**Mantak Chia, born 1941 or 1944**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak\_Chia



**Mantak Chia** ([Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_language): 謝明德, [Pinyin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin): Xiè Míngdé, born 1941 or 1944 in [Bangkok](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangkok), [Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand)) is a [Thai Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thai_Chinese) author, teacher and self-described [healer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healer). He is best known for his books and teachings on [Taoism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism) and [qigong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qigong). He has closely worked with several students with a background in Western esoteric studies, especially [Michael Winn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Winn), [Eric Yudelove](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Eric_Yudelove&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Dennis Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Lewis).

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**Biography**

Mantak Chia was born to a Chinese family in Thailand in 1941 or 1944. He trained in [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong) and studied both [traditional Chinese medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_Chinese_medicine) and Western medicine. He began study at the young age of six and had many teachers throughout the years. Of all his teachers, the heaviest influence on his system of thought was Yi Eng (White Cloud), an [eremitic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eremitic) member of the [Dragon's Gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_Gate_Taoism) sect of the [Quanzhen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quanzhen) (Complete Perfection) school of Taoism.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-Miller_2006._Pg_268-0)[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-Kohn_2008._Pg_221-1)

Mantak Chia was raised in a [Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) family. His father was a [Baptist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptist) minister, breaking with a long tradition of Taoist healers. As an adult, Mantak Chia identifies as a Christian. Chia states that Yi Eng encouraged him to teach Taoist alchemy and meditation to Westerners, motivated by the fear that the practices would dwindle and be lost. He reports that repression in China and Taoist teachers offering instruction to only a very few for exhorbitant fees were main factors in this concern.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-interview-2)

In 1974, after systematizing his knowledge of [alchemy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_alchemy), he established his first school in Thailand. James Miller states that in 1979 Chia founded the Taoist Esoteric Yoga Center in New York. The center, later renamed the Healing Tao Center, attracted a broad variety of European and American students that helped him establish a lecture and seminar circuit. In 1994, Chia and his wife Maneewan, later divorced, returned to Thailand to build the Internation Healing Tao Center in Chiang Mai, Tao Garden. The center caters to wealthy European and American visitors, offering classes in an expensive upscale spa environment.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-Miller_2006._Pg_268-0)

Livia Kohn states that Chia established a school in [Huntington, New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntington%2C_New_York) in 1978, later opening a center in [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City) in 1983. His principal Western student is Michael Winn, who founding the Healing Tao University in [upstate New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upstate_New_York) and provides support to local centers in metropolitan areas throughout North America.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-Kohn_2008._Pg_221-1)

He has closely worked with several students with a background in Western esoteric studies, especially Michael Winn, Eric Yudelove and Dennis Lewis.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-3) His ex-wife Maneewan Chia is the co-author of many of his books. According to [King's College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_College_London) scholar Peter Bernard Clarke, Chia's Healing Tao movement is one of the few Thai [new religious movements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_religious_movements) to have achieved an international following.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-4)

**Beliefs and teachings**

Chia states that he sees no conflict between his Christianity and the Healing Tao practices. He states that the system is not religious and that practitioners "can be Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim and still enjoy the benefits in the framework of [their] own belief system". In an interview, Chia stated that he teaches "how to control and harness the sexual energy".[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-interview-2)

Regarding the mystical nature of the system, Chia stated:

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| **“** | When Buddhism came to China, shamans were persecuted, like witches in the west, so they became Taoists, rivals to the Buddhists, and continued their practices in secret, using only internal energy, internal alchemy, without the use of accessories to identify themselves. The saying goes "you cannot tell a sage by his clothes." They were also known as magicians, wizards and sorcerers. Yes, Taoism is magic. | **”** |
| —Mantak Chia, Interview in Positive Health.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-5) |

Western society is presented in Chia's writings as in the throes of crisis, which is a common trope in [New Age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age) and [esoteric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esotericism) writings. He draws a parallel between the perceived excesses of Western culture and the "wasteful" failure to develop a means of [semen retention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semen_retention). He indicates the need for recycling and conservatism, connecting the sexual practices with ecological standards.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-6)

