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Part 7: Distillation

by Nanci Shanderá, Ph.D.

“Your feelings and thoughts are the feelings and thoughts of the Whole Universe," (from The Emerald Tablet by Dennis William Hauck). This statement describes the process of Distillation, where we become far more interested in the greater good than merely in our own. It is the transformational stage where we are spiritually and emotionally mature enough to merge with the collective conscious and unconscious without becoming devastated by what we find there. The reason we can keep our balance after having arrived at the Distillation stage is that the ego no longer controls us and we can therefore appreciate the mysteries of the collective - and personal - shadow material without the ego’s intrusion. (The shadow is that part of our own consciousness, as well as society’s, that holds the darker, rejected, denied, and powerful aspects. It not only holds difficult material that sometimes feels demonic in nature, but is also is the repository for our gifts, talents, and Soul’s voice until such time as we are ready to fully take them on.)

Distillation brings the creative out of us. It encourages all that we are to manifest in balanced and serenely powerful ways. It heralds the entry of the influence of the higher forces and the balancing of those forces with the lower ones, which provide our "groundedness," so crucial to wholeness. Someone once said that to be spiritually high all the time made us no earthly good. I see so much of the so-called “New Age” philosophies, as well as many religious ones, promoting the idea that our spiritual task is to transcend the body and earthly pleasures and problems, and move into an idealistic realm populated by angels and eternal joviality. These philosophies are based upon ages-old misconceptions about spiritual experience. These ideas imply that we are not capable of dealing with the reasons our Souls brought us down to earth in the first place. These philosophies would have us either become dependent upon intermediaries between us and our gods or look at life through very smudged rose-colored glasses. The truth about life is that it is exactly what it is in every moment. It is childish to believe that there was some kind of cosmic mistake that gave us the parents we have, put us on a toxic planet, and dropped us off without a user’s manual. Our infantile needs for remaining blind and rebelliously unresponsive to all the problems that our
Souls chose life on Earth to experience keep us unconscious and unevolved.

Distillation takes us into higher realms of awareness, but because we have been through all of the purifications and difficult challenges in the previous stages, we have a finer appreciation of the purpose of those difficulties. A distilled person is able to walk in both worlds at once, without rejecting either. And - this is very important - a distilled person is mature. She/he does not expect life to meet egoistic expectations, nor does she/he view it as a devastating disappointment just because it doesn’t meet those expectations. A distilled person would tend to perceive Earth as a “workshop planet,” where we have the blessed (yes, I said blessed) opportunity to really grow. A Soul who chooses Earth as its experience has great courage.

A distilled person would know that the Soul, rather than the ego, was now guiding her/his life. A distilled person surrenders to the higher forces while celebrating and honoring the existence of the lower ones. A mystical symbol of this state of consciousness which appears in many spiritual and religious logos is the image of two triangles, one with its point coming down to either touch or merge into a second triangle whose point rises up to meet or merge with the other.

In the last article on Fermentation, I shared with you the process I had just gone through - a deeper burning out of the ego’s influence and control over my life, particularly in regard to my creativity. As I began to emerge from the fermenting experience, I consulted my favorite tarot deck, The Alchemical Tarot, and drew the three of coins card in response to my question of where I was going from there. This card depicts a man at a desk doing some drawing or writing. He is seated by a window which looks out onto a lovely scene. Above the window are the alchemical symbols for mercury, salt and sulfur, which together represent wholeness. The card also illustrates the stability that is required in order for creative endeavors to manifest as a result of having combined the higher inspirations with the unconscious urge to create.

I was very pleased with this card because, over the next few weeks, it provided a confirmation of the value of the writing work I’ve been doing on these articles and the books I’m writing. From an ego-based viewpoint, I would have viewed this as personally gratifying since I had wanted to be an author since I was a little girl. But from the perception within a distilled consciousness, I understand the impact upon others that my writing will have, and that has become far more important than if it were merely for my own personal pleasure. (Don’t get me wrong - it’s also a great feeling to see what appears on the page as I write. But I am able to take on the primary purpose of my work as an offering to the world, rather than within the limited scope of only my personal life.)

