

KEN COHEN

THE  
ESSENTIAL

# Qigong

TRAINING  
GUIDE

*Strong as the Mountain,  
Supple as Water*



## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

This book is designed to accompany and complement Ken Cohen's home study audio-visual program: *The Essential Qigong Training Course: 100 Days to Increase Energy, Physical Health, and Spiritual Well-Being*. Please demonstrate your appreciation for the hard work of the author, artists, and publisher by respecting the copyright and not scanning, duplicating, or in other ways copying these materials.

This program is offered for education and personal development only and is not intended to diagnose, prevent, or treat disease, nor to substitute for therapy by a licensed health-care professional. Please seek the advice of your physician before beginning any personal health care program. Educate your doctor about the benefits of qigong, and make him or her a partner in your progress. Health-care providers are encouraged to incorporate these methods in a complementary care program or, where appropriate, as tools for patient education.

Qigong is a method of self-care and is most effective when part of a healthy lifestyle. You will not benefit from qigong if you are indulging in an unhealthy diet, drinking too much alcohol, or using recreational drugs.

Though it should be obvious, please note that it is dangerous to practice the meditations on this program while driving. You may certainly listen to the CDs in your car in order to familiarize yourself with instructions, but it would be foolish to try to practice at that time. Meditation, and qigong in general, requires an environment free of distraction.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I offer a bow of profound gratitude to the masters who have shared their qigong arts, including:

**William C. C. Chen** my main teacher in Taiji Quan , a great man and great martial artist, who gave me the tools for cultivating health, strength, and self-understanding;

**B.P. Chan** my first qigong teacher, for demonstrating in his life and work the power, value, and spiritual depths of qigong and the martial arts;

Share K. Lew for transmitting profound Taoist methods of qi assessment and treatment;

**Liang Shou-yu** for making One Finger Zen and other Chinese healing and martial arts available in the West

**Gao Fu** (and her teacher, Feng Zhiqiang) for sharing the wisdom and power of Chen Style Taiji Quan and the Hunyuan (Primordial) Qigong System;

**Taoist Abbot Huang Gengshi, Ph.D.** for his friendship and guidance and for teaching me by words, training, and example how to be an antenna for the universal qi of Heaven and Earth."

Gratitude and Blessings to the **Native American and African Elders** who helped me to trace the roots of the various energy healing methods back to our common ground.

I thank the artists, editors, film and audio crews, and staff of Sounds True, People Productions, and Intrepid Films for their technical expertise and commitment to integrity in business. I thank my students and helpers for demonstrating various techniques on the Qi Healing DVDs. And most of all, to my family, for their love and support.



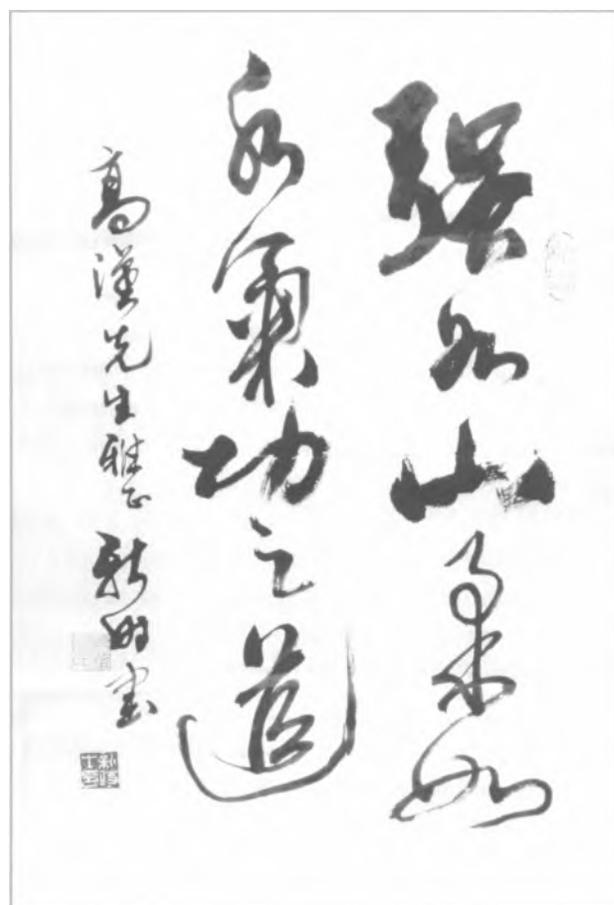
## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCING QIGONG: A TREE WITH MANY BRANCHES

Qigong, pronounced "chee gung," is a Chinese term consisting of two components. *Qi* means

life energy and breath, the essence of life. *Gong* has several meanings, including work, skill, or the benefits and merit gained from any activity. Qigong is thus "qi work." It is an ancient Chinese system of exercise and meditation that makes the mind and spirit tranquil, improves performance in sports such as the martial arts, and cultivates health, well-being, and long life. Thus, there are three major kinds of qigong: spiritual, sports, and healing.

### Spiritual Qigong: One with the Universe

Qigong is a spiritual discipline, inspired by ancient Chinese shamans, Taoists, and Buddhists, all of whom sought harmony and peace in the solitude of nature. Through qigong, spiritual seekers learn to unify the qi within their bodies with "primordial breath of Heaven and Earth," the spirit and energy of the universe. Because of their connection with these forces, qigong students are able to replenish themselves when vitality is low. Qigong also increases artistic sensitivity and expressiveness. The qigong practitioner feels as though Nature uses his or her eyes to see herself. The pine tree expresses its life, its qi, through the painter's brush or the poet's words. A great painting, like a great poem, pulses with life energy. It has *qi yun* "qi rhythm."



There is also a very practical reason why Chinese monks have always promoted and practiced qigong. Qigong exercises prevent the physical stagnation and mental imbalance that may result from *excessive* meditation. According to Taoism, too much spiritual practice (*xing*) results in stagnation, atrophy, weakness, and delusional

states. For example, I once met a Chinese monk who had spent nearly two decades meditating in a cave. He was an expert at harmonizing internal qi but had lost the ability to have a harmonious conversation with a friend. He was not enlightened but, rather, obsessed with himself. Buddhists, who disparage fundamentalism, would say that he "stunk of Zen."

On the other hand, too much exercise (*ming*) and not enough meditation dulls the mind and spirit. For optimal health, we need body and spirit, exercise and meditation, awareness of the inner world and the outer. In other words, health requires balance and moderation. The goal of qigong may be summarized as *xing ming shuang silt*, "spirit and body equally refined and cultivated." Cultivate your whole being, as you would cultivate a garden—with attention, care, and even love.

### The Way of Sports: Golfing Anyone?

Qigong is a powerful way to improve every aspect of sports performance. The various exercises and meditations increase strength, stamina, speed, flexibility, coordination, sensitivity, and precision. A martial artist who practices qigong is able to anticipate and avoid his opponent's strikes and has more power in his punch. A qigong tennis player is lighter on her feet and spots holes in her partner's defense. A swimmer uses qigong to improve coordination and loosen the muscles for longer and quicker strokes. I have trained golf pros who increased their drive by fifty yards after only a few months of qigong. Qigong teaches the supple waist and whole-body-coordinated-power (*zheng ti jin*) necessary for sports excellence. A more powerful qigong routine can give an athlete the competitive edge.

In addition, athletes who practice qigong are less likely to suffer broken bones, bruises, or other sports-related injuries. And if an injury occurs, the qigong practitioner recovers more quickly. Of course, there are limits to toughness and resilience. Because of better bone density, if a qigong student falls on the ice or is tackled in Football, he is less likely than an untrained person to be injured. However, this does not mean that he can repel bullets or should take illogical risks. During the Boxer Rebellion, no amount of qigong made the Chinese martial artists invulnerable! A qigong person accepts his or her mortality.

### Healing Qigong: The Importance of Practice

There are two kinds of healing qigong: **Personal Healing Qigong**, the best known aspect, prevents illness, improves health, and is a powerful and enjoyable way for healthy people to enhance their vitality and well-being. With more than 100 million practitioners, personal healing qigong is the most widely practiced form of complementary and alternative medicine in the world. It is also the most scientifically tested.

The other kind of healing qigong, called **External Qi Healing** (*Wai Qi Liao Fa*), is a kind of Chinese Therapeutic Touch in which the healer attempts to assess the qi of a patient, client, or partner and to project healing qi through his or her hands to restore balance. The healer holds her hands near the patient's body and makes various therapeutic gestures, such as circling the hands in the air or "tapping," as though sprinkling qi onto the patient through the finger tips. Principles and techniques from External Qi Healing work well with other healing therapies, such as massage therapy or acupuncture. A masseur who knows how to project qi through his hands is much more effective than one who does not have this skill.

Personal practice and experience are the basis of EQH. An energy healer cannot heal a patient unless he or she can feel the qi. EQH is more than a technology; it is as much art as science.

In this book, when I speak of "qigong," you may assume that I am referring to Personal Healing Qigong. However, because Personal Healing Qigong and External Qi Healing are based on the same philosophy and principles of posture, breathing, and mindfulness, most of the information will be relevant to both disciplines.



Ken Cohen practicing qi healing

## Repair, Restore, Rejuvenate

Experimental evidence demonstrates that qigong may be an effective adjunct in the treatment of chronic pain, asthma, arthritis, diabetes, headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, chronic fatigue, and, very importantly, cancer and heart disease—the two major killers of our time. In spite of the miracles of medical science, our

ability to prevent or cure these two epidemics has been deadlocked for more than sixty years.

