep it from getting too hot or too cold. The Pearl is strengthened and can be projected down into the Earth to contact or interact with animal, plant, flower and tree energies. This is clearly derived from the shamanic practices described earlier in this book. Self-intercourse in this formula is concerned with creating a spirit body. Energy is drawn from the pineal gland and mixed in the solar plexus Tan Tim with sexual energy drawn from the genitals. This creates an ecstatic feeling within the body. The seed (sperm) is drawn from the spleen into the cauldron. If properly done, it results in the pregnancy of the spirit body. We are here moving into some of the greatest mysteries of Taoist Internal Alchemy. I will not reveal the entire formula because it should not be practiced until the student has mastered the previous levels. It is at this point in the practice that the presence of an experienced teacher is really necessary. The spirit body can be sent into the upper worlds to travel where it wills or to meet spirit guides, again, pure shamanism. Once a pregnancy takes place, all steaming practices should be

stopped. This is truly a transforming experience and can be quite uncomfortable at times. A Greatest Kan and Li session ends with rolling of the eyes as described above, except this time the energy is collected in the cauldron at the solar plexus. The Greatest Kan and Li can be performed in the morning directly after doing the Fusion of the Five Elements.

Planets and the Stars

Taoist Yoga seeks to connect the practitioner with not only the forces of nature on the Earth, but with extraterrestrial forces as well as the Sun and Moon, as described above, and the planets and the stars. Although originally reserved for only his most advanced students, Chia now teaches contacting and drawing in energy from the Big Dipper (Ursa Major) and the North Star (Polaris) as advanced levels of the Microcosmic Orbit. In advanced formulas of the Fusion of the Five Elements, we connect with the Chi of the planets, which in turn enrich the Chi of the associated organs. Jupiter corresponds with Wood and the liver, Mars with Fire and the heart, Saturn with Earth and the spleen, Venus with Metal and the lungs and Mercury with Water and the kidneys. Each planet also corresponds to the appropriate color for the planet. Its energy is experienced as snow falling from above. Blue snow for Mercury, red snow for Mars, green snow for Jupiter, white snow for Venus and yellow snow for Saturn (in all due respect to the late Frank Zappa, you can eat this yellow snow). The complete formulas are available in Chia's book *Fusion of the Five Elements I*.