A medieval alchemical drawing shows a well from which are emerging the masculine sun and the feminine moon. This depicts the process in distillation of arising from the depths of the lower work into a balanced relationship with both higher and lower aspects of being. Also in the picture is a pelican shown pecking at her breast until she draws blood that she then feeds to her young. This represents the sacred sacrifice we are asked to make if we are sincere in our intentions to become spiritually advanced. At some point we are required to make a sacrifice that benefits the greater good. It is important to understand that I am not talking about the soap opera type of sacrifice, with the heroine dramatically swooning with the back of her hand on her forehead. That kind of sacrifice is no sacrifice at all. It’s just more ego drama. The true sacrifice is one based upon the origin of the word: it is to make a sacred act or, to make an act sacred rather than self-serving.
Next time we’ll look at the last stage of alchemical transformation called Coagulation, which is the congealing of all earthly and heavenly consciousness within an individual. It moves us beyond even the ability to walk in both worlds found in Distillation and into a new consciousness that is a combination of both but that has become one distinct consciousness, no longer consisting of two aspects. It is what the alchemists call The One Thing. We may call it God.

Nanci Shanderá, Ph.D. is a Mystery School teacher and spiritual counselor-dreamworker at EarthSpirit Center in Eagle Rock, California. This article is excerpted from her book in progress: *Digging for Gold: the Art & Soul of Spiritual Experience*. She can be reached at 323/254-5458. Her website is [www.EarthSpiritCenter.com](http://www.EarthSpiritCenter.com).

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**Three Gems of Alchemical Initiation**

**Part 3: Distillation of Shen, the Third Gem of Alchemy**

By Lynn Osburn

Shen is the manifestation power of existence. When Shen is distilled things manifest. When Shen is distilled within the subtle body transcendent evolution can be attained. The human being distills shen naturally. In the drawing to the left above are shown the ventricles of the brain where the alchemical distillation takes place. The mechanisms of the cerebro-spinal system are akin to the furnace and retort/receiver bodies used in mundane distillation. In this analogy the distillation chamber itself is in the brain. The natural production of shen within the human being is mind power. Do not think shen is mind for shen is much more than mind. Mind is a manifestation of shen.

The major religions and philosophies direct the pilgrim to calm the mind using the analogy of a still pond that reflects distortion free the mysterious transcendent inspiration of cosmic origin. The still pond reflector state is passive shen. When one receives the manifestation of passive shen—the reflection of inspiring ideas upon the still mind, and then returns to the outer world and puts the ideas into action so that they become manifest, then one is using active shen power to manifest the idea (passive shen) in the world. Shen is the power to do things.

Will and imagination are fed by shen power. In alchemy will is fixed sulfur and imagination is volatile sulfur. Both are conditions of the alchemical soul. When you “imagized” the chi power in the circulation praxis of the first gemstone you were employing basic shen through volatile sulfur to manifest the chi power. However if you tried to entertain both concepts in the beginning the manifestation would more than likely
fail thus discouraging you from further attempts.

The important thing in the first gemstone praxis is to feel the chi power; you cannot feel the chi power in the beginning if your natural shen power of mind manifests instead of the chi power: If your mind makes a phantasy of It losing the chi into an idle dream. Once you can feel the chi power in the circulation shen will ride with It instead of consuming It.

You use shen power through volatile sulfur to configure the concept of the inner circulation. You use shen power through fixed sulfur to set the inner circulation concept into motion. Imagination and will in this way stir spirit into motion. Moving spirit is chi. It is felt as vibration which is waveform energy. When you feel vibration in the circuits of the subtle body that is chi power energizing you. Chi power engenders feelings of calmness and serenity.

You use shen power through volatile sulfur to configure the ching sublimation concept. You use shen power through fix sulfur to hold back and redirect the natural pleasurable surge to orgasm during the ching praxis. You redirect your earthly ching power with fixed sulfur. Earthly ching power has an intimate affinity with fixed sulfur. It clings to fixed sulfur so will power can turn the direction of sexual energy—will power can sublimate sexual energy into pure ching power.

Sublimated ching does not vibrate like chi power, It pulses and surges as discrete energy quanta more like bits than waveforms. When you feel the pulse as a fluid or gas-like plasma moving up your spine and packing density at the base of your skull that is ching power enlivening your subtle body. In this respect ching is likened to the alchemical salt that gives form to the subtle body so that It unites there.