**Spiritual sexuality**

Chia's philosophy attempts to reinterpret traditional Taoist sexual teachings in a modern context, with the intent of presenting an accessible form of this reinterpretation to a Western audience. For Chia, the study of Taoist sexuality is a combination of theoretical knowledge and personal experience. This is a trend in Taoist writings intended for a Western audience, leading to a proliferation of subjective and modern "love manuals" and expositions on the Taoist way of love. Chia energetically asserts that these sexual practices are not only of historical interest, but have a real and practical value in modern life.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-7)

Chia emphasizes balance between men and women, mutual satisfaction, and intimate experiences purportedly exceeding the pleasure of normal lovemaking. Similar to [Daniel Reid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Reid), his writings about sexual practices carry a heavy overtones of proselytism. The integration of Taoist concepts and practices into Western society are presented as not only required for heightened pleasure and improved health, but fundamental to a new spiritual revival.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-8)

**Practices**

Mantak Chia's teachings about qi and cosmology are similar to the Taoist instructor Hua-ching Ni. In contrast to Ni's writings however, Chia's books lack discussion of philosophy, ethics or everyday practical advice. The system he presents is a narrowly focused system of [qigong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qigong) rooted firmly in [neidan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neidan).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-Miller_2006._Pg_268-0)

The fundamentals of Healing Tao correspond with traditional [internal alchemy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internal_alchemy) and Taoist meditation. Its spirituality is presented in three levels. First, a practitioner learns to cultivate healing energy for physical health. Qigong and [taijiquan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taijiquan) feature as the main practices. Physical motion and deep breathing exercises reputedly help clear the body of toxins, allowing a better opportunity to focus and cultivate qi. Mantak Chia offers a form of [taoyin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoyin) as an alternative method. This practice is intended to increase the qi flow and reserves of the practitioner, as well as increase their internal awareness. In contrast to the other exercises, the taoyin practices require a much greater understanding of internal anatomy, Chinese alchemy, traditional Chinese medicine, complex Taoist philosophy, and related information. In describing this set of practices, Mantak Chia makes many unsupported references to Western medicine. In the second stage of development, utilizing either "path", negative emotions are changed into positive emotional energy. The third stage of esoteric pursuit features advanced practices focused on creativity and spirituality.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-9)

**Instruction**

While all of the exercises in the Healing Tao system are included in his series of books, Chia heavily advocates the benefits of personal instruction. The complete official main course consists of fifteen lessons. Franchised instructors teach the curriculum worldwide, with more intensive and expansive course offerings available at the Tao Garden resort in Thailand. Michael Winn, Chia's oftentimes co-author, adapted the Healing Tao teachings with some differences in practice and philosophy. Miller reports that his annual summer retreat, featuring Mantak Chia as an invited speaker, is particularly notable for the commercialized language in its brochure. The practices are promoted as helping to "profoundly improve sexual health" and claiming that practitioners "lose pounds permanently without dieting", for example.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_note-10)

**Footnotes**

1. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-Miller_2006._Pg_268_0-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-Miller_2006._Pg_268_0-1) [***c***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-Miller_2006._Pg_268_0-2) Miller (2006). Pg 268.
2. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-Kohn_2008._Pg_221_1-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-Kohn_2008._Pg_221_1-1) Kohn (2008). Pg 221.
3. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-interview_2-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-interview_2-1) Larthe (1999).
4. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-3) [*Daoist Alchemy in the West* by Lee Iwrin](http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeVI/Dao.htm)
5. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-4) Clarke (2006). Pg 277.
6. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-5) Larthe (1999)
7. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-6) Clarke (2000), p. 133.
8. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-7) Machacek & Wilcox (2003). Pg 96.
9. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-8) Clarke (2000), pp. 132-33.
10. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-9) Kohn (2008). Pp 221-22.
11. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantak_Chia#cite_ref-10) Miller (2006). Pp. 268-69.

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* Miller, James. *Chinese religions in contemporary society*. ABC-CLIO, 2006. [ISBN 1851096264](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/1851096264).

**Further reading**

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* Chia, Mantak. *Cosmic Healing I: Cosmic Chi Kung*. Universal Tao Publications, 2001. [ISBN 9748767256](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/9748767256).

**External links**

* [Mantak Chia's Official Workshop Videos](http://www.pacifictao.com/)
* [Universal Tao](http://www.universal-tao.com/)

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