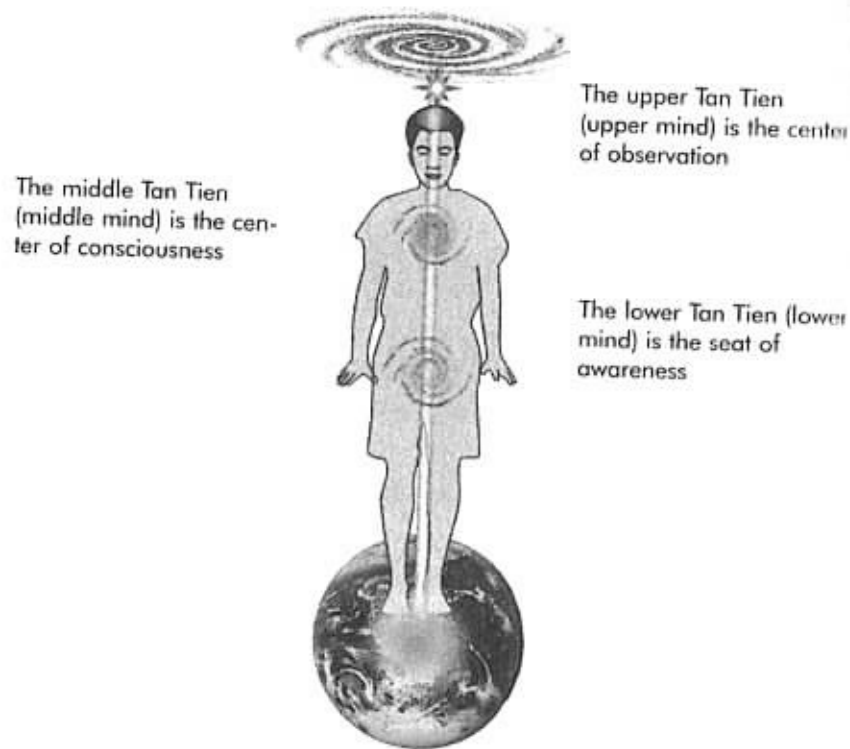


and the sexual center. For men, the sexual center is the prostate gland and for women it lies in the top of the cervix between the ovaries.



THREE TAN TIENS

Because the lower Tan Tien is the place where our prenatal Chi is stored, where all the energy that we absorb and collect during the Chi Kung exercises is stored, and where denser energies are transformed into more subtle energies, Taoist inner alchemy places a great deal of attention on this area. The lower Tan Tien is also called the "medicine field" or "elixir field," as it gathers and contains the healing power of Chi. Other names for it are the "cauldron" and the "navel center." The expression "cauldron" refers to the function of the lower Tan Tien as the center of internal alchemy that transforms energy.

The lower Tan Tien serves as the source of the life force or vital force. This then becomes transformed into the more subtle Shen Chi, or spirit power/energy. Thus, throughout all Universal Tao practices, the lower Tan Tien remains the key to supplying the body and the mind with a free, uninterrupted flow of energy. Taoist Chi Kung is above all a practice by which the unity of what is above and below is acknowledged and honored. Through its service as a reservoir and transformer of Chi, the lower Tan Tien confirms the unity between earth and heaven in the body.

## THE THREE MINDS

As illustrated on page 28, Taoist masters discovered that human beings have three minds: the upper mind, which is the observing mind; the middle mind, which is the consciousness mind; and the lower mind, which is the awareness mind. The upper mind is valuable for analytic activity and planning, but negative emotions can cause the upper mind to be agitated with excessive thinking and worrying, which drains energy. The upper mind works practically all the time, stirring up the emotions and using up to 80 percent of our body energy. We should train the upper mind to be relaxed and to just observe when we do not need to be involved in specific mental activity. The key is to "seek the released mind" by relaxing, emptying, and sinking the upper mind down into the lower mind/lower Tan Tien. Western science has recently discovered that there are nerve endings in the stomach and intestines that are related to emotional responses. By smiling into the lower Tan Tien, we can activate the lower mind. We can then use the upper mind (observing mind), middle mind (consciousness mind), and lower mind (awareness mind) together, grounded in the abdomen.

If we can use the lower mind more, the upper mind can rest and listen (observe) from the abdomen. The upper mind, or, as the Taoists refer to it, the "monkey mind," can, when agitated, suppress consciousness or awareness. Once the upper mind rests, we can

*Source: Mantak Chia and Tao Huang, the Secret Teachings of the Tao Te Ching*