Mortality rates from heart disease have fallen one to two percent per year—perhaps from earlier detection and subsequent lifestyle adjustments—but arterial disease is more widespread than ever. According to United States government statistics, by age *twenty*, there are signs of cardiovascular disease in half of the American population.

The age-adjusted mortality rate for cancer has remained the same since the 1940s; one third of all Americans will contract cancer during their lifetime. Yet, we do not have to wait for God to roll the dice. In fact, a hopeless and helpless attitude can fuel tumor growth and cause the arteries to harden more quickly. Through qigong practice, we can take control of our health. Although life is always a gamble, and no therapy is certain, qigong can shift the odds in favor of a long and healthy life.

Qigong is based on the premise that the human body is an energy system. As long as it has energy or qi, it is alive; when energy is gone, it is dead. This makes good scientific sense. A living cell has an electric charge; differences in electric potential allow nutrients to flow in and out of the cell and messages to pass through the nervous system. Like a computer, the electrical signaling system can become corrupted through "incompatible programs"—pollution, poor diet, stress. Or the electric signals and information they carry may become fragmented and ineffective as a simple consequence of aging. The body's "wiring" becomes frayed and circuits are broken after long-term use. Qigong is like a computer repair utility that optimizes the body's energy, shifting data to make it more accessible. It also mends the "wiring" (the nervous system) and restores

the body's original "system." This system is the body's healing program, the body's innate ability to repair itself.

Our ancestors probably had a better ability to heal themselves than modern people. Yes, they had stresses, but a saber-toothed tiger attacks only for a moment. Ancient peoples were not subject to the prolonged stress of air, water, land, noise, and light pollution, or overcrowding and poverty. Anthropologists have documented that Paleolithic peoples were taller, stronger, and had more competent immune systems than their civilized descendants. The system that qigong restores is not the one from childhood, but the one from humanity's childhood, an ancient genetic code for health that remains largely dormant in the modern world.

Put in Chinese terms, qigong exercises and meditations improve health because of three effects on the qi, the life energy. Qigong:

- Cleanses the qi of impurities, pathogens, and toxins.
- Gathers the qi, creating a reservoir of healing vitality in the body.
- **Circulates** the qi, opening places of stagnation and blockage, where the energy channels are dammed. As qi moves, it becomes clearer and healthier, like a rapidly flowing mountain stream. Healthy qi is distributed to areas of disease or distress.

These qualities are not just theoretical. The qigong practitioner learns to actually sense energy in the body. He or she is able to detect when qi is turbid, depleted, excessive, or stagnant, and knows what to do to balance or correct the condition. One of the greatest benefits of qigong is that illness is sometimes detected while it is still *sub-clinical*, that is, before

it has reached such a serious stage that it shows up in a medical examination. In a sense, cancer is cured before, by medical definitions, one even has it. The qigong practitioner experiences a profound shift of identity; she experiences herself as an energy being, in harmony with the energy of nature and life. She senses any break in the flow of energy within or between self and nature. She has the tools to remedy a "disturbance in the Force." (Thanks to *Star Wars* for this term. When the movie was released I was so excited—a Hollywood production about qi!)

## How Many Kinds of Qigong Are There?

Every now and then I encounter a student who confidently informs me, "I have already learned qigong." Imagine that! More than seven thousand styles of qigong, most requiring at least a year or two to master, and here is an immortal who has learned them all! But the mistake is easily forgiven. As in any field of research, the more you study, the more you realize how little you know. It is easy to be an "expert" when you are a beginner.

Qigong students generally learn one or two styles. A professional teacher may know dozens of styles, a pharmacopoeia of techniques that may be tailored to the needs, interests, and talents of the student. The styles are sometimes named for what they do, for example: Bone Marrow Cleansing Qigong, Healing Sounds Qigong, Muscle Transforming Qigong, Harmonizing with the Seasons Qigong, Intelligence Qigong, Invigorating Qigong, Coiling Qigong, Relaxation Qigong. Some qigong styles are named after their real or legendary founders, for example Taoist Monk Chen Xiyi's Sleeping Qigong, Peng Zu's Longevity Qigong, Eighteen Buddhist Monks Qigong.

Qigong systems may reflect their places of origin, such as Mount 0 Mei Qigong, Mount Wudang Qigong, Shaolin One Finger Zen, or Tibetan Qigong. It is also common for a qigong system to be named after an animal, martial art, or aspect of culture: Soaring Crane Qigong, Snake Qigong, Xingyi Martial Art Qigong, Eight Brocade Qigong.

The famous slow-motion exercise, T'ai Chi (more correctly spelled Taiji Quan 太極拳) is an example of a qigong system that is based on a philosophical principle. T'ai Chi means the balance and harmony of complementary

opposites: up and down, right and left, inside and outside, open and close, warm and cool, tension and relaxation, active and passive, masculine and feminine. T'ai Chi is a unique and beautiful style of qigong that blends spirituality, sports conditioning, and healing.

Qigong is like a great river that stretches from the mythic past to the present, fed by three streams: spirituality, sports, and healing. It continues to evolve. Variations on classical systems or entirely new styles are always emerging based on the creativity and insight of practitioners.

## Qigong in Legend and History

Qigong is as old as Chinese civilization. *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, written in 240 B.C. describes a legend that is linked to the history of qigong. All of China was once covered by flood waters. Stagnant waters produced disease and plague, and the people called upon their gods for help. The God-Emperor Yu used his mystical power to cause the rain to subside. He danced on the land with a bear-like gait and used a magic pole to etch deep into the earth's surface a pattern that looked like the Big Dipper constellation. The waters flowed into the newly formed river beds; the constellation of sacred rivers delineated the ancient provinces of China.

As the flood ended, people reasoned that just as stagnant water breeds disease, so stagnant energy in the body creates the conditions that feed illness. Exercise can stimulate and move the energy of life. It can clear the body's energy channels, or meridians, of obstructions to health. Emperor Yu moved like a bear because he knew that animals and natural forces can inspire people to move with grace and power.

Qigong-like postures are found on ancient rock art throughout China. We see pictographs

and petroglyphs of people imitating the frog, fish, bird, and sheep in gesture, posture, and dance. As early as three thousand B.C., Chinese tribal people donned animal masks, and under the leadership of a bear-masked shaman, imitated the animals in a ritual winter dance to drive away evil forces. Warriors and soldiers imitated the bear to cultivate strength and courage, the snake for flexibility and stealth, the eagle for speed and precision, and the tiger for power. Not surprisingly, the most ancient word for doctor in Chinese is a picture of a feathered, dancing shaman. These various animal gestures became the foundation of healing qigong exercises.

Archaeologists discovered one of the earliest references to qigong (called *dao-yin*, "leading and guiding the energy," in ancient times) in an inscription on twelve pieces of jade from approximately 500 B.C. It describes how breathing causes the qi to gather and descend to an energy reservoir in the lower abdomen. Once the qi becomes tranquil and stable, it "sprouts" and spreads all the way to the crown of the head. From this same period, there are records of a qigong-like "Crane Dance," sometimes performed at court to magically confer longevity or as a symbol of the ability to transcend death.

In Chinese literature, the word "dao-yin" first appears in a famous book of philosophy, the *Ke-yi* (Constrained in Will) Chapter of *Zhuang Zi* (369-286 B.C.).

The first illustrated book of dao-yin, the *Dao-Yin Illustrations* dated 168 B.C., shows people in animal-like postures that are remarkably similar to qigong exercises practiced today. Interestingly, the illustrations present figures from all walks of life—peasant and nobleman, disabled and healthy, male and female, young and old — suggesting that qigong was not the domain of an educated elite but was practiced by or at

least suitable for everyone. Next to each figure is the name of the disease that the exercise was intended to treat.

The second century A.D. "father of Chinese medicine," Hua Tuo also drew on the healing example of nature to create his famous qigong system, the Five Animal Frolics, based on the movements of the Crane, Bear, Monkey, Deer, and Tiger. The Crane is the most relaxing of the Frolics. The Bear is for strength, especially in the bones, legs, and waist. The Monkey teaches suppleness and flexibility. The Deer develops grace and vitality. The Tiger cultivates power and focus.

Hua Tuo said that just as a door hinge will not rust if it is used, so the body will achieve health by gently moving and exercising all of the limbs. Or as one of my colleagues once remarked, paraphrasing Hua Tuo, "The reason the teeth fall out rather than the tongue, is that the tongue is always moving!" The modern Chinese actress, Guo Lin, attributed her remission from uterine cancer to her practice of the Five Animal Frolics. (Note: I was one of the First Five Animal Frolics instructors in North America and have been teaching it since 1978. A video of the Five Animal Frolics is available from the qigong Research and Practice Center, listed in the Resources at the end of this book.)

Much of the early history of qigong will never be known because it was never written down. Taoist and Buddhist monks and martial arts masters passed the oral secrets to their most trusted students, those who had earned the knowledge after proving their moral character.

## A Qigong Timeline: Highlights in Qigong History

Note: The word "qigong" is modern. The original terms for qigong are *yang sheng* (nourishing life), *tu na* (expelling the old, drawing in the new), and, most commonly, *dan yin*, which may be translated "leading and guiding [the qi]" or "extending and contracting [the body]." The majority of ancient qigong works are found among the 1200 texts of the Taoist Canon (*Dan Zang*), the great compendium of classic Taoist literature.

