

# Sexuality and partnership

The topic of sexuality and partnership is very complex because here is where the really big themes meet. Sexuality itself combined with the question "How can partnership be successful?". In order to respond to this complexity, I will address the following points in this article:

- ✓ What is the Tao of sexuality?
- ✓ The role of Taoist practices in our modern times
- ✓ The differences between men and women
- ✓ Partnership and sexuality
- ✓ The Tao of sexuality and meditation/mystics

## What does Tao of Sexuality mean?

### Overview Taoism

In order to understand the significance of sexuality in Taoism, we first need an idea of what exactly Taoism is and which role it played during its time of origin. Taoism emerged in the period around 500-600 years BC in the region of ancient China. At that time there were great social problems and living conditions were so difficult that the average life expectancy was very low. In this context Taoism was born, also as an answer to the questions "How can I deal with difficult life situations?", "How can I create a power and a space within myself that allows me to grow despite negative external influences, open my heart, develop my potential and lovingly put myself out into the world." The central idea of Taoism is that both, ourselves and all life around us, are infused with the Tao, which nurtures and cares for us. Thus, the question underlying Taoist practices is always, "How can I achieve oneness with the Tao, beyond life and death?"

In order to cultivate these ideas, Taoism has developed various elements, such as body exercises, meditation practices, and healing exercises, but also aspects of Chinese medicine, which we will discuss later on. A special field in Taoism is the deep practice of Inner Alchemy. Inner Alchemy means I change my physical, mental and emotional state with the help of my mind. In this context, visualization exercises and the sexual practices have a great importance. Another big topic in Taoism is, of course, mysticism, which we will also talk about, as the sexual practices can help us develop our spirituality.

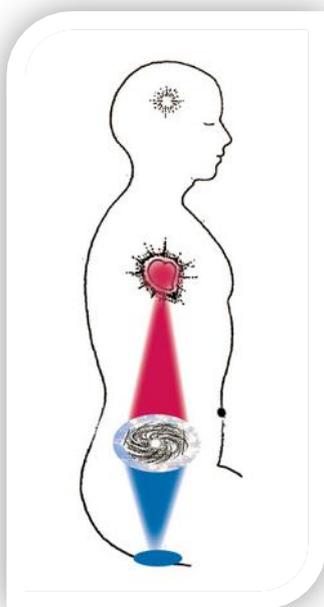
## Sexual Practices in Inner Alchemy

There are two reasons why sexual practices are so important in Taoism. First, the Taoists acknowledged sexuality as a natural part of life, and dealing with daily life, maintaining healthy relationships, and experiencing joy in life were one of the focuses they had. On the other hand there was the idea that sexual power is the source of our inner energy, an essence that allows our whole being to flourish. This idea was also common in India and throughout Asia. If we manage to awaken, increase and retain this power within us, it gives us a boost of vitality, life force and energy and the opportunity to arrive at our center to open our heart, develop our potential and evolve spiritually.

### Love Meets Libido

The central idea of the sexual practices in Inner Alchemy is that love and libido come together in the abdomen. Very often in life these two forces do not come together. When we are in love, love flows outward to the other person, just as sexual power usually flows outward. In the meditations of Inner Alchemy, we gather these two forces inside. To do so, the libido rises into the abdomen along with the yin forces from the pelvic floor, the earth, and the yuan qi of the kidneys (see below), while the love of the heart flows down from above. The main energy here is the sexual force, however in TCM the pelvic floor is also seen as an important source of energy as there are various acupuncture points that have a strong Yin uplifting effect. The yuan qi of the kidneys, on the other hand, is more yang, as it warms us and provides us with active power.

In the abdomen, the forces of libido, pelvic floor and kidneys then merge with the love of the heart into something new, greater (alchemy!), into a kind of superpower that acts like a strong inner healing force. This inner power has incredible effects on our body and our life: it activates healing processes, has a life-prolonging effect, gives us more energy and improves our brain function, it deepens our partnership and sexuality, supports self-love and self-acceptance, and gives us stability, calm and peace. It also allows us to really feel our center and arrive at ourselves.