The North Star and the Big Dipper

The Taoists believe that organic and inorganic particles and forces originating in the universe seeded life on Earth. We are not necessarily talking aliens here. The seeds of life could have arrived from comets, meteors, solar and stellar winds, supernovas, cosmic rays, etc. Many scientists hold similar beliefs. To the Taoists this was known collectively as Heavenly Chi. In simple terms we are dealing with the Chi of the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars. In the advanced practices, the Chi of the seven stars of the Big Dipper and the North Star are of crucial importance. As the practitioner advances this star Chi becomes more and more important. The energy of the Big Dipper is experienced as vibrant red light. The North Star Polaris is experienced as violet light. In the Microcosmic Orbit and Fusion of the Five Elements, first the red light of the Big Dipper is brought into the brain. Next, the stars of the Big Dipper are aligned to wrap around the lower half of the body. Imagine that the star at the tip of the handle of the Big Dipper, Alkaid, shines its red light in your solar plexus. The next star on the handle is Mizar; it shines behind your navel. The third star, Alioth, shines at the Sexual Palace at the base or root of the sexual organ. Megrez shines its brilliant red light at your perineum. Pheeda shines at the tip of your coccyx. Merak shines in your sacrum and Dubhe shines in the Door of Life, the point on the spine directly behind the navel. The stars of the Big Dipper attract the purple light of the North Star. This is their main function. The line in the back from Merak to Dubhe draws down the purple light of the North Star, first through the crown, then down the neck and spine to the stations of the seven stars of the Big Dipper. The resulting light energy can then be circulated in the Microcosmic Orbit. Mantak Chia provides a different and excellent exercise in *Awaken Healing Light of the Tao*. It is in the Greatest Kan and Li that this star energy becomes a crucial part of the process. The red and violet lights of the Big Dipper and Polaris are gathered below the crown and added to the Fire of the stove, providing a tremendous boost of energy. In the Greatest Kan and Li, the cauldron is moved to the level of the heart. It is the final formula of intermediate alchemy. In this formula, the Fire energies or stove are gathered together in the Crystal Room (or Crystal Palace), beneath the crown. The Crystal Room comprises that area in the brain, which includes the pituitary, pineal, and thalamus glands. Projecting deep into the Earth and drawing cold Water energy from the Earth itself draw a more potent form of Water. The Fire energy is drawn down to the solar plexus and the Water energy is drawn up to the throat center. They are coupled in the cauldron in the center of the body at the level of the heart. One interesting sub-formula involves a more advanced method of connecting with each of the seven stars of the Big Dipper. In this variation, the stars connect with various points on the skull (see Figure 37), and the North Star connects with the Crystal Room. Starting at the end of the handle of the Big Dipper, the star Alkaid is both visualized as brilliant red light and felt as being at the top of the crown of the head. The next star Mizer is visualized and felt at the base of the skull and likewise Alioth at the bottom of the chin. The star at the inner top of the Dipper Megrez is seen and felt at the left temple, and Pheeda is experienced at the right temple. Merak is visualized and felt at the right mastoid (top of the jaw) and Dubhe at the left mastoid. As the stars are actually positioned in the night sky, a line drawn from Merak to Dubhe and continued straight ahead will point almost directly to Polaris. The North Star Polaris is at the tail end of the constellation known as The Little Dipper or Ursa Minor. The stars of the Big Dipper draw the purple light of the North Star down into the Crystal Room and allow it to shine there. It then descends into the cauldron at the heart level. Directing star energy to points of the body provides a definite, substantial feeling of something actually being there. It is not easy to describe. However it seems to be more than mere imagination. There are other sub-formulas in the Greatest Kan and Li. Much of the work is done on opening the heart center. Also a meditation is taught to collect star Chi from the twenty-eight constellations. When done properly, you imagine that you have a giant body, billions of light years from head to toe. You become the Cosmic Being whose Crystal Palace is the North Star, who has constellations and planets for vital organs, whose heart is the Sun, whose kidneys are the Moon, and whose Tan Tim is the planet Earth. This Cosmic Being, the mind of Tao, beams down its exquisite rays to one cell of its body, you, sitting on a chair on planet Earth, meditating up on the stars. At the end of a Greatest Kan and Li session, the refined energy is "breathed" or absorbed, directly into the bones for storage. A session can also be done in the morning after doing a short Fusion exercise.