After the chi/spirit, the ching/body and the shen/soul have each been separated from It by conscious awareness, feeling and sensation, so that one knows each power separately, They reunite as One in the subtle body which then evolves according to your nature.
First you used the natural spirit that moves all as a basis to empower your alchemical development—you sent chi vibrating through your inner circulation. Second you used natural creation sensation to enliven your alchemical development—you reversed the flow of ching recreating the inner circulation as the immortal fetus of your subtle alchemical body.

The alchemical development described thus far will take time to gestate through practice. Your new alchemical body—immortal fetus will evolve. That evolution is unfolding manifestation and fed primarily by shen power.

True you will circulate chi daily to keep power in your channels. Not to do this is to invite general crapulence and senility, such is the path leading to mortality. The alchemical being that you now are will naturally avoid lethal intervals of toxic crapulence.

Also true you will continue to sublimate ching or evolution of the alchemical body will not have the creative power to manifest. You will become uninspired by sex without alchemy because you will either drain your partner of ching or drain your ching into your partner. The latter will not enliven the alchemical body of your sexual partner—unless your partner is an alchemist. Instead your alchemical ching thus given to a non-initiate will be diverted into channels of physical vitality by unconscious mechanisms within your partner.

Continue Creation into Manifestation: This is the Power most powerful of all powers. This is distilling shen. When enough alchemical power has saturated the shen collectors in the ventricles of the brain, the left and right shen channels open like magnetic fields around parallel rods on either side of your head. That placid calm pond of a mind state upon which images manifest begins to heave like turbulent seas, until the shen rotates in toroidal motion. It boils away from the rotating center like waters separating in an alchemical retort. These waters of shen distill the alchemical body through space/time into Eternity where one is ONE at the center.

One is now able to go forth from here to Eternity and return without transition through death the usual route. Pilgrims describe near death experiences many with similar circumstances. A white light or tunnel appears. The pilgrims travel into the light or tunnel. As they go revelations impress themselves upon these travelers. At some point for some reason or circumstance the person returns to the Macrocosm with visions that affect their lives profoundly.
I have never been able to distill enough shen from sublimating ching to open the shen channels. You can charge them with density and refine your powers of perception and concentration, but the channels will not unfold. I believe it is Entropy that keeps the conversion ratio too low to open the channels. When the Supreme Ultimate and the Immaterial Spirit unfold, the Point at the crown of your head opens and the light or tunnel or shaft leading to the Cosmic Egg is revealed.

Distilling shen from separating chi and sublimating ching is not complete. The separated chi is the Microcosmic outer alchemical agent, and the sublimated ching is the Microcosmic inner alchemical agent. One must also prepare the Macrocosmic inner and outer alchemical agents and combine them with the Microcosmic alchemical agents. Then the circulation will have enough power to distill shen to the Supreme Ultimate and Immaterial Spirit.

The Macrocosmic inner alchemical agent is prepared by the body in the form of saliva. The Taoist alchemists called this “enchymoma.” The Macrocosmic outer alchemical agent must be prepared from a substance found outside the body in one of the three kingdoms: mineral, plant, or animal.

When the elixir is ready to use one should begin separating chi into the inner circulation. After a few rotations smell the aroma of the elixir on the inhalation. Feel the energy that is added to the chi. At the end of the exhalation place a few drops in your mouth on the tongue. Mix with saliva and inhale through the nose and do the next rotation. Upon the exhalation as the charge rises more saliva will flood the mouth. Mix it with the elixir. When you have enough saliva swallow at the inhalation and draw this fusion into the circulation. Draw some of the vapors from your mouth into the stream of air going into your lungs. Let the alchemical fusion expand up the front channel.

Rotate as long as you like; stop when you will. For more energy add a few drops to the circulation. If you add enough of the elixir the energy rotating will begin to distill. You will feel it rising like dragon fire up the center channel (very colorful but does not burn). It distills into the lateral ventricles. The pressure expands out the Sylvian fissures above the ears. The dragon wings open feeling like great magnetic fields extending about one foot from the head. More fire and the dragon wings unfold again and extend the field down the length of the body.