#### Benefit of the sexual practices:

- *Activates healing processes*
- *Life-prolonging effect*
- *More energy*
- *Better brain function*
- *Deepens partnership and sexuality*
- *Supports self-love and self-acceptance*
- *Stability, calm, peace*

Fig. 1: Love and Libido meet in the abdomen

## Taoist practices in today's world

These practices are a great treasure for our modern times. While we no longer have the same problems as people did at the time of Taoism's emergence - nevertheless, the modern, digital age presents us with a plethora of challenges for which Taoist practices can provide an answer.

Most people today are overwhelmed and hardly able to turn off their heads, and instead feel and connect with themselves. This state is caused by constant stress, overwork, media consumption, electro-smog, poor nutrition, etc. All of these factors lead to one point: our abdominal space is empty and this prevents us from really arriving at ourselves. As a consequence of this inner absence we are also no longer able to feel our heart and its needs. So what we need most in these days is an arrival within ourselves, stability, but also an unfolding of the heart. In all spiritual traditions the heart is considered to be the strongest healing force and it is ideally a compass that guides us through life and allows us to unfold our potential and bring it into the world.

### The connection between the abdomen and the brain

In Chinese medicine we call it the “weak center”, when people are no longer able to digest life experiences and stay centred within themselves. The most famous symptoms in this context are worrying, brooding and circling in one's own thoughts. Even modern science has recently discovered that our brain interacts directly with the nervous system of the intestines. So, if the abdomen is energetically empty, our brain also does not function well and we can hardly digest our daily life. At the same time mental overwork, stress, and media consumption causes our belly to become more and more empty. In this context Taoist practices have one central solution to interrupt the vicious circle: if we manage to unite, concentrate and retain love and libido in the abdomen, our center will be filled and nourished. This gives us an inner stability and calmness and most importantly, our brain is nourished and well fed again. Through this our mind can come to rest and we can digest life again.



Fig. 2: Brain and intestine interact.

## Recycled life force

Taoist sexual practices are known to have broad healing effects, which can be explained with the help of Chinese medicine and the science of meridians. Here, the sexual force is not considered a separate force, but as part of our essence. This essence is our inherited Qi, the life energy that we have received from our parents. It determines our constitution, how long we live and how healthy and resilient we are. This inherited essence resides in the lower back, especially in the kidneys, which is why we often refer to it generally as kidney energy. It is very important to understand in this context that when Chinese medicine refers to the kidneys, it does not mean the physical kidneys alone, but rather a force in the lower back that radiates out into the bones, the brain, and by doing so, helps determine their strength and health.

In addition, kidney energy also raises the libido. Here is one important point: if a man loses a lot of libido by ejaculating frequently, or again if a woman loses a lot of blood during menstruation or has many children, both lose not only vitality, but most of all they lose essence. This is a big problem because essence cannot be built up as easily as our Qi. This is where the sexual practices come in. They have the idea of recycling the sexual energy and transforming it into active life force, instead of wasting it through sperm and the power of the ovaries. In this way, it is possible to preserve our essence and deeply built up and nourish ourselves with the help of sexual energy, while simply sitting on a chair and having free time.

## Medical aspects

Taking care of the kidney energy and preserving our essence leads to numerous positive effects on our health: impotence, premature ejaculation, lack of libido, exhaustion, back pain, and many others are sustainably improved by the practices. In addition, the meditations open the Chong Mai, a central meridian that runs right through the middle of the body. This affects many gynaecological complaints, such as irregular / too heavy / painful menstruation, discharge, unwanted childlessness, post-menopausal symptoms, etc.. For women, there is another special benefit - they can learn to take care of their abdomen and build up blood to compensate for the loss of blood during menstruation. So women learn through these practices not only to build up Qi, but also Blood, because it is only through the Blood that the Qi can sink and arrive and the woman is able to rest within herself. Another huge issue nowadays is the question "How can I get pregnant more easily?" as many couples are struggling with unwanted childlessness. Often the reason is that the woman has too little blood or a too cold belly. Acupuncture, Chinese herbs and the right diet can also help in this case and complement the Taoist practices in a useful way.

## The connection between the pelvic floor and the brain

Another important aspect: in Chinese medicine there is known a connection from the pelvic floor, i.e. the lower glands, the ovaries, the testicles and the prostate with important centers in the brain. These centers include the pineal gland and the pituitary gland, two central endocrine glands that superordinately control our entire hormonal system. Another center is the limbic system, a major regulatory center that controls drive, learning, memory, emotions, and large areas of our autonomic nervous system. These areas, and the brain itself, are activated when we activate libido and pelvic

floor energy. Thus, sexual practices are able to regulate our hormone balance, strengthen our mind and brain function, and allow us to emotionally process and heal.