500 B.C. inscription on a jade tablet:

To circulate the qi (*xing qi*)  
Swallow it so that it will gather  
If it is gathered, it will expand into spirit (*shen*)  
When it expands, it will drop.  
When it drops, it will become stable.  
When it is stable, it will be solid.  
When it is solid, it will sprout.  
When it sprouts, it will grow.  
When it grows, it will return.  
When it returns, it will be heavenly.  
The heavenly is revealed in the rising of qi;  
The earthly is revealed in the sinking of qi.  
Follow this and you will live (*Shun zi sheng*).  
Oppose it, and you will die (*Ni zi si*).

c. 350 B.C. Five Phases of Change Theory developed by the philosopher Zou Yan, also the period of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi (founders of Taoist philosophy), beginnings of Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine (the classic textbook of Chinese medicine).

c. 300 B.C. Guan Zi (a classic of Taoist philosophy), from the section on Nei Ye (Inner Work, a precursor to the modern term nei gong, a synonym for qigong):

When the four limbs are aligned  
And the blood and qi are tranquil  
Unify your intent (yi) and  
concentrate your mind.  
Then your ears and eyes will not be  
swayed by lust;  
What seemed far away [the Tao] will  
be close by.

c. 240 B.C. *Lu Shi Qun Qiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals) records that a great flood once engulfed the earth. The people realized that just as stagnant waters breed disease, so stagnant blood and breath cause illness in the body. Exercise was practiced to stimulate circulation and prevent disease.

168 B.C. The *Dao-yin Tu* (Dao-yin Chart) discovered in 1973, a silk manuscript excavated at Ma Wang Dui (Tomb of King Ma) near Changsha, the capital of Hunan Province, China. This important text is the first major chart of Dao-yin (qigong) postures. There are 44 figures, several of which have captions describing the therapeutic effect. The exercises were probably prescribed by a physician, perhaps in formulas combining several exercises for specific illnesses. The figures are young and old, male and female, from all walks of life—showing that dao-yin was practiced by a broad spectrum of the society. Thirteen of the postures are named after birds and beasts; there are several figures in horse stance. We see the first example of themes that remain throughout the history of qigong.

c. 190-265 A.D. Hua Tuo developed the Five Animal Frolics to "promote digestion, improve circulation, and prevent illness." He called his art a form of dao-yin. The Five

Animal Frolics is the first recorded system of dao-yin that is still practiced today. (See Hua Tuo's biography in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, Hou Han Shu.) Chinese literature does not record detailed instructions for the Frolics from this period. The earliest instructions are found in the *Yang Sheng Dao Yin Fa* (Dao Yin Method for Nourishing Life), 1506.

320 A.D. The *Biro Pr/Zi* (Master Who Embraces Simplicity) of Ge Hong. Important source for alchemy, medicine, and longevity techniques; mentions various forms of dao-yin based on the crane and tortoise.

456-536 Tao Hongjing, Taoist alchemist and author of *Yang Sheng Yan Ming Lu* (Record on Longevity and Nourishing Life). The six chapters in his work describe:

1. Precepts relating to the quest for immortality
2. Diet
3. Precepts, prohibitions, and prayers to avoid calamities
4. Ways of cultivating the qi to cure illness
5. Dao-yin and self-massage
6. Sexual yoga

His text has the first reference to the Healing Sounds (*Liu Qi Fa*, Six Qi Method, taught in this program on the DVD "Qigong: Traditional Chinese Exercises for Healing Body, Mind, and Spirit")

538-597 Zhi-yi, the founder of Tian Tai School of Buddhism presents an important sixfold classification of illness (Taisho edition of Chinese Buddhist Canon 1911 8A: I06A-109B):

1. Illness caused by discord among the four elements
2. Due to imbalanced diet
3. Caused by incorrect meditation
4. Caused by demons that enter the viscera (cites efficacy of exorcists)
5. Maladies of Mara, especially perverse thoughts
6. Caused by misdeeds in past lives or the present life

The method of therapy varies according to the type of illness being treated. Medicines are given for 1-2. Mindfulness of breathing and insight meditation are prescribed for 3. Here Zhi-yi also mentions the importance of fixing the mind on the dan tian (energy centers) and practicing the Six Qi Method. Illnesses caused by demons (4-5) are treated with mantras, incantations (*dharani*), and magic. Karmic illness is treated through introspection and counseling (especially confession and repentance).

581-682 Sun Simo, along with Hua Tuo, is one of the "gods" of Chinese medicine. His *Qian Jin Yao Fang* (Precious Medical Formulas) includes a medical theory based on four elements (earth, water, fire, air), various forms of dao-yin, sexual yoga, and references to the Six Qi Method.

895-989 Chen Xiyi, great Daoist recluse from Mount Hua, one of the creators of the Taiji Diagram (the famous yin-yang symbol, as seen on the Korean flag) and originator of the following dao-yin systems: Taiji Ruler, Twenty-four Seasonal Dao-yin Method, Six Harmonies-Eight Methods.

1151 Zeng Cao states that the Eight Brocade Exercise was inscribed on stone by Lu

Dong-bin (8th Century, one of the Eight Immortals), recorded in the *Xiu Zhen Shi Shu* (Dao Zang 260).

1881 Publication of the *Nei Gong Tu Shuo* by Wang Zuyuan. First diagrams and description of the Yi Jin Jing (Muscle/Tendon Change Qigong) and the Seated Eight Brocades in a popular work. The Yi Jin Jing is often attributed to Bodhidharma (died c. 475 A.D.). However, Joseph Needham believes that the exercises were probably created in the 16th Century. (*Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. V, Pt. 5, p. 166) There is no evidence that Bodhidharma, the Indian monk who established Chan (Zen) Buddhism in China, practiced any form of qigong or martial arts. Qigong and martial systems have been falsely attributed to him because antiquity lends an aura of authenticity and authority. A master's prestige increases if he can say, "I didn't create this technique; it is a direct transmission from Bodhidharma!"

1844-1962 Zhao Zhongdao, descendant of the Song Dynasty Imperial family and Master of Taiji Ruler (a famous style of qigong). Beginning in 1954, Zhao was the first to teach Taiji Ruler publicly.

1879-1973 Hu Yaozhen, master of Taoism, martial arts, qigong, and Chinese medicine. Qigong instructor of renowned Taiji Quan Master Feng Zhiqiang. Author of *The Five Animal Frolics* and *Strengthening Qigong* (Chinese language only). Hu standardized the terms qigong, active qigong (*Wong gong*), and passive qigong (*jing gong*). In the early 1950s, Hu and his colleague, Liu Guizhen, were the first to teach qigong in hospitals and thus promote the idea of healing or medical qigong (*yi gong*).

1886-1963 Wang Xiangzhai, founder of Yi Quan, master of Standing Meditation, major influence on qigong evolution.

1936 A work by Dong Hao is published in Hangzhou, *Special Therapy for Tuberculosis: Qigong*. This is the first book to categorize "qigong" as a medical discipline.

1955 A qigong sanatorium is founded in Tangshan, Hebei Province. Within a year, two qigong training centers are established in Hebei.

1957 A qigong sanatorium opens in Shanghai.

1959 The Chinese Ministry of Public Health sponsors a national qigong conference in Beidaihe, Hebei Province.

1966-1976 The Cultural Revolution. Taoism is branded *fan long*, "counter-revolutionary," because of its history of fostering independent thinking and revolution. Spiritual beliefs and disciplines are suppressed. Numerous qigong practitioners are thrown in jail. Qigong is illegal until the early 1980s.

1976 Ken Cohen founds the Academy of Chinese Healing Arts in Montreal, Canada. 1977, the Academy moves to Berkeley, California; 1981 established in Colorado as the "Taoist Mountain Retreat" and "Qigong Research and Practice Center," offering the first qigong Teacher Training Program in North America.

1980 Dr. Qian Xuesen, an M.I.T.-trained nuclear physicist, advises the editors of China's *Nature Journal* to "use science and technology to study human potential" by researching Chinese

medicine, qigong, and exceptional functions of the human body. Shortly thereafter, the ban on qigong is lifted.

1987 Dr. Qian is named chair of the Chinese Science and Technology Association. He issues a statement, "Qigong is modern science and technology—high technology—absolutely top technology." The Chinese Department of Education orders universities to develop qigong training courses and programs.

1999 Falun Gong, a religious organization that promotes qigong, is prohibited in China; all related books, videos, and pamphlets are burned. Practitioners are detained, tortured, and sentenced to as much as 18 years in prison. On September 23, 1999, the Chinese Health Ministry issues laws that restrict *all* forms of qigong. "General" and "health enhancing" qigong are allowed, but only among small, scattered, local, voluntary groups that have pre-registered with the government. Qigong schools are prohibited.

## Health Care Vs. Sick Care: How Qigong Differs from Western Medicine

Unlike western medicine, qigong techniques are not designed to cure a single illness. Rather, they restore systemic, overall wellness or combat a broad class of illnesses, such as respiratory, cardiovascular, or digestive disorders. Without appreciating this fact, it is easy for a western physician to become confused when he reads in various qigong textbooks that an exercise that treats digestive ailments is also helpful for arthritis and high blood pressure.