The energy is now flowing up the center channel out and down the wing channels (Supreme Ultimate and Immaterial Spirit) and drawn back up the center channel. The shen distills into an energy toroid with an intense void in the center. A portal opens in the center of the void and shen distills into Eternity.

Lynn Osburn is co-author of Green Gold: the Tree of Life, Marijuana in Magic and Religion published by Access Unlimited. For more information email openi420@juno.com.
New Releases

The Philosopher's Stone: A Quest for the Secrets of Alchemy

by Peter Marshall

Order online from Amazon UK by clicking on cover!

Alchemy, the art and science of transformation, is a very ancient discipline and yet highly relevant today. It offers a fiery crucible of wisdom with a crucial message for our time. The alchemists, who combined science and spirituality, experiment and vision, were not just naive eccentrics of the past but may well prove to be the prophets of the future. Closely allied to magic and astrology, alchemy is one of the world's greatest mysteries and best kept secrets.

Newton, Jung, Emperor Rudolph II, Nicholas Flamel, St Thomas Aquinas, and Zosimus all spent much of their lives searching for the Philosopher's Stone, the supreme goal of alchemy. With its magical and enigmatic power, it can transform base metal into gold, decipher the riddle of existence and unlock the secrets of eternal life. After years of study and research, Peter Marshall set off on a worldwide quest to discover the Philosopher's Stone and to unearth the secrets of alchemy in the lands where it was traditionally practiced. The result is a tour de force of historical, scientific and philosophical detective work as well as a thrilling physical and spiritual adventure.

During his enthralling journey, Marshall stays in the White Cloud Temple in Beijing, rows down the Ganges at dawn, meditates under the bodhi tree where Buddha found enlightenment, climbs the Great Pyramid, penetrates the necropolis under St Peter's Cathedral, tours Chartres, visits the Moorish palace of the Alhambra, and enters Prague Castle. He meets many scientists, sages and mystics, including Chinese Taoists, Hindu yogis, Tibetan Buddhist monks, Hermetic philosophers and practicing alchemists. He explores the beliefs and practices, the myths and symbols of the alchemists, both ancient and modern. As an intrepid explorer of the mind, he investigates the alchemy of spirit as well as of matter.

In his fascinating quest, Marshall discovers that alchemy, occasionally glimpsed and invariably misunderstood, forms a powerful underground stream in societies East and West. Its universal themes point to the possibility of a common source in a lost civilization. It has not only made an enormous contribution to the growth of science and medicine throughout the world, but has had a profound influence on religion, philosophy, psychology, literature, architecture and art. At the dawn of the new millennium, Marshall lifts the veil to show the secrets of alchemy to the world. Never before have they been so urgent and needed. They offer profound insights into the nature of science, the character of the human psyche and the structure of the universe. They are so powerful they could bring about a revolution in the way we think about ourselves,
Laboratory Notes

Types of Plant Distillation

by Elizabeth Swift

The most common form of plant distillation, in which the plant is directly immersed in the water, is called Water Distillation. The disadvantage of this method is that it is slow and some plants may decompose due to prolonged boiling. A second method is Water/Steam distillation, which is similar to the method you might use for steaming broccoli for dinner: Water is placed in the body of the still, as in the water distillation method, but instead of directly immersing the plant materials in the water, they are placed on a rack just above the water and are steamed directly in the still. The third method is called Steam Distillation. In this method, there is no water in the still body, just steam. The plant matter is again placed on a rack above the steam source. The steam condenses on the plant matter, both extracting and condensing the oil. If done properly, this distillation method has the highest success rate for oil extraction. The distillation process is often repeated so that every single drop of a plant's oil can be removed. Considering that the oils from some plants cost as high as $40,000 per pound, the extra step is worth it!

Though distillation can be used as a method of obtaining most essential oils (80%), it can not be used for all. Why? Many white florals disintegrate quickly under the violent boiling methods of distillation. In addition, the constituents of jasmine and narcissus are so volatile that they can not be condensed by the still—their oils literally dissolve into thin air before they can even be condensed! So for the remaining 20% that do not respond well to distillation, there are a few other methods, one of which is Solvent Extraction.

