



GenEd1091



# **Week 7 Inward Training**

GenEd1091: Classical Chinese Philosophy and Political Theory



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**Share your favorite passage from the *Inward Training***



# How does the passage define vital energy and the numinous?

## Chapter 1

It is this that brings them to life.

It generates the five grains below

And becomes the constellated stars above.

When flowing amid the heavens and the earth

We call it ghostly and numinous.

When stored within the chests of human beings,

We call them sages.





## How does the passage define vital energy, vital essence, and the numinous? GenEd1091

### Chapter 2

Therefore this vital energy is  
Bright!-as if ascending the heavens;  
Dark!-as if entering an abyss;  
Vast!-as if dwelling in an ocean;  
Lofty!-as if dwelling on a mountain peak.

Therefore this vital energy  
Cannot be halted by force,  
**Yet can be secured by inner power [Te].**

Cannot be summoned by speech,  
**Yet can be welcomed by the awareness.**

Reverently hold onto it and do not lose it:  
This is called “developing inner power.”

**When inner power develops and wisdom emerges,**  
The myriad things will, to the last one, be grasped.



## How does the passage define vital energy, vital essence, and the numinous? GenEd1091

### Chapter 8

If you can be aligned and be tranquil,  
Only then can you be stable.

With a stable mind at your core,

With the eyes and ears acute and clear,

And with the four limbs firm and fixed,

You can thereby make a **lodging place** for the vital essence.

**The vital essence: it is the essence of the vital energy.**

When the vital energy is guided, it [the vital essence] is generated,

But when it is generated, there is thought,

When there is thought, there is knowledge,

But when there is knowledge, then you must stop.

Whenever the forms of the mind have excessive knowledge,

You lose your vitality.



## How does the passage define vital energy, vital essence, and the numinous? GenEd1091

### Chapter 15

For those who preserve and naturally generate **vital essence**

On the outside a calmness will flourish.

Stored inside, we take it to be the well spring.

Floodlike, it harmonizes and equalizes

And we take it to be the fount of the vital energy.

When the fount is not dried up,

The four limbs are firm.

When the well spring is not drained,

Vital energy freely circulates through the nine apertures.

You can then exhaust the heavens and the earth

And spread over the four seas.

When you have no delusions within you,

Externally there will be no disasters.

Those who keep their minds unimpaired within,

Externally keep their bodies unimpaired,

Who do not encounter heavenly disasters

Or meet with harm at the hands of others,

Call them Sages.





## How does the passage define vital energy, vital essence, and the numinous?

### Chapter 19

By concentrating your vital breath as if numinous,  
The myriad things will all be contained within you.  
Can you concentrate? Can you unite with them?  
Can you not resort to divining by tortoise or milfoil  
Yet know bad and good fortune?  
Can you stop? Can you cease?  
Can you not seek it in others,  
Yet attain it within yourself?  
You think and think about it  
And think still further about it.  
You think, yet still cannot penetrate it.  
While the ghostly and numinous will penetrate it,  
But to the utmost refinement of your essential vital breath.  
When the four limbs are aligned  
And the blood and vital breath are tranquil,  
Unify your awareness, concentrate your mind,  
Then your eyes and ears will not be overstimulated.  
And even the far-off will seem close at hand.





# What forms of self-cultivation is this passage calling for?

## Chapter 3

All the forms of the mind  
Are naturally infused and filled with it [the vital essence],  
Are naturally generated and developed [because of] it.

**It is lost**

**Inevitably because of sorrow, happiness, joy, anger, desire, and profit-seeking.**  
If you are able to **cast off** sorrow, happiness, joy, anger, desire, and profit-seeking.  
Your mind will just **revert to equanimity**.

The true condition of the mind  
Is that **it finds calmness beneficial** and, by it, **attains repose**.  
Do not disturb it, do not disrupt it  
And harmony will naturally develop.