We need to remember that qigong is treating the disease host, the person, more than the disease. It

focuses more on restoring health than on combating pathology. Qigong healers and educators look at a person as a whole being in which every part of the body and mind affects every other, rather than devoting their attention only to the presenting symptom or to the part of the body that, according to medical tests, is diseased.

Western medicine is called *allopathic* because it commonly treats pathology with medicines that produce an opposite effect (cello, Greek for "other") to that of the disease. Thus, For high blood pressure, you take a medicine that lowers blood pressure. For excess stomach acid, you swallow an ant-acid. Bacterial infection requires an anti-biotic, a substance that destroys (anti) the life (bios) of the invading pathogen.

At first glance, it seems that qigong also promotes "medicines" that oppose disease symptoms. If a person has a hot, yang condition, such as an infection or fever, then gentle, cooling exercises may be recommended such as the Crane Frolic. IF a person has a cool, yin condition, such as low blood pressure or cold hands and feet, then dynamic and energizing exercises may be recommended, such as the Bear Frolic. However, the intent of the practitioner is not to combat disease, but rather to open blockages to qi flow and create energy balance and harmony.

Disease is equivalent to a dam in the body's life-stream, which creates too much "water" (energy or qi) on one side of the blockage, and too little water on the other. Through qigong practice, the dam is dissolved, and the water again flows, irrigating the body's fields. Or, to borrow an analogy from Qigong Master Hong Liu, if you bring a knotted rope to a western doctor, he or she cuts the knot out and then resections the rope together. If you bring the rope to a qigong master, he or she unties

the knot. This does not mean that surgery is unnecessary, but it does imply that we should always attempt to treat disease by the least invasive means possible.

Western medicine and qigong have different criteria of effectiveness. Western medicine is concerned with curing, a term that implies causing a measurable physiologic change: the tumor shrinks, the bacteria is destroyed, the arthritic knee is removed and replaced. Western medicine produces quick and often dramatic results.

Qigong may also cure disease; however its primary goal is *healing*, which means "making whole and harmonious." Qigong dates from a period before disease was measured or analyzed with scientific instruments. The calibrating instrument was the patient. If he or she felt better, happier, more in harmony and balance, then the therapy was deemed successful. However, unlike modern medicine, these results might not be felt immediately. Healing is a gentle, gradual, and cumulative process. Every day the qigong practitioner feels a little bit better.

We need both curing and healing. It is tempting to say that western medicine is best for acute disease, and qigong for chronic conditions (including aging!) Unfortunately, neither modality fits into such a neat box. The problem in relying exclusively on the qigong approach to health is that people can easily deceive themselves and believe that they are healthy when they are harboring serious disease. The human instrument is not always accurate at assessing its own health, although the more qigong you practice, the more accurate it becomes.

On the other hand, because western medicine relies on the advice of an "expert", patients learn to mistrust their own intuition and to assume that they cannot heal themselves. Responsibility is shifted into the hands of a physician who is

supposed to "fix" the problem. This attitude can result in some absurd behaviors, such as a man who was waiting in line at the ice cream shop who told me about his cholesterol problem and recent bypass surgery. He ordered a triple scoop! We need to take responsibility for our health, but to also realize that there are times when we need outside help. Qigong complements western medicine; it does not substitute for it.

Most patients do not relish the thought of a medical exam or therapy. Western medicine tends to be invasive of the body or of personal privacy. Patients do not feel refreshed or empowered by their insulin shot or pain medication, nor do they wait with joyous anticipation for the colonoscopy. Qigong, on the other hand, is enjoyable. Students will sometimes study with a single teacher for a decade or more. I have one student who has been attending my weekly classes for nearly twenty years. He knows the techniques as well as I, but he continues practicing with the group because it is so much ... well, fun—there's just no other word for it. I believe that the best motivation for practicing qigong is exploration of the hidden potentials of the body, mind, and spirit. No one has ever reached the end of such a study.

Enjoyable healing practices are more beneficial than healing practices that are boring, uncomfortable, or engaged in because of a "should"—*I should* go jogging; *I should* lift weights; *I should* practice yoga and qigong. Enjoyment induces the placebo effect, an expectation of positive results that actually helps foster those results. Scientific studies have shown that meditation, relaxation, and many other stress-reducing techniques are not effective unless accompanied by joy of life.

Qigong is nearly 100 percent safe and without side-effects. This does not mean that no danger exists. Any exercise may be harmful if it is

overdone or inappropriate—for example, you wouldn't do head rotations after a whiplash injury to the neck. But if you practice qigong gently, moderately, and intuitively, and follow your doctor's advice, adverse effects are extremely rare. Here, even the most skeptical physician must shamefacedly admit that his or her art cannot hold a candle to qigong. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that in the United States, there are at least 100,000 hospital deaths per year as a result of adverse effects from medication. This figure only represents those patients who follow their doctors' orders and take medications correctly! Common surgeries also frequently produce unwanted or fatal side-effects, such as internal hemorrhage or blood clots. "The surgery was a success," the physician remarks, "but the patient died." Modern medicine is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S., outranking diabetes.

The goal of conventional medical treatment is different from that of qigong. Physicians are trained to restore sick individuals to their previous state of health or to one that is considered average or "normal". To paraphrase the outstanding scientist Elmer Green, Ph.D., western medicine is not part of a health-care system, but a sick-care system. When a qigong practitioner has a sore-throat, his goal is not simply to return to a symptom-free state, but to continue on a road towards fuller potential, deeper self-awareness, and enhanced well-being. Health is not freedom from disease, but, rather, wellness and wisdom.

## Tuning the Human Instrument: Principles of Qigong Practice

Although qigong techniques take time to master, the principles are very easy to understand and can make an immediate difference in quality

of life. Qigong is based on the Three Tunings, that is three aspects of one's being that must be adjusted and harmonized, like tuning an instrument. Tune the Body (*Toro Shen*), Tune the Breath (*Tiao Xi*), and Tune the Mind (*Tiao Xin*).

Qigong begins by paying attention to the body. If the body is tense and the posture is poor, the breath cannot be slow or deep, and the mind cannot be tranquil. *The easiest way to change your mind is to change your body.* This is qigong's million dollar secret and the perfect antidote to stress.

In the modern world, there is no way to avoid stressful situations. If life is upsetting, the typical western approach is to develop a psychological coping strategy either on one's own or with the help of a therapist. Perhaps in the midst of a Los Angeles traffic jam, one needs to say to oneself, "This too shall pass," or "I have the strength to meet any challenge." If molehills are becoming mountains, they sometimes can be leveled by improving self-esteem. A person who has a strong sense of self-worth does not interpret everyday stresses as a threat to personal identity. The IRS agent is not a saber-toothed tiger. Death and taxes may be immutable, but they are not synonymous.

Qigong takes a different approach. The problem is not the stressful situation, but rather your reaction to it, a reaction that is energetically imprinted in your physiology. It does no good to say to yourself, "I will remain calm," if your body has spent the last ten years reacting to certain emotional triggers by tightening the shoulders, quickening the breath, and raising the blood pressure. Again, if you want to change your mind, change your body first. Qigong teaches you how to gain control over both ordinary tension as well as the subtle internal tensions that quicken the heart-beat, raise blood pressure, and increase the blood levels of stress hormones and age-promoting free radicals. In fact, to the extent that you cannot

control the external world, it becomes all the more imperative to control the internal one.

Qigong practitioners learn to control the stress response by practicing Tuning the Body, Breath, and Mind at least ten minutes every day. The Three Tunings calm the sympathetic nervous system's "light or flight" stress reaction—which the Chinese call excess yang, and activates the relaxation response of the parasympathetic system, which the Chinese consider yin. When the body is relaxed, you feel centered, calm yet alert, and capable of making good decisions. But speaking about relaxation is easy; doing it is more challenging. To *try* to relax is to become tense, like trying to float or trying to ride a bicycle. It's not a matter of trying, but of surrendering to the body's wisdom. Use intent, that is, mental focus, without straining. Find the balance between effort and effortlessness. Taoists call this "doing without doing" (wei wu wei).

To benefit from the Three Tunings:

**Make a commitment.** Decide that you will devote some time each day to your own well-being. You cannot be of service to others if you neglect yourself.

Remove jewelry. Take off any rings or other jewelry and eyeglasses, as these may interfere with qi flow.

**Pick a comfortable place to practice.**

Practice outdoors if the weather is pleasant or in a well ventilated, quiet, and naturally lit room (no glaring lights). If you are practicing indoors, face a window or towards a simple and non-distracting area of your home.

**Discourage interruptions.** Turn off your phone and answering machine.

**Dress for comfort.** Wear loose, comfortable clothing, and sneakers or flat-bottomed slippers or shoes. You may be barefoot if the ground is comfortable and warm.

**Watch what you eat.** The Three Tunings are best practiced at least a half-hour before a meal or at least two hours after a meal. Never drink cold liquids immediately before or after practice, as these can shock the body and prevent qi from circulating.

## Tuning the Body

Here's the procedure for Tuning the Body:

**Stand with the feet shoulder width apart.**

Let your arms rest at the sides of the body, holding them just a few inches away from the thighs. Your arms are relaxed, but not limp. (You may also practice the Three Tunings while seated on a stool or in a straight backed chair. Your legs are uncrossed, feet on the ground and hands resting comfortably in the lap. A seated position is advised if you have arthritis in the lower body or any medical condition that makes it inadvisable to stand for extended periods of time.)