Solvent extraction was first used in the petroleum plants of Pennsylvania and was later applied to perfumery in the early 19th century. The process is as follows: as soon as possible, the flower petals are harvested and taken to an extraction plant. The blooms are then loaded into huge tanks and hermetically sealed. A solvent is passed through the tank (much in the way that clothes are dry-cleaned), but only the fragrant oils are removed, not any dirt or grease. Today, the solvent employed is
usually petroleum ether — it has a low boiling point (60 ° to 80° C). As the solvent collects the oil, it may also collect any plant waxes or paraffins, as well as pigments.

The solvent is then evaporated, and what is left is known as "floral concrete," a left-over solid due to the presence of paraffins. The waxes are removed by putting them in an apparatus called a batteuse, and then mixing them with ethyl alcohol. The oils pass into the alcohol and the wax is removed. Then the oil must be extracted from the alcohol by distilling it in a vacuum to maintain the low temperature necessary to the preservation of the fragile essences. Jasmine, violets, hyacinths, carnation, boronia, oakmoss and Spanish broom respond best to solvent extraction.

Elizabeth Swift began her career in Washington, D.C. as a legislative analyst and received a B.A. in Art History from the University of Virginia in 1990, and is currently pursuing graduate study at the University of New Mexico. In 1998, however, she decided to pursue her true interests—dress and culture—full-time. Elizabeth’s role at Jolique is that of researcher, writer, illustrator and graphic editor. This article is taken from her website at http://www.jolique.com/perfume/chemistry_alchemy.htm .

Alchemy Lectures and Workshops


A "Personal Alchemy Workshop" with Dennis William Hauck will be held at the EarthSpirit Center in Los Angeles from 10:00 to 6:00 PM on Saturday, May 11. Spend the day with one of the world’s few practicing alchemists, as he reveals ancient methods of transformation and helps you apply them to your own life. Learn how the alchemists worked simultaneously on all three levels of reality – the physical, the mental, and the spiritual – to achieve their transmutations. $75. Seating is limited! For registration, contact the EarthSpirit Center at 323-254-5458. Fax: 323-254-4850. Email: info@earthspiritcenter.com. Website: www.EarthSpiritCenter.com.


"Twelve Keys and the Glass House" is the title of an exhibition of the alchemical artwork of Kurt Godwin. (See samples of his work in the Alchemy Art Gallery.) The exhibition runs from June 6 through July 21 at the McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean, Virginia 22101. For more information, call 703-790-1953 or email curator999@aol.com.


"Alchemy of the Stone: Accessing the Greater Reality" is the title of a lecture by Dennis William Hauck at 11:00 AM on Sunday, July 14, at the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles, California.
Dennis is author of several books on alchemy, including *The Emerald Tablet: Alchemy for Personal Transformation* and has been a practicing alchemist for over twenty years. Learn to use the alchemists’ own drawings and original meditations to achieve higher states of consciousness to penetrate the Clouds of Unknowing that prevent us from accessing the single source behind the physical, mental, and spiritual realms. Pianist/composer Seth Osburn will be performing his original work "The Emerald Tablet" at the event. Admission: $5.00. Philosophical Research Society, 3910 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027. Phone: 323-663-2167. Email: info@prs.org. Website: www.PRS.org.

**Formula of the Stone. Los Angeles, California. July 14, 2002.**

"Formula of the Stone: Changing Lead into Gold" is the title of a workshop with D.W. Hauck from 1:30-3:30 PM on Sunday, July 14, at PRS in Los Angeles. Enter the sacred space of the inner laboratory to follow the ancient operations of alchemy and create the Stone, an incorruptible state of integrated consciousness the alchemists used to explore and work on different levels of reality. Admission: $15.00. Philosophical Research Society, 3910 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027. Phone: 323-663-2167. Email: info@prs.org. Website: www.PRS.org.