## What forms of self-cultivation is this passage calling for?

### Chapter 13

There is a numinous [mind] naturally residing within;  
One moment it goes, the next it comes,  
And no one is able to conceive of it.  
If you lose it you are inevitably disordered;  
If you attain it you are inevitably well ordered.  
Diligently clean out its lodging place  
And its vital essence will naturally arrive.  
Still your attempts to imagine and conceive of it.  
Relax your efforts to reflect on and control it.  
Be reverent and diligent  
And its vital essence will naturally stabilize.  
Grasp it and don't let go  
Then the eyes and ears won't overflow  
And the mind will have nothing else to seek.  
When a properly aligned mind resides within you,  
The myriad things will be seen in their proper perspective.





# What forms of self-cultivation is this passage calling for?

## Chapter 20

Deep thinking generates knowledge.  
Idleness and carelessness generate worry.  
Cruelty and arrogance generate resentment.  
Worry and grief generate illness.  
When illness reaches a distressing degree, you die.  
When you think about something and don't let go of it,  
Internally you will be distressed, externally you will be weak.  
Do not plan things out in advance  
Or else your vitality will cede its dwelling.

In eating, it is best not to fill up;  
In thinking, it is best not to overdo.  
Limit these to the appropriate degree  
And you will naturally reach it [vitality].





# What forms of self-cultivation is this passage calling for?

## Chapter 22

As for the vitality of all human beings:  
It inevitably occurs because of balanced and aligned [breathing].  
The reason for its loss  
Is inevitably pleasure and anger, worry and anxiety.  
Therefore, to bring your anger to a halt, there is nothing better than poetry;  
To cast off worry there is nothing better than music;  
To limit music there is nothing better than the rites;  
To hold onto the rites there is nothing better than reverence;  
To hold onto reverence there is nothing better than tranquility.  
When you are inwardly tranquil and outwardly reverent  
You are able to return to your innate nature  
And this nature will become greatly stable.





# What forms of self-cultivation is this passage calling for?

## Chapter 25

The vitality of all people  
Inevitably comes from their peace of mind.  
When anxious, you lose this guiding thread;  
When angry, you lose this basic point.  
When you are anxious or sad, pleased or angry,  
The Way has no place within you to settle.  
Love and desire: still them!  
Folly and disturbance: correct them!  
Do not push it! do not pull it!  
Good fortune will naturally return to you,  
And that Way will naturally come to you  
So you can rely on and take counsel from it.  
If you are tranquil then you will attain it;  
If you are agitated then you will lose it.





# What would a cultivated person be able to do?

## Chapter 9

Those who can transform even a single thing, call them "numinous";

Those who can alter even a single situation, call them "wise."

But to transform without expending vital energy; to alter without expending wisdom:

Only exemplary persons who hold fast to the One are able to do this.

Hold fast to the One; do not lose it,

And you will be able to master the myriad things.

**Exemplary persons act upon things,**

**And are not acted upon by them,**

Because they grasp the guiding principle of the One.





# What would a cultivated person be able to do?

## Chapter 18

When there is a mind that is unimpaired within you,  
It cannot be hidden.

**It will be known in your countenance,  
And seen in your skin color.**

If with this good flow of vital energy you encounter others,  
They will be kinder to you than your own brethren.

But if with a bad flow of vital energy you encounter others,  
They will harm you with their weapons.

[This is because] the wordless pronouncement  
Is more rapid than the drumming of thunder.

The perceptible form of the mind's vital energy  
Is brighter than the sun and moon,

And more apparent than the concern of parents.

Rewards are not sufficient to encourage the good;

Punishments are not sufficient to discourage the bad.

Yet once this flow of vital energy is achieved,

All under the heavens will submit.

And once the mind is made stable,

All under the heavens will listen.



## Textual style



- How would you describe the literary style of the *Inward Training*?
- How does it compare with the styles used in previous texts we have read?

# Discussion



- Do you agree or disagree with author?
- Why?
- If you were to apply this to a real -world scenario, how would you approach it?
- Do you think this is feasible?





# Post a reflection on Ed

- Prompt: Apply **one** concept from the *Inward Training* to a real-world scenario and share your thoughts. You may either agree or disagree with the author's ideas.
- Post it on Ed Discussion under “Sections” and “Week 6 Inward Training”
- Submit the link of your post under Assignment
- If you can't finish it by the end of the section, please finish it by the end of the day.