

Nine Holes in the Pearls



By Master Wasentha Young

The "nine holes in the pearl" refers to the bringing of energy upward from the earth through the body from the feet. The method is threading the major holes or entry spaces in the skeletal system together. Starting from the Bubbling Well on the bottom of the foot you use your mind to thread upward through the ankles, knees, hips, then up through the coccyx (tail bone) and up the spine out to the shoulders, down to the elbows, wrists, and fingers, then return to the spine (starting around the ming men point between the kidneys) up to the back of the head, and then to the top of head.

When using the imagery of "as if being hung by a string from above" it is entirely separate from the above imagery. This imagery is mostly used to help tai chi students to keep the head upright and spine straight in the relaxation process.

When to practice "Threading the Nine Holes in the Pearl".

When beginning the tai chi form there is a saying to "through the body wide open, thread the nine holes in the pearls." When starting the form, a common practice is to start off by relaxing downward, and then to open upward. Relaxing downward involves letting go of tension in the soft matter of the body, as well as allowing the breath to sink. Opening upward involves deeper relaxation where you are sensing the bone structure, or firm interior of the body and reducing the tension of sinus and ligament tension on the bones as well as the downward pressure of gravity.

All of this is done at the same time you are performing the beginning posture. After you have engaged the relaxation techniques in both directions, you eventually develop the skill of maintaining this awareness throughout your form.

Yang Dwing-ming has a practice in one of his books he calls "Bone Marrow, Brain Washing" that is essentially the upward imagery of the "nine holes". You can therefore use this imagery in isolation. The holes are as follows:

1. Ankles
2. Knees
3. Hips
4. Coccyx (tail bone)
5. Shoulders
6. Elbows
7. Wrists
8. Center of Occipital Ridge (base of skull)
9. Top of head



One pitfall is - overloading your senses. As your awareness develops in threading the nine holes, it becomes more natural. As you deeply relax and maintain proper alignment that should open the energy centers on the central channel. If you use too much force and intention you will find that both your openness on the inside and relaxation on the outside becomes impeded. Look mostly for the experience to be as natural as possible. This is a Taoist approach.

If you are a healer, you are aware that breathing and being open to letting the energy flow through you is the best strategy. Be aware of the pathways (meridians) the energy flows through; and let it flow through naturally – in its essential and sensual way.