The Sealing of the Five Senses and the Seven Double Letters

We now approach advanced Taoist Internal Alchemy. These formulas have never been openly taught. It is when these highest levels are reached that the practitioner feels the need to leave society and retire to the mountains. The body and its functions slow down. You want peacefulness and seclusion. As a practical matter, to function in society, your daily practice would consist of lower formulas, unless you are extraordinarily gifted. In the Sealing of the Five Senses, the Tan Tim is moved to the Crystal Room in the brain. It is sometimes referred to as the Heavenly Heart. There are seven openings in the skull: the left and right eyes, left and right ears, left and right nostrils, and the mouth. These seven openings represent the five senses. The mouth is separated into lips, which touch, and tongue which tastes; the nose smells, the ears hear; and the eyes see. In this formula the senses are sealed in the cauldron. First connect each organ to its proper sense. The energy of the two eyes and seeing are brought to the third eye area between and slightly above the eyes. The energy of the two ears and hearing are brought to the back of the skull. They are all collected into the cauldron. Next the energy of the two nostrils and smelling the lips and touching and the tongue and tasting are combined and also brought into the cauldron in the Crystal Palace. We visualize that out in space the cup of the Big Dipper fills with the purple light of the North Star. We visualize the Big Dipper being turned over and the purple light of Polaris is poured into the cauldron in the Crystal Room in our brain. This creates tremendous light. The light is the Tao. This is as much of the formula as 1 will reveal at this time. The higher formulas really require years of practicing the lower and intermediate formulas before one is ready to perform them. It is highly recommended that anyone seeking to practice Taoist Internal Alchemy should make every effort to locate a teacher especially for all the Kan and Li and more advanced formulas. What I've given here is just the bare bones outline of the actual practice. Now we turn to a little spiritual detective work and look for correspondences in the Kabbalah. And they are there. Each of these seven letters corresponds with one of the seven openings to the head as found in the Sealing of the Five Senses formula. Beth is the right eye. Gimel is the left eye. Dalet is the right ear, and Kaph is the left ear. Peh is the right nostril, Resh is the left nostril and Tav is the mouth. In each system we are dealing with the same seven openings, the Sepher Yetzirah itself provides no instructions, but I have earlier shown the hidden alchemical tradition there. To try to put it together requires us to better understand the significance of the North Star to this work. The North Star provides the practitioner with a celestial pole. It is the center around which everything else revolves. Once aligned with the North Star, the alchemist becomes, in effect, the center of the universe. So where do we find this in Sepher Yetzirah? It's there, and again hidden. That word is Teli. It has generally been translated as Dragon or Celestial Dragon. Many of the ancient Hebrew sources say it refers to the constellation Draco, popularly known as the Dragon. Draco is a northern constellation the tail of which is between the Big Dipper and Polaris. Kumham's Celestial Handbook, Vol.2, the Astronomers Bible, tells us that Polaris was not always the North Star because over long periods of time the Earth's axis shifts in relationship to the sky. In the future the star Vega in the constellation Lyra will become the North Star. In 2800 B.C., the time of Abraham, the North Star was Thuban, a star in the tail of Draco! In Abraham's time the constellation Draco served the same purpose as the Big Dipper and Polaris does in modern Taoist Alchemy. Draco wraps around the north heavens. My best guess is that ancient Hebrew students were able to use this information in a similar manner as used in the advanced Taoist alchemical formulas. The ancient Hebrew Kabbalist aligned himself with the North Star, Thuban, and used this as his celestial pole. In the Great Pyramid at Giza in Egypt, if one were to look upward from the tomb of the Pharaoh Khufu, you would see a small rectangular opening to the sky above. Astronomers have shown through astronomical calculations that at the time Khufu had the Pyramid built, if you looked through the rectangular hole, you would be looking directly at Thuban. Again please note that Abraham was reputed to be knowledgeable in all the mystical sciences of Egypt and alchemy translates as the Egyptian matter. So, is this all correct? I don't really know. With the methods of Taoist alchemy available to me, it all points to a common source and make sense out of what previously made no sense.

The actual language used in the Sepher Yetzirah states:

1. There are three Mothers and from them emanated three Fathers and their offspring. Seven are the planets and their host, twelve are the diagonal boundaries. And the proof of this, faithful witnesses, are the universe, the year and the soul. A rule of Ten, Three, Seven and Twelve, and he appointed over them the Teli, the cycle and the heart. The Three arc fire, water, and air; fire above, water below and air mediating between them. A sign of these things is that the fire supports water. Mem hums, Shin hisses and Alef, a breath of air, which places them in equilibrium.
2. The Teli in the Universe is like a king upon his throne. The cycle of the year like a king over his dominion. The heart in the soul is like a king in war. We can see that the Teli is mentioned in the midst of the alchemical formula: the fire supports water. 'The Teli (Celestial Dragon) in the universe is like a king upon his throne,' Everything revolves around it, from this regal viewpoint. The analogy to the Cosmic Being, whose Crystal Palace is the North Star seems appropriate. Aryeh Kaplan says that the reference to the Heart refers to the Heart of Heaven. As mentioned, another name for the Crystal Palace is the Heavenly Heart. In Western Alchemy, it was called the Philosophers Stone. Actually, much of this is of historical interest only. Thuban is no longer the North Star: Polaris is. If I were teaching this today, I would substitute Polaris and the Big Dipper for Draco. The cycle of the year revolves around them, the constellations of the zodiac revolve around them, the universe revolves around them, from our vantage point here on Earth. As often mentioned, the Sepher Yetzirah contains mysteries within mysteries.