On a spiritual level, the sexual practices thereby support the opening of the upper two chakras in the head area, the Anja chakra at the forehead and the Sahasrara chakra at the crown. In the tradition of mysticism, both chakras are associated with intuition, wisdom and knowledge. <sup>1</sup>

## The difference between men and women

Before we get to the difference between men and women, I feel it is important to say that both sexes cannot simply be pigeonholed. There are men who have very masculine qualities and others whose feminine qualities are more pronounced. Of course, the same is true for women. Nevertheless, there are different priorities in the sexuality of men and women.

### *Men*

Male sexuality is yang accentuated. This is obvious: the male sexual organs are on the outside and the man is active when he penetrates the woman. There are two key points here. First, the man needs a yang energy, a power, a force, which, among other things, enables an erection to occur. In order for this yang energy to occur, the man needs a strong abdomen, which is not the case for many men who are exhausted. The second point is that the liver energy must be functioning well and be in balance. Let's take another short excursion into Chinese medicine, because here each organ is associated with certain qualities, tasks and emotions. The liver represents the free flow of energy, the implementation of projects, the birth of ideas, i.e. the kind of energy that a man needs during sex. At the same time, the liver is very burdened in many people, by stress, hectic, overeating, alcohol and old unresolved emotions, especially anger. Aggression is omnipresent in sexuality nowadays, whether in porn, fantasies or real abuse, and it occurs when men act out their unresolved emotions and anger in sexuality. Therefore, it is essential for men to learn different qualities in parallel with sexual practices, such as the ability to resolve inner emotions. This enables the man to feel his heart more deeply and through this he is able to feel the woman and melt with her, instead of acting out his stress and anger.

Another point is that many men cannot easily feel their heart. Yet the awareness of their own heart is the key to a deep relationship. Often men feel their heart exclusively when they are in love. But as we all know, this infatuation wears off over the years. Feeling the heart is the key for men. There are two key aspects here: Only by feeling their heart men are able to really open up to the relationship. The second key point is that for men, connecting with their heart is very helpful to fully arrive at their inner center. Unlike the woman, in whose abdomen lies the power center of the uterus, in the man's abdomen we find the intestine, that is, an empty container. When the man tries to come to rest here, it initially feels like an empty room. However, if the man manages to let the power of the heart shine down and connect with his libido, this area becomes energetically filled with a deep presence and stillness. This allows men in sexuality to melt much more with their partner and be present with her, and at the same time it is much easier for them to let the sexual power sparkle up into the internal organs or the brain.

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term chakra here, although it comes from yoga and not from the Taoist tradition. There are overlaps in content between the concept of the three dantiens, the meridian theory and the teaching of the chakras, so that these concepts complement each other in a useful way.

## *Women*

Women's sexuality is more yin focused. Their sexual organs are on the inside, the man penetrates them, so for women sexuality is mainly about letting go, letting in and melting. For many women, it's easy to melt and feel their heart, and libido often rises naturally on its own. A different issue is more important here: many women have the ability to empathize and melt with another person. This is essential for women when they have children, because only then are they able to care for the child appropriately and provide the child with a stable bonding experience. The flip side of this ability is that many women do not easily arrive at themselves, at their center and their strength, in other words, at an inner still point where they are connected to their strength, have a deep calm, and are not identified with the relational space. Now here is a point that women can learn easily through these practices: How can I truly enter my power and avoid being lost in the relationship space, see everything more clearly, and from this power and stability and connected to my heart, implement the things that are important to me in life.

## Sexuality and Partnership

Often people ask me "How can I have greater sex?" My answer: "This will come automatically when you practice the Taoist practices. But by the way you asked the wrong question! The question should be: How can I love myself more and arrive at myself so that I can unite deeper with my partner and melt together more easily?"

