

## **The Virtuality of Art in the Twenty First Century -Our Ethereal Soul**

Written by April Shen 10/10/06

What difference is there between art and virtue? Visa versa, what are the same directions for human spirituality and everyday living during the twenty-first century?

An artist must have a faithful soul and a steady path towards his (her) art. A term can be introduced here-Our Ethereal Soul\*1, an ultimate loyalty towards human race in one's pursuit of art.

What is an Ethereal Soul? For anyone who practices Qi-Gong, he (she) knows the importance and the precious moment of a quiet, repose center. This very moment of quietness, the nature of quietness, leads to a state of tenderness and softness. In China, this state of tenderness and softness is called "Ren" 仁 -an equivalence of "kindness" in English language.

In ancient China, the word "Huen" 魂 represents "the passed" or "the deceased", away from the present life. This word of "Huen" is now widely used in western terminology for Students who study Traditional Chinese Medicine in the west. It is an important segment in studying Five Element Chinese acupuncture of which primarily treats emotional disorders.\*2

In other Chinese arts, including both Chinese literature and archaeology, this concept of "the deceased" or "of the deceased" appeared often in ancient texts and poetry, self-reflecting a cultural attitude connected with the deep root of the human emotion coincides with the universe it resides in. This concept of "Huen", our Ethereal Soul, offers the twenty-first century, a time when both human civilization and the western science become the prominent and the dominant sectors of human life in many parts of the world, a clear understanding of another side of the human as being.

When in loss and in sadness, one often expresses an infinity of love and connection to the people and the surroundings in one's environment. This infinity of love and connection from loss and sadness often stems from the ancient Chinese culture, the concept of "Huen", a soul that drifts away from the deceased, looking for a home.

A soul is always connected to the heart. *In traditional Chinese medicine, heart is the commander of the emotion. It regulates the clarity and the calmness of the "emotions" produced by the human mind.\*3*

How do we keep our mind clear and with the ability to reflect its thoughts and action? In the recent years, we see the increasing practices in meditation and Qi-Gong. These two large stems of Eastern practicing philosophy have become more and more popular worldwide.

There are many ways and techniques as to the practice of Qi-Gong and meditation (Meditation sometimes is included as part of Qi-Gong practice.). But they all point to one thing-this ongoing, both physically and mentally, single, concentrated, steady, and gentle progression of force or energy, interpreted as Qi 氣\*4 (energy of the being and of the universe) or “state of being”.

In traditional Chinese visual arts or objects of art, when a carpenter creates with a piece of beautiful wood when carving a phoenix or a dragon, he uses a steadily concentrated single mind-ness into the creation. This concentration of energy, body, mind, and heart, is not different from the above state of energy (Qi) or being.

In our daily life, often we work with different jobs, we meet different people, and we do many different things. In the larger universal context, we carry this same concentrated, steady, gentle, and long-lasting force or energy with us, we are able to achieve or be in our state of being, ultimate state of harmony, as a member of the universe.

Note 1 & Note 2: Although I have not taken a class in Five Element acupuncture, I believe I have first heard the term of “Ethereal” and “Five Element” either from the teachers or from other classes I have taken at Five Branches University in Santa Cruz.

Note 3: The concept in paragraph 10, I believe I have learned from the combination of the classes taught or text books offered when I studied at Five Branches University as well as my own interpretation through other studies and life practices.

Note 4: I believe there are different translations and interpretations for the word “Qi”.