Star Magick

I am uplifted in thine heart; and the kisses of the stars rain hard upon thy body." (The Book of the Law, II. 62, 1904)

We have traveled now to the stars themselves and drawn their energies down into ourselves. We have drawn down the purple light from above. The true light of the North Star is purple beyond purple, purple beyond eyesight. It is the purple of the violet ray of transformation. Purple is the color of alchemical transformation in the Western Alchemical Tradition. Purple is the seventh ray. To modern day followers of the teachings of Saint Germain, connecting with the purple light of alchemy is at the heart of the system. To find this perfect correlation between Taoist and Western Alchemy is extraordinary. Actually, being able to experience the star energy requires diligence and practice. When I first learned of drawing star energy, it seemed almost silly. Initially it requires the active use of the imagination. But with practice it becomes more real. As you climb through the levels of alchemy, the body and mind become more attuned to sensing and experiencing subtle energies. There is a Taoist expression describing the effects of this gradual transformation: that which was real becomes false while that which was false becomes real. A simple Taoist star energy exercise is to pick any star in the sky (it could be Polaris), and imagine that its light is spiraling down into your eyes. Do this a few times and you will find that it soon feels like more than imagination. You can feel something spiraling down: the light of the stars.

Aleister Crowley and the Book of the Law

In the Western Kaballah, one of the great mysteries of the twentieth century is that of Aleister Crowley and The Book of the Law. This strange book has either delighted, baffled, or grossed out anyone who has ever read it. Crowley claimed that on three consecutive nights: April 8, 9, and 10 in 1904, while on his honeymoon with his wife Rose in Cairo, Egypt, a new era was born for mankind. The Aeon was proclaimed. This was accomplished when Rose spontaneously announced the presence of Aiwass, a discarnate being, who referred to himself as "the Minister of Hoor-Paar-Kraat." Rose then channeled a chapter of a book on each of three consecutive nights. This short three-part book eventually became the focal point of Crowley's life. He believed it came from a higher being. It changed his life. Whether there really was an Aiwass or merely a projection of Crowley's unconscious cannot be known. However, this mysterious work that Crowley referred to as The Book of the Law or Liber L Vel Legis is, in large part, concerned with star magick, "the unveiling of the company of heaven." In Egyptian mythology, Nuit was the Goddess of the Sky. Her body contained all the planets and stars in the night sky. At the end of each day, she would swallow the sun, which would pass through her body during the night and be excreted each morning. Crowley referred to the first chapter of The Book of the Law as the "Book of Nuit" or "Liber Nuit." It is Nuit who proclaims "every man and every woman is a star." In the cosmology of The Book of the Law, Nuit has a consort, Hadit. Nuit represents infinite space and Hadit is any point within infinite space. If you grasp the concept, it is simple. In infinite space, any point is equally in the center of that space. To become aware that you are in the center of infinity is the proper mindset. By the same token, every star in the heavens is in the center of infinite space. And as previously discussed, each person is a living embodiment of energy from the stars. Thus, every man and every woman is a star. In the words of Hadit, "In the sphere I am everywhere the center, as she (Nuit), the circumference is nowhere found." I don't want to explore The Book of the Law here in any great depth. My point is that star magick, drawing energy from the stars and identification of the self as being in the center of the universe plays an important role in modern Western Kabbalism. The Book of the Law has many analogies to the higher levels of Taoist Alchemy. I predict that as Western Kabbalists learn more about Taoist Yoga many of the Taoist practices will be absorbed into the Kabbalistic system.