**Keep your eyes open.** You should be looking straight ahead with the longest and widest possible gaze. Your eyes are soft and relaxed, not looking at anything in particular. Eliminate any tendency to squint, to open the eyes widely, or to stare intensely. Imagine that you are looking both inside and outside. Your inner eye is aware of your bodily sensations.

**Use minimum effort.** Imagine that you are standing so delicately that if a feather landed on your head, your knees would buckle because of the weight of the feather. If a fly landed on your shoulder, your shoulder would drop because of the weight of the fly.

**Sink your weight.** Let your weight sink down through your feet into the ground. Imagine that any tension is flowing downwards, like water flowing down a hillside. Your feet are rooted into the ground like a tree. To develop this rooted sensation, it is very important to consciously

relax the feet. Allow your weight to spread evenly through the feet, not leaning on your toes or heels, on the insides of your feet, or the outsides.

**Stay loose.** Imagine that all of the joints of your body are relaxed and open, never locked. To lock a joint is to close the space between the bones and create more wear and tear, leading to arthritis. According to Chinese medicine, locking a joint closes an energy gate and prevents qi from moving through adjacent meridians.

**Bend your knees.** It is especially important to keep the knees slightly bent at all times. The knees are your body's shock absorbers. They absorb the shock of walking on concrete or on any hard and unyielding surface. If you lock the knees when you step, you are jarring your lower spine, which increases back-pain and your chances of injuring the lower back.

**Unlock your elbows.** Similarly the elbows are subject to injury. Imagine lifting a very heavy object with locked elbows. Just the thought is painful.

**Keep your hips open.** How can you relax and open your hips if they are compressed by gravity? To relax your hips, you must use your mind. Imagine that your upper torso is gently lifted up and away from the legs and that you are creating more space in the hip joints. Allow all of the deep muscles that attach to the hips to become warm, open, and pliant.

**Let your mind relax your body.** Use your mind to relax other joints in the body: the toes, ankles, wrists, fingers, and shoulders. Your shoulder joints will open if you say to yourself, "My shoulders are sitting." They are relaxed down, neither slouched forward, nor pulled back.

**Release the chest muscles.** This happens when you relax your ribs and breastbone. Avoid either depressing the chest or puffing the chest up or out. Both interfere with breathing and

create imbalanced mental attitudes. Depressing the chest may create feelings of depression. Lifting the chest may make one feel uptight or egotistically proud.

**Keep your spine long.** The spine must be vertically erect. Use your mind to stretch it open and long. Imagine that your tailbone is anchored into the ground and your head is lifting gently away from it, as though pulled upwards from the crown, like a puppet on a string. Or imagine that your vertebrae are beads on a string; the string is delicately stretched to eliminate excess slack. Now there is more space between each bead.

**Pay attention to your mouth and tongue.** Your mouth is lightly closed, with the tongue touching the upper hard palate. This tongue position generates saliva, preventing the mouth from becoming dry. It also closes a gap between two major energy channels, one that ends at the palate, and another that begins at the tip of the tongue. Although qi can bridge the gap, by deliberately closing the circuit, you can help the qi current become stronger and clearer.

**Keep your belly relaxed.** This is very important. You cannot master qigong if you pull your belly up or in to make it appear flat. A tight abdomen interferes with breathing and sexual pleasure.

## Tuning the Breath

Take a good, deep breath. If you are like most Americans, you are probably sucking in your stomach and expanding your chest as you inhale. According to the traditions of East and West, this method of breathing is inefficient, shallow, and contributes to anxiety, hypertension, and angina (chest pain). Chest breathing causes muscles to spasm and decreases oxygen delivery to the cells. This can have especially serious effects on neurological

diseases, since the brain requires 20 percent of the body's available oxygen.

To learn how to *really* take a deep breath, you don't have to read a textbook on respiratory therapy; just watch a child breathing. When a child inhales, the belly expands; when he exhales, the belly retracts. This is the most natural and relaxed way to breathe. From a scientific viewpoint, to inhale, the diaphragm must drop, opening the lungs and pushing the abdomen out. This creates a vacuum that sucks air into the lungs effortlessly. To exhale, the diaphragm rises, contracting the abdomen and gently pushing air out.

Qigong takes diaphragmatic breathing one step further. Imagine that you have an energy sphere in your lower abdomen, about two to three inches below the navel and midway between the front and back of your body. When you inhale, it inflates like a balloon and pushes the lower abdomen out, while also exerting a very slight pressure on the lower back. Imagine that the lower back is also expanding. With practice, patience, and gentle perseverance, you will gradually begin to feel that the lower back expands at the same time as the belly. The movement is not as pronounced, but it is definitely there.

Belly-back breathing is called *dan tian* breathing. The dan tian is the field (tian) of the elixir (dan) of long life, an energy center in the lower abdomen where, through tranquil breathing, you plant and cultivate the seed of long life and wisdom.

To practice Tuning the Breath, you'll find Dan Tian Breathing particularly helpful. Here's the procedure:

Inhale slowly and deeply. With each inhalation, you should feel both your belly and back expanding.

Exhale fully. With each exhalation, gently intend that your belly and back contract.

Keep it slow. Because dan tian breathing is more efficient than thoracic (chest) breathing, you need less breaths per minute to deliver necessary oxygen to your cells. With regular practice, you can shift from the average resting respiratory rate of 17 breaths per minute down to 5 breaths per minute. This improvement usually occurs within the first few months of practice. Slow breathing slows down the brain waves and makes you more relaxed, tranquil, and intuitive.

Keep it long, deep, smooth, and even. The breath is long because it flows like a mountain stream without any artificial breaks or dams in the current. The breath is deep, like an infinitely deep ocean of power and vitality. The breath is smooth, like fine silk, not coarse like sandpaper. The breath is also even. You allow the inhalation and exhalation with equal grace and ease. You do not favor the right or left side of your body, the front or back. The breath stimulates qi to move evenly throughout the body.

Allow it to just happen. The most important aspect of breathing is an attitude of trusting the wisdom of the body. Do not pull the breath in; do not push it out. Surrender to the breathing process, and allow each breath to refresh and renew you.

## Tuning the Mind

Tuning the Body and Breath induces a state of quiet awareness of whatever presents itself, whatever is happening. You are not concentrating on anything in particular, but rather on the entire *field of perception and being*.

Ask yourself, "Can I be simple, innocent, and open, without either rejecting or prolonging any thought or sensation?" If a thought passes through your mind, just let it pass, like a cloud moving across the sky. This state of awareness is

called *disattachment*, because you are not mentally or emotionally stuck to any phenomena.

When the mind is disattached, unburdened by memory or expectation, you can be refreshed and renewed by each passing moment. In fact, the ability to be renewed moment by moment and to see life with fresh clarity is precisely what Buddhists call "enlightenment" or Taoists "unity with the Tao (Way of Nature)." The Buddhist *Diamond Sutra* says, "Awaken your mind without fixing it anywhere." In the Taoist classic *Da De Jing*, we read "Not naming (freezing the flow of life in conceptual boxes) is the beginning of Heaven and Earth."

You cannot *try to still* your mind; that would be like trying to calm turbulent water by pounding on it. You can only still your mind by accepting it and deciding to let it be. Then the waves of thought cease of themselves. When the surface of a lake is quiet and without waves, it becomes a mirror that reflects life whole, not in broken fragments. This means that mental quiet helps to eliminate prejudice and preconception so that you can see the outside world more accurately. As the water becomes more and more still, the depths are no longer stirred up and muddy; you can see clear to the bottom. Thus, a quiet mind is also able to perceive itself more accurately. It is self-aware and not preoccupied with material objects.

## How Do I Know It's Qi ?

You know you are successful at cultivating qi if, during or after practice, you feel any of the classic "Qi Sensations" (*Qi Gan*):

- Pleasant warmth, which is a sign of improved blood and qi circulation.
  - Tingling or a feeling of vibrating, pulsing energy, most commonly in the hands.
- Distinguish this from numbness, which is

a sign that you are practicing too long and that your extremities are falling asleep.

- Heaviness in lower body, lightness in the upper, as though you have become a tree with deep roots and tall branches that can easily sway in the breeze.
  - Expansiveness, a feeling that you are no longer limited to your body. Your energy and awareness extend into nature.
  - Tranquillity, centeredness, and stability.
- Qigong can give you greater confidence, awareness, and presence in everyday life.

## Slow Is Beautiful

The Three Tunings are in themselves an excellent qigong practice, but they are also the foundation of virtually any style of qigong. That is, whether you are practicing a qigong exercise designed to calm the mind, improve health, or increase the power of your football tackle, always begin with the Three Tunings. Once your instrument is tuned, you can learn the intricacies of qigong and begin to make beautiful music.

Don't try to learn too many styles. It is better to emphasize quality than quantity. A few notes played clearly are far more enjoyable than many notes played off-key. And as with music, slower techniques may look easier but actually require the most skill. Musicians worry most about performing the slow *andante* movement because it is here that mistakes are most glaringly obvious to both the audience and the musician. "Slow is beautiful," said the artist Rodin. But it takes great patience to achieve this beauty.

## Benefits and Dangers

After 100 days of qigong training, you are likely to experience any or all of the 12 Benefits of qigong.