**Crucible 2002: A Gathering of Alchemists**

*Crucible 2002* will be held on Saturday, October 12, in Sacramento, California, USA. The all-day multimedia event presents cutting-edge research in alchemy and spagyrics, and a special session of *Flamel College* offers intensive classes in both practical and spiritual techniques in alchemy. There will also be a vendor area offering rare books, recent titles, prints, tinctures, essential oils, videos, audio tapes, and many more unique products. Lecture: "What Is Alchemy?" Classes: "Making Tinctures and Elixirs" and "Meditation Techniques of the Alchemists." Registration is $79, which includes all lectures, classes, and demonstrations, as well as manuals and materials. For more information, visit www.Crucible.org.

EDITORIAL

**From the Editor (Dennis William Hauck)**

The theme of this issue is Distillation, a process in alchemy where the matter at hand is exalted and purified. To the medieval alchemists, this was the most important and powerful of all the stages of alchemy. Most of their processes relied heavily on Distillation, whereas more ancient Egyptian alchemy relied more on Fermentation for the higher transformations. In the psychology of the modern person, Fermentation corresponds to soulful contact with higher realms, whereas Distillation takes the more objective view of spirit in seeking what is true. Fermentation is religion; Distillation is science. You can
see these same trends in civilization. Religion and science, subjective and objective, soul and spirit, Sulfur and Mercury, each struggling for supremacy.

When practiced internally, we come to really know these two operations. My Fermentation experiences provide an instant, intuitive, and often overwhelming insight into deeper mysteries, while my moments of Distillation allow me to understand and extract the universal wisdom in these "irrational" experiences. Fermentation is when I drop out of sight and refuse to talk to anyone. Distillation is when I try to write a book or go out and give lectures. Coagulation, which is a higher merging of these two operations to become the Stone, has happened to me rarely. When it does, it is an incorruptible experience of being truly alive and participating in the universe in which all my previous doubts and problems seem absolutely trivial. At these precious moments, I give up the pen, computer, lectern, meditating, and even my own ego, and try to go out into the world just to relax with people at any level of society. When coagulated, my presence in the world is enough to change it. Call it "vibes" or "aura" or "Christ consciousness" or whatever you want. It is something new, something unexpected, something wonderful. In Coagulation, you wear truth like a wedding garment; you live it and it lives you. That precious incarnation is the true Powder of Projection and process of Multiplication in the alchemy of our species. As the alchemists keep reminding us: "It takes a seed of gold to make gold."

I think the next step in our planetary alchemy will be when we finally move beyond the disruptive processes of Fermentation and Distillation. During the final Coagulation, the planet and those sentient beings who populate it will finally become "real" and alive. As "living Stones," we will move beyond both science and religion to a quickened gnosis of what really lies beyond the Clouds of Unknowing. The alchemists predicted that those who are genuine vessels and survive the stressful transformations will become seeds of higher consciousness in the fertile soil of earth. That is what is happening as we enter the next epoch. Coagulation is not the final step, but it is the crucial middle pillar between the extremes of Fermentation and Distillation. Authoritarian or extreme views from either religion or science, matriarchal or patriarchal control, liberal or conservative dictators, the supremacy of either lunar or solar consciousness in individuals -- any of these can destroy the planetary experiment in Coagulation. All we can do is beware of manipulations from extreme positions both in society and within us. It is time for each of us to become who we really are, to forsake both forms of parental authority and follow the purified, experiential path of the Child. Only then will the Child of the Philosophers become the Salt of the earth.
Subscriptions

The *Alchemy Journal* is posted bimonthly at the Alchemy Lab website on the journal archives page at [www.AlchemyLab.com/journal.htm](http://www.AlchemyLab.com/journal.htm). To subscribe to the journal, send a blank email to *AlchemyJournal-subscribe@yahoogroups.com*.

Alchemy Resources

- **Alchemergy** (Modern Alchemy) [http://www.Alchemergy.com](http://www.Alchemergy.com)
- **Alchemy Guild** (Membership Organization) [http://www.AlchemyGuild.org](http://www.AlchemyGuild.org)
- **Alchemy Lab** (Alchemy Articles, Files, and Gallery) [http://www.AlchemyLab.com](http://www.AlchemyLab.com)
- **Alchemy Website** (Original Alchemy Texts) [http://www.levity.com/alchemy/](http://www.levity.com/alchemy/)
- **Crucible Catalog** (Books, Tapes, Labware, Tinctures, Herbs) [http://www.Crucible.org](http://www.Crucible.org)
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