The Congress of Heaven and Earth

This is actually an advanced sexual formula. It involves the creation of a male (yang) and female (ym) entity within the body. They have intercourse within the brain resulting in full development of the pineal gland. The sensation is difficult to describe. It is as if the pineal gland has become the male sexual organ, which is brought to orgasm by the undulations of the pituitary gland, which acts as a female sexual organ, while the thalamus acts as the cauldron. The thalamus is also the gland that directly connects with the North Star. At an even higher level, the intercourse takes place outside the physical body in the spirit body between a heavenly Cod and Goddess. Franz Bardon in Initiation into Hermetic has a wonderful full color picture of what he calls the first tarot card. Above the head of the central figure is a crown, and above the crown is a clear globe within which a heavenly man and woman are copulating. He describes this image as representing the procreative positive and negative forces, which stand for the creating act of the universe. Clearly, Bardon was familiar with this formula though he never specifically refers to it anywhere else in his writings. To a Hebrew Kabbalist, what is being described here is intercourse between the higher Shekinah (Binah) and the Great Father (Chokmah). I know of no authentic Hebrew sources that describe such practices. But then again, there really are no words that could adequately describe intercourse between the positive and negative creative forces in the universe. Remember, Chokmah consciousness is beyond the verbal powers of the intellect.

Return to the Source

The highest light is the clear light. It is beyond the purple light. In the Hebrew Kabbalah, it is the clear light that is unmoving and unchanging, that pervades all of creation. It is like the canvas upon which the universe is painted. In Lurianic Kabbalism, the clear light preceded all of creation. It is the fin Soph Aur, the Limitless Light. As stated, Lurianic Kabbalism is immensely complex. Luria's version of creation was stunning. Prior to creation, the Ein Soph was limitless. In order to allow creation to take place, the in Soph has to create a

space in which creation could take place. To accomplish this, the Ein Soph contracted into itself. It contracted to a single point. This is known as the Tsimtsum. However, despite the contraction, there remained an essence of the Ein Soph, a higher light that lingered in the space the Ein Soph had contracted from. To conceptualize this, imagine a bottle filled with wine. Pour out the wine and there will still be the aroma of the wine lingering in the bottle. Now, instead of pouring out the wine imagine it condensing into a single point within the bottle. This is sort of like the Tsimtsum. The next step involved the creation of the primordial man, Adam Kadmon, at the point of concentration. From the eyes of Adam Kadmon came the emanation of light to fill each sephirah and create the universe. However, after the light from Adam Kadmon's eyes shown into Kether, Chokmah and Binah, the next sephirah Chesed was not strong enough to contain the light of original creation and it shattered. It was this shattering of the vessels that brought chaos and evil into the universe. It was necessary that a second creation take place. This time the light issued forth from the forehead of Adam Kadmon and this time the sephiroth held. But, it is the shattered sparks from the original creation that the Lurianic Kabbalist must unify and return to the Ein Soph to fulfill the original plan of creation. All religions seem to have a tradition of a higher light, a light of heaven, a clear light. Kabbalistic Judaism and Taoism are no different. Taoists call rejoining this light the Return to the Source or the Union of Heaven and Man. After intercourse between the divine man and divine woman in the Congress of Heaven and Earth, the spirit body obtains immortality and merges with the Higher Light of the Tao, the Wu Chi. There are legends of Taoist Immortals who could leave their bodies on earth in a state of suspended animation and travel through space for years on end before returning to their bodies. One such recent legend tells of a detachment of Communist soldiers finding a group of non-decaying, but not apparently living bodies in a cave. The bodies were ordered burned. In time, the Taoist Immortals returned to earth only to find their bodies had been destroyed. Their methods of revenge taken against the soldiers would make for an interesting novel. How can I describe merging with the Source, returning to Heaven? I cannot. It is the ultimate mystical experience reserved for the very few highest adepts.