

**ARCHIBALD COCKREN**



**ALCHEMY  
REDISCOVERED  
AND RESTORED**

A STUDY

**Archibald Cockren**

# **Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored: A Study**

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# Chapter I: Beginnings of Alchemy

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To most of us the word 'alchemy' calls up the picture of a medieval and slightly sinister laboratory in which an aged, black-robed wizard brooded over the crucibles and alembics that were to bring within his reach the Philosophers' Stone, and with that discovery the formula for the elixir of life and the transmutation of metals. But one can scarcely dismiss so lightly the science--or art, if you will--which won to its service the lifelong devotion of men of culture and attainment from every race and clime over a period of hundreds, or, indeed, thousands, of years, for the beginnings of alchemy are hidden in the mists of time. Such a science is something far more than an outlet for a few eccentric old men in their dotage.

What was the motive behind the constant strivings, the never-failing patience in the unravelling of the mysteries, the tenacity of purpose in the face of persecution and ridicule through the countless ages that led the alchemist to pursue undaunted his appointed way? Something far greater, surely, than a mere vainglorious desire to transmute the base metals into gold, or to brew a potion to prolong a little longer this earthly span, for the devotees of alchemy in the main cared little for these things. The accounts of their lives almost without exception lead us to believe that they were concerned with things spiritual rather than with things temporal. Rather were these men inspired by a vision, a vision of man made perfect, of man freed from disease and the limitations of warring faculties both mental

and physical, standing as a god in the realization of a power that even at this very moment of time is lying hidden in the deeper strata of his consciousness, a vision of man made truly in the image and likeness of the one Divine Life in all its Perfection, Beauty, and Harmony.

To appreciate and understand these adepts' visions it is necessary to trace to some extent the history of their cult, so let us for a space step back into the past to catch a glimpse of these men, of their work and ideals, and more important still, of the possibilities that their life-work might bring to those who to-day are seeking for fuller knowledge and wider horizons.

References are to be found in the myths and legends of China. From a book written by Edward Chalmers Werner, a late member of the Chinese Government's Historiological Bureau, Peking, comes this quotation from old Chinese records:

'Chang Tao-Ling, the first Taoist pope, was born in A.D. 35 in the reign of the Emperor Kuang Wu Ti of the Han dynasty. His birthplace is variously given as the T'ien-mu Shan, "Eye of Heaven Mountain," in Lin-an-Hsien in Chekiang, and Feng-yang Eu in Anhui. He devoted himself wholly to study and meditation, declining all offers to enter the service of the State. He preferred to take up his abode in the mountains of Western China where he persevered in the study of alchemy and in cultivating the virtues of purity and mental abstraction. From the hands of Lao Tzu he received supernaturally a mystic treatise, by following the instructions in which he was successful in his search for the Elixir of Life.'