## *The Twelve Benefits of Qigong*

**1. Well-being and improved health.** Qigong emphasizes whole body, whole system health. While it is true that qigong will often cure specific ills, this is not the primary reason for practice. Even if a disease cannot be cured, qigong improves quality of life and helps you find greater happiness. It is not only a matter of adding years to your life, but life to your years.

**2. Clear and tranquil mind.** When the mind is at peace, the whole universe seems at peace. World peace begins with you; it is your responsibility to find a peaceful heart and mind. Then you can heal and transform others just through your presence. I am not suggesting that you use meditation as a substitute for political action (such as voting), but rather, if you have tranquil mind, you will make better decisions and have the skill to know when to act and when to be still.

**3. Deeper, more restorative sleep.** Sleep is becoming more and more a challenge in our hectic, quick-paced, wired world. Qigong will help you find the deep relaxation and mental quiet necessary for sleep. However, qigong is not enough! You must also get sufficient aerobic and resistance exercise, eat well, not overwork, and be willing to enjoy leisure. Be a human being, not a human doing. As philosopher Lin Yutang once put it, "Since culture is a product of leisure, the sage is the one who loafs gracefully."

**4. Increased energy, including sexual vitality and fertility.** Qigong people have more energy. In Chinese terms, qigong can *fan lao huan tong*, "reverse aging and restore youthfulness." Part of this youthful quality is a feeling of sexual potency and both male and female fertility. Let me share an anecdote with you. I was taking a lunch break during a science conference and enjoying

a conversation with some of the attendees and with my daughter (then age 17), who was sitting next to me. An attractive young woman walked over to my table and extended her hand, I presumed to shake hands. When I grasped her hand, she sandwiched it between her two and, looking warmly in my eyes, said, "Thank you so much for getting me pregnant." My daughter exclaimed quizzically "Dad?!" She knows her dad is "weird", but not immoral. The woman explained, "Oh, you may not remember me, but I was at this conference last year and complained about my inability to become pregnant. Both my husband and I had been tested, but the doctors could find nothing wrong. You recommended some qigong exercises, and now I have a healthy boy!" If anything makes me want to continue teaching qigong for the rest of my life, it is testimonials like this.

**5. Comfortable warmth.** Qigong is great for cold hands and feet. Circulation improves, and the body generates more internal warmth when it is cold. I heard of a famous qigong master who used to teach his classes outdoors in Tokyo, even in the winter. If a student got too cold, he or she had only to grasp the master's hand, a natural hand warmer! Until you reach this stage, if cold weather makes you uncomfortable, you may wish to take advantage of a Japanese secret. During cold winter days, keep a scarf wrapped around your lower abdomen, under your jacket. You have probably heard that it is good to wear a warm hat because heat escapes from the head. True. However, you can also increase internal heat by keeping the body's energy furnace (the abdominal dan tian) warm.

**6. Clear skin.** The skin, like the intestines, is an organ of elimination. According to Chinese medicine, as your qigong improves, your body eliminates toxins, and the skin becomes clear,

smooth, and youthful. Qigong is excellent for the complexion.

7. Happy attitude. There is an old Tibetan saying, "You can tell a Yogi by his or her laugh." I believe the same is true of a qigong master. Although there are certainly serious, obsessive, and even morose qigong teachers, correct and moderate qigong practice usually creates an optimistic and joyous disposition. Deep learning brings humility before the great unknown (the Tao) and the vast amount still to be known. The more you know, the more you know that you don't know, and the less seriously you take yourself.

8. More efficient metabolism. Digestion improves, and hair and nails grow more quickly. Students commonly remark that after a few months of qigong, they need to use their nail clippers twice as often. The traditional explanation is that the body is throwing off dead cells more quickly. Would you like to hear some Taoist mystical trivia? When a Taoist master dies, his or her body disappears in a flash of light, and all that is left is hair, nails, and clothes. Or so the story goes.

9. Greater physiological control. This means that aspects of the body that were imbalanced or out of control begin to normalize, for example, breathing rate, heart rate, blood pressure, hormone levels, and states of chronic inflammation or depletion. "Control" means greater control over the body's functions, generally not by conscious effort but naturally from within, as a side effect of qigong practice. As biological functions normalize, you become more flexible and resilient. One of my colleagues put it this way, "If I want to fast for a few days, no problem! If I want to enjoy a feast, no problem! I can sleep peacefully for eight hours or, when necessary, I can miss sleep for a night without ill effects."

10. Bright eyes. The qigong master's eyes are said to glow in the dark, like a cat's. The eyes also appear "bright" because the spirit and soul are luminous and the heart is open.

11. Intuition and creativity. I believe that intuition and creativity generate each other and come from the same source, an awakened brain and being, an ability to think with the gut, to feel with the mind. Our society stresses compartmentalization, a specialized education, family life separate from work, church separate from state. We spend much of our lives living in compartments—home, school, workplace, and car. Qigong teaches us to reclaim the wholeness of who we are. Instead of fitting into a neat box, we are willing to exercise our intuition and creativity, to "boldly go where no person has gone before."

12. Spiritual effects. Advancement in qigong is often accompanied by a variety of spiritual experiences. For example, synchronicity, meaningful coincidences, become more common. When the qi is abundant, clear, and flowing, the senses perceive and are permeated by a sweetness, as though a divine nectar perfumes the skin and is generated in the mouth. Some students see a radiance or aura around people. Be thankful for such experiences but do not become egotistical about them; neither awe nor excitement are necessary. You are indeed special, but no more special than every person. Each individual, like each flower in a field, has a unique beauty.

As I mentioned earlier, qigong is safe as long as you practice moderation, follow good common sense, and listen to your health care provider's advice. Nevertheless, during the first few months of practice some students may experience the following temporary unpleasant phenomena,

signs that your body is adjusting to a new and better energy level:

### Common Temporary Reactions

**Itching.** The skin may itch as it discharges old and unneeded qi.

**Trembling.** Trembling occurs because your energy circuits are carrying a higher current. Or trembling may be a sign that you are using excess effort or awakening muscles that have not been exercised for a long time. When trembling occurs, pay attention and relax. If it continues, stop your practice and resume later or the next day.

**Nausea.** You have more nerve cells in your abdomen than in the spinal cord. As you awaken your mind and body, your digestion may feel different for a few months. The stomach may gurgle; you may burp or fart more often. This is only temporary.

Remember that Chinese medicine (acupuncture and herbs) are excellent adjuncts to qigong practice. To accelerate your progress in qigong, you may wish to occasionally get an acupuncture "tune up" from a licensed practitioner.



## CHAPTER 2 ORGANS, ELEMENTS, AND THREE TREASURES: FUNDAMENTALS OF QIGONG PHILOSOPHY

According to qigong philosophy, you have the ability to gather, store, or lose energy, qi. By practicing qigong, you gather more energy and prevent it from "leaking" out. Qi, like electricity, is in every cell of the body. Yet certain areas of the body have the capacity to store more energy. Like batteries that provide power to the rest of the body, these areas include:

- The internal organs
- The dan tian in the lower abdomen, the body's principal energy center, as well as the dan tians in the chest and between the eyebrows (the "third eye")

Health depends on keeping the "batteries" fully charged and maintaining a calm and relaxed mind and body. Relaxation opens the meridians so that the qi can flow smoothly. If a river is full of nutrients but the water is dammed and unable to feed the smaller streams, then the fish in these streams will starve. Similarly, even if you have abundant qi, if you are uptight and rigid, the qi will, over time, become more and more turbid.

The body is composed mostly of water, and like water, it is healthiest when it flows. Flow is an internal state—energy moving smoothly to wherever it is needed. It is also a state of harmony with nature—a flow between inside and outside. And in qigong, flow is quality of

movement. Movements that flow like water are the deepest expression of who you are and are the most beneficial to health.

### The Internal Organs

Oriental medicine divides the internal organs into two categories known as yin and yang. The liver, heart, lungs, kidneys, spleen, and pericardium are yin viscera (*zang*) and relatively solid. They produce, regulate, and store various forms of qi. The gall bladder, small intestine, large intestine, bladder, and stomach are considered yang. Yang organs (*fu*) are relatively hollow. They receive and transmit food and fluids.

There is one other rather unusual yang organ called the "triple heater," unrecognized in Western medicine. Triple heater (sometimes called triple burner) refers to a function rather than a substance, like "blood circulation" rather than "the heart." It controls the balance of warmth and energy in three regions of the body: the upper burner from the head to the chest, the middle burner around the solar plexus, and the lower burner in the lower abdomen. Or, according to some authorities: upper burner from base of the neck to solar plexus (respiration), middle burner from solar plexus to navel (digestion), and lower burner from navel to pubis (elimination). The upper burner is compared to a mist (like vapors from the lungs), the middle to a foam (digestive churning), the lower to a swamp (excretions).

Of the yin and yang organs, the yin are the most important. This makes good sense. We can live without all or part of our gall bladder, small intestine, large intestine, bladder, and stomach. By contrast, health is seriously compromised if any of the yin organs are damaged—liver, heart, lungs, kidneys, spleen, pericardium. Yin, we could say, is the basis of yang just as the mother and Mother Earth are the bases of life.