It is important to understand that sexuality is not only physical. Otherwise, sex would be just two people rubbing against each other. Rather, sexuality is based on energy and heart power, so it takes place on an energetic-emotional level. Many people enter into a partnership in a state of inner emptiness. They neither feel themselves, nor feel their presence and love, but expect exactly to do so from their partner. But since the other person is usually in a similar state, the situation is like two one-legged people trying to walk together. In any case, this will not bring any pleasant result, especially after the first infatuation has faded away. The solution to this dilemma is this: The more we arrive at ourselves, love ourselves and be with ourselves, the more love we can put out into the partnership and the more sexuality will be fulfilling. That is why the very first thing we learn in sexual practices is to return the libido into the body as a healing force and to connect it with the love of the heart.

Let's talk about sex itself. Once you have mastered the meditation practices, you learn quite quickly how to use the sexual energy for yourself. You can for example, guide it through **the small circulatory system**, into the spine, into the brain and the glands, and you can learn how to nourish all your organs and decelerate the aging process. If you have mastered this level, you can integrate the practices relatively easily during sexual intercourse, which leads to sexuality becoming more fulfilling, going longer, but also touching us more deeply and nourishing the partnership.

Important to know: There is a difference between sexuality and partnership! It is rather easy to learn these exercises and to improve our sexuality, but this does not mean that our partnership will automatically improve as well. There is a very important point here: energy exercises bear the danger that they cover being and presence. The less presence and being I have inside me, the more I feel like I need energy exercises to feel myself. This bears the danger that missing partnership and missing belonging are covered up by energy exercises. To establish a really deep partnership, you need the ability to truly perceive your partner, to listen and to feel. It also requires the ability to look deeper

into oneself and recognize all the old drama and trauma with prevent me from being loving and open-hearted towards my partner. For this purpose, arriving in the abdomen can be the key, because it turns the abdomen into a safe vessel from which I can perceive and process old issues. Coaching and therapeutic work may also be necessary here. Above all, partnership means listening, feeling and perceiving the other person from the heart in his/her soul. Partnership is a complex issue and needs time and space to unfold!

To summarize: Sexual practices are a great basis and can deepen a partnership, but they are only one piece of the puzzle that is needed for real partnership to succeed.

## Meditation and Mysticism

Beside healing, improving partnership and unfolding the heart, sexual practices hold another great opportunity: the possibility of improving our meditation and developing our spirituality. Sexuality, spirituality, meditation and mysticism have been connected throughout the ages. Many people think meditation means I sit totally still and everything is quiet. But this is not true. At the core, meditation means: our whole being becomes transparent. All meditations have one main principle: I sink into my center and arrive within myself, thereby creating an inner space. Through this, my body becomes wider on the outside, I can leave everyday life behind, see myself from a meta-perspective and thus gain a greater overview. This is the basis for any spirituality, no matter which spiritual system you look at. In this state, the inner meridians and chakras open nearly on its own, and we feel transparent and connected to life. To enter this process there are two energy centers that are of fundamental importance: First, the heart center, one of the most difficult chakras to open, and secondly, the sexual chakra, which has an enormous power, but at the same time is often burdened with negative emotions and traumata. Taoist sexual practices open these two centers simultaneously, which creates a great potential for spiritual development and deep experiences. The connection of love and libido in the abdomen also activates the Svadhsthana Chakra, the energy center of the abdomen. In martial arts, this chakra is known as "dantien" or "hara" and it is also of great importance in any therapeutic work. Once it is fully activated, it not only improves a person's overall health and psychological stability, but it also improves intuition and brings out qualities of non-sensory perception. Later on, sexual energy can also open the upper energy centers. This may catapult us into another dimension of being and reality, as we feel totally differently connected to the world and grasp ourselves in it in a completely new way. Sexual energy can be a good foundation for this process, but it is not enough. In all spiritual traditions exists the knowledge that the upper centers generally open up more through insight, silence and devotion than through pure energy work.

## Summary

Taoist practices are more relevant than ever as they offer a wealth of answers to the problems of our time. By merging love and libido and developing a new power in the abdomen, they are able to fundamentally improve our health, deepen our relationships, and develop our spirituality. Also, my own life has been fundamentally changed by these practices. Although I had already been practicing martial arts and silent meditation for years, the sexual practices completely changed my energy, my

health, and the way I aged. Furthermore, they brought my understanding of partnership, psychological issues, and various spiritual traditions to a whole different level. So, in summary, I dare to say that this practice is worth more than gold!