Taoist philosophy provides interesting insight into the important role of the yin organs. The word for yin organ, *zang*, also means "reservoir" or, as a verb, to hold, to contain." Thus the *Taoist Canon* is known as the *Dao Zang*, "the Reservoir of Tao." In Taoism, the *zang* are considered reservoirs of both spiritual and healing qi. According to He Shang-Gong, 2nd Century Taoist philosopher, the liver contains the *hou* (yang soul); the lungs, the *po* (yin soul); the heart, the *shen* (spirit); the kidneys, *the jing* (sexual essence); and the spleen, the *zhi* (will, volition). He Shang-Gong warns, If the viscera are damaged, the spirits will flee."

The Taoist cultivates internal organ health (or repairs any damage) in order to preserve the spirits. The alchemist Tao Hongjing (6th Century) warns that advanced meditations are effective only if one is in good health. In the *Zhen Gao* (Declarations of the True), he gives the example of an adept who engaged in alchemy for many years, all in vain, until one day an immortal spirit appeared and explained that none of the adept's meditations were bearing any fruit because his body was ill.

If the organs are damaged, the spirits flee. Conversely, if the spirits flee, the organs suffer. Thus in many styles of qigong meditation one visualizes the spirits of the organs as animals, gods, planets, or colored light fixed or sealed in their respective organs. (One of the terms for

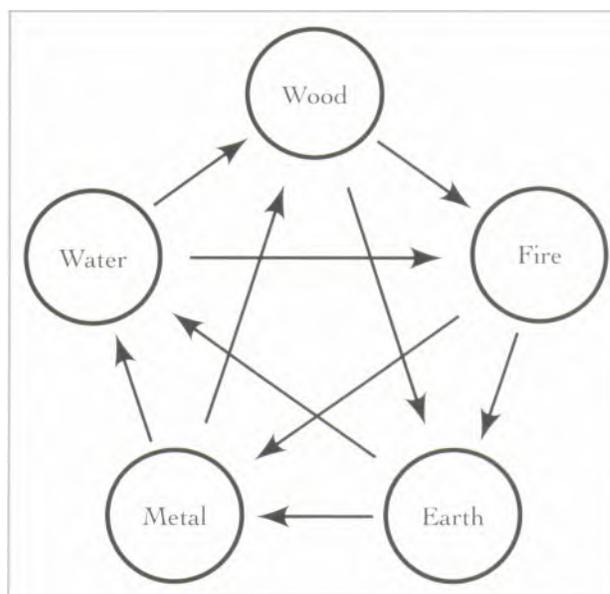
Daoist Meditation is *cun si* "fixing thought.") Several of these meditations are included on the audio CDs accompanying this program.

Just as yang complements yin, so various internal organs come in pairs. Liver and gall bladder are related. The health of one effects the health of the other. Similarly, the following organs are paired: heart-small intestine, spleen-stomach, lungs-large intestine, kidneys-bladder.

## Wu Xing: The Five Elements

The periodic table of Taoism is relatively simple. There are five elements (*wu xing*): wood, fire, earth, metal, water. Various combinations of these five elements account for all phenomena. Actually, "five elements," although a common translation, is not quite accurate. *Wu xing* really means five moving forces, or five phases of change and transformation. Many authors simply call them the "five phases."

To understand the five phases let's examine their interactions. In the Cycle of Creation



The Five Element, showing the Cycle of Creation (outer arrows), and the Cycle of Destruction (inner arrows).

(or Growth) (*Xiang Sheng*), wood creates or generates fire, fire creates earth (ashes), earth creates metal (minerals extracted from the earth), metal creates water (becoming molten or condensing water from the atmosphere), and water grows wood. Thus it is a cycle, one phase creating the next.

In the **Cycle of Destruction (or Dissolution, Restraint, and Control)** (*Xiang Ke*), wood penetrates and destroys earth, earth absorbs and destroys water, water puts out fire, fire melts metal, and metal chops wood.

How is this abstract philosophy relevant to health and qigong? Each yin yang organ pair is related to a phase. Look at the chart on page 24. For example, liver and gall bladder are wood. Since wood generates fire, the energy of the liver and gall bladder generate the energy of the heart and small intestine. Fire creates earth; thus when heart and small intestine are healthy, the spleen and stomach are more likely to be healthy. The energy of one organ can also destroy or cut into the energy of another. Metal chops wood; an overactive lung can weaken the liver. Fire melts metal. If the heart is over-stimulated (perhaps because of emotional excitement), it may weaken the lungs.

All of the organs, like their related phases, are constantly interacting. Creation and destruction is how life works. You produce a biological substance, such as a hormone, enzyme, or neurotransmitter when it is needed (creation), it disappears when no longer needed (destruction). Imagine if you were constantly generating the neurotransmitter (mood chemical) that generates sadness. Not very pleasant! Similarly we want just the right amount of thyroid hormone, not too much, not too little.

The cycles of Creation and Destruction must be balanced. Then we have homeostasis, or, from the Chinese viewpoint, health, vitality, and

longevity. Because the five phases nurture and control each other, when you practice qigong for the internal organs, it is generally best to work on all of the organs rather than focusing exclusively on the particular one that is troubling you (for example an upset stomach). When one part is ill, the entire system is ill.

## Laws of Interaction

Qigong and Chinese medicine are closely related, and both recognize the importance of the Five Phases. Although this program does not require knowledge of Chinese Medicine, an understanding of basic Five Phase Theory can enhance your understanding and appreciation of both disciplines.

1. A deficient child creates a deficient mother. Supplement the mother to tonify the child. For example if the primary problem is weakness in the lungs (metal), then add qi to the spleen (earth creates metal).

2. Yin organs tend toward deficiency; yang organs toward excess (with the exception of the heart, which tends toward excess). It is generally best to supplement deficiency as the first stage in therapy. This is why qigong emphasizes exercises and meditations for the yin organs: the heart more than the paired small intestine, the kidneys more than the bladder, etc. (See the Healing Sounds exercise on DVD 1, chapter 5, Purifying the Qi: The Healing Sounds, and Healing Sounds meditation on CD 3 track 4, The Six Sound Secret.

3. When the yin organ is deficient, the paired yang organ tends toward excess, and vice versa. For example, if the kidneys are weak, the bladder may have a tendency towards infection. Thus, if you see your acupuncturist for a cough (lungs), don't be surprised at her diagnosis of "heat in the large intestine." (Treatment key: When the yin is

tonified, the yang is sedated. When the yang is tonified, the yin is sedated.)

4. A deficient organ causes the controlling organ to become excess. For example, wood destroys earth. Thus, if your stomach (earth) is weak, the gall bladder (wood) may be inflamed, blocked, or simply too yang.

5. When the deficient organ is tonified, the grandmother is sedated. The grandmother is the mother's mother. Let's say that you tonify, add qi, to the liver. Liver is wood. Water grows wood. Metal melts to create water. Metal (lungs) is the grandmother of wood (liver). When you tonify the liver, you sedate the lungs.

From this brief introduction, you can see how the internal organs effect each other. In the human organism, all processes are intertwined and interdependent.

The Five Phases correspond to more than elements and organs. They are a model that helps us to understand how emotions, sounds, climate, and many other kinds of phenomena interact. As an example, look at the second column in the Chart of the Five Phases. Metal is the "element" of the lungs and large intestine. These organs are related to the health of the nose, skin, and hair. To heal the lungs (or large intestine) imagine them filled with white Tight, or make the sound See-ah, or listen to the note G#. Metal, lungs, large intestine, and white are also related to the west direction (known as White Tiger in feng-shui), autumn, dry climates, and the pungent or spicy flavor. This means that some spicy food is good for your lungs. Because Venus is the planet of metal, you can fill the lungs with healing energy by imagining them absorbing

PHASE	METAL	WATER	WOOD	FIRE	EARTH
Yin Organ, Yang Organ	Lungs, Large Intestine, Bladder	Kidney, Bladder	Liver, Gall Bladder	Heart, Small Intestine	Spleen, Stomach
Orifice	Nose	Ears	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth
Tissue	Skin, Hair	Bones, Teeth, Flair	Tendons, Muscles, Nails, Nerves	Blood Vessels	Flesh and Muscles
Color	White	Dark Blue or Black	Green	Red	Yellow
Healing Sound	Lion-Seeah G# (Shang)	Bear-Chrooe D# (Yu)	Monkey-Shh A# (due)	Dragon-Heu C# (Zhi)	Owl-Hoo F# (Gong)
Direction	West	North	East	South	Center
Feng Shui	White Tiger	Black Tortoise	Green Dragon	Red Bird	Yellow Worm
Season	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Late Summer
Climate	Dry	Cold	Windy	Hot	Damp
Taste	Pungent	Salty	Sour	Bitter	Sweet
Planet	Venus	Mercury	Jupiter	Mars	Earth
Harmful Emotions	Anxiety, Sorrow	Fear	Anger	.Joy, Shock	Pensiveness, Empathy
Qi Effect of Harmful Emotions	Constrict	Drop	Rise	Scatter	Knot
Virtue	Yi and Courage	Zhi (Wisdom)	Ren (Kindness)	Li (Orderliness and Peace)	Xin (Trust)

Ike Chart of the Five Phases

white light from Venus. Anxiety and sorrow constrict and damage the lungs; a feeling of courage and integrity heals them. As you practice visualizations on the accompanying CDs, you may wish to refer back to the chart. It will serve as a handy reminder of the meditations and may help you to make up your own!

Note: The Triple Heater (or Triple Burner), a Yang organ, and Pericardium, a Yin organ, do not fit into the basic Five Element classification. The Triple Heater healing sound is Xi (pronounced "See").

## The Three Treasures

Oxygen, like qi, is a source of energy; it must reach every cell. Certain areas of the body, requiring more oxygen than others, are more critical for health. The brain, for example, has a huge oxygen appetite, and even a brief period of oxygen deprivation can have serious consequences. Similarly, some parts of the body's subtle energy anatomy need more qi, such as the internal organs, which I have already discussed, and the three dan tian energy centers. These dan tian are located between the eyebrows ("upper dan tian"), in the center of the chest ("middle dan tian"), and in the lower abdomen, about three inches below the navel ("lower dan tian"). There are many other dan tian; I am only discussing the principal ones.

Each dan tian stores a slightly different form of qi. The upper dan tian is the abode of the yang, heavenly qi, called *shen*. This is the qi that accounts for spirituality, awareness, and intuition. In Taoist philosophy, shen may be further broken down into various components: intent (*yi*), will (*zhi*), soul (*bun, po*), and spirit (*shen*).

The middle dan tian stores the highly potent neutral qi, the energy of life that can

transform into either yin or yang forces and substances as needed. Qi includes the life-giving power of the breath (*zong qi*), the energy of food (*gu qi*), and the "original qi" (*yuan qi*) that we receive at conception from our parents and the universe.

The lower dan tian is the reservoir of the yin and earthy energy called *jing*, "life essence"—the germ of life, vitality, and sexual energy. Jing means a refined essence, for example the nutritional essence of food (*hua tian jing*) or the underlying genetic program that we inherit from our ancestors (*xian tian jing*).

Qigong helps to keep these "three treasures," jing, qi, and shen, balanced, in full supply, and capable of transforming one into the other. Shen is not better than jing, spirit is not better than sexuality. Higher up in the body does not mean higher in value. Rather, a whole human being honors all aspects of his or her being.

In the developing embryo, the three treasures are located in different positions than in the adult. The upper dan tian, "the third eye," stores jing. After birth, the jing settles in the lower dan tian and becomes the source of sexual vitality. Yet, it remains associated with the upper body and is essential for healthy brain functioning. The middle dan tian stores shen; shen rises after birth into the brain, yet spirit and spirituality remain important to the health of both the physical and emotional heart. The lower dan tian stores neutral qi; in the infant it rises to the middle chest-level dan tian. But, as qigong practitioners know and experience, the vital breath is always linked with the lower abdomen, its original home.

We have multiple sources for replenishing the three treasures, some external and some internal. Externally, jing, qi and shen are

nourished by sexual harmony and proper nutrition (jing), qigong (qi), and meditation (shen). Internally, there is a link between the health of the organs and one's supply of the three treasures. When the heart and liver are healthy, their energies combine to produce shen. When the lungs and kidneys are healthy, their energies combine to produce jing. When the spleen is healthy, it produces qi.



## CHAPTER 3 GETTING STARTED: 100 DAYS TO SUCCESS

Why 100 days? Wouldn't 365 days be better? In writing about a 100-day training program, I am not catering to the

American "fast food" mentality. Rather, according to Chinese tradition, after 100 days of intensive training, you can "taste" the joy and benefits of qigong. It is then easy to determine if the exercises or meditations are right for you, or if you need to mix and match techniques that you have "tasted" from previous 100-day trainings.

Scientists also recognize that *tune* is an essential element in biological transformation. For example, many of qigong's positive biochemical and neurological effects become pronounced only after 20 minutes of practice. These include higher blood levels of endorphins (a sign of decreased pain, improved immunity, and positive mood) and slower brainwaves (signifying mental relaxation and focus). Similarly, it usually takes approximately three months of training (100 days!) before long term problems—such as imbalanced blood sugar or cholesterol levels—may show signs of significant improvement.

100 days does not mean *only* 100 days. But 100 days is a great start. You will have a deeper understanding of how to manage your own health. Begin with 100 days, and continue for a lifetime.

### Why *These* Exercises and Meditations?

With thousands of styles, no one is expected to learn all qigong exercises and meditations. I used four criteria to choose qigong practices for this program:

1. I practice them myself.
2. They have beneficial and replicable results, having been found effective for many thousands of students over a long period of time.
3. They can be easily and accurately learned from an audio-visual program.
4. They are fun to practice.

### Principles of Practice

What to wear? Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing and flat-bottomed shoes. If the ground is comfortable you may practice barefooted. Remove your wrist watch and any jewelry, since these can interfere with energy sensitivity. If you do not need eyeglasses to watch the program, remove your eyeglasses.

When? It is best to emphasize *exercises* in the early morning. Practice at least two hours after a meal or a half-hour before one. You may also practice at sunset or in the early evening. Be careful about practicing dynamic or energizing forms of qigong immediately before going to bed, as your increased energy level might interfere with sleep.

I like to begin and end the day with quiet meditation or healing imagery (visualization). Some visualizations, however, are meant for

specific times or situations. For example, meditations designed to absorb energy from the sun should be practiced in the morning. Moon and star meditations, by contrast, are appropriate at night. In general, during the morning begin with the most tranquil practices and progress gradually from stillness into movement. In the evening, do the reverse—start with your more active practices and end with meditation. Or, very simply, emphasize exercise in the morning and meditation at night.

If you are practicing qigong to address a specific health issue you may use the "Daily Cycle of Qi Flow" chart to find out the ideal time of practice. The chart shows when the qi is most active in a particular organ. Some acupuncturists also use the chart as a diagnostic tool. If, in everyday life, you experience a feeling of disease at a particular time of day or night, this may indicate that the associated organ is imbalanced. For example, if you tend to wake up at 2 a.m., this could indicate an imbalance in the liver because, as you can see below, the qi flows most strongly in the liver meridian from 1 to 3 a.m.. Or if you regularly experience a feeling of discomfort at noon, this may indicate that the heart qi is imbalanced.

### The Daily Cycle of Qi Flow

11 p.m.—1 a.m. Gallbladder  
1 a.m.—3 a.m. Liver  
3 a.m.—5 a.m. Lung  
5 a.m.—7 a.m. Large Intestine  
7 a.m.—9 a.m. Stomach  
9 a.m.—11 a.m. Spleen  
11 a.m.—1 p.m. Heart  
1 p.m.—3 p.m. Small Intestine  
3 p.m.—5 p.m. Bladder  
5 p.m.—7 p.m. Kidney  
7 p.m.—9 p.m. Pericardium  
9 p.m.—11 p.m. Triple Burner

**Where?** Practice qigong in a place that is clean, well ventilated, quiet, and without distraction. Avoid glaring lights; natural lighting is best. When the weather is calm and comfortable, you may practice outdoors. Avoid practicing in the wind or during extremes of cold, heat, or damp.

**How often?** Practice daily. Your energy garden must be watered regularly if you wish to produce a good harvest.

**How long?** Build your practice time gradually. Among most qigong practitioners, the average practice session is 20 to 40 minutes long. Some students practice as long as an hour or two. The important thing is to find out what works *for you*. Be patient and moderate—neither overdo nor underdo.

**Practice alone?** Qigong is fundamentally a solitary practice, a way for you to improve your own health and commune with the forces of life around you. However, it is also helpful to practice and review techniques with friends or family members. I suggest that you join a qigong class or form your own qigong practice group, meeting once or twice a week.

**Pain means no gain.** Discomfort is different from pain. Discomfort is common during the first month or two of qigong training. It is a sign that you are becoming aware of and changing old habits. However, pain should not be ignored. If a technique is painful, stop the exercise and carefully review the instructions. If the difficulty persists, seek the supervision of a health-care professional.

## CHAPTER 4

# YOUR 100-DAY TRAINING COURSE

Qigong today is very different from qigong in the past. In some ways it is worse, but in many ways it is much better.

How is it worse? We live in a world filled with distraction. Whether you live in Shanghai or Chicago, you probably have too much to do and too little time. The pace of life is so quick that you have to write in your calendar when to visit a friend. Few people are willing to say no, to set limits, and make time for qigong practice.

How is qigong better? There is better access to teachers and information; con artists are more easily weeded out. In old China, qigong students pledged their allegiance to one school, one style, one master. Qigong schools were more insular and isolated, and as a result styles did not change or evolve easily. Today qigong students from different schools can share information and improve their arts. Masters of various lineages gather for conferences, organizational meetings, and, in the case of martial arts qigong, for tournaments. As a result the entire field becomes richer.

I am fortunate to have learned from many exceptional teachers, colleagues, and friends. Also, because I speak and read Chinese, I am familiar with the traditional literature. Based on my research and practice, I chose what I consider the most important qigong methods for this program. Very importantly, these are techniques that I am confident you can learn accurately without my personal instruction.

Aren't you disappointed when you watch or listen to a program and discover that it is only a tease, impossible to follow?! I truly believe that the goal of an educator or a healer should be to empower the student or patient so that they can take care of themselves! Of course, you may *also* take classes, and I certainly advise this. It is difficult to see one's own blind spots, and having a *ming shi*, an insightful teacher, can be inspirational and will speed up your progress. It is also enjoyable to learn in a group and to share both the challenges and joys of discovery.

## What Kinds of Qigong Are on This Program?

DVD 1 —Qigong: Traditional Chinese Exercises for Healing the Body, Mind, and Spirit

1. Introduction to Qigong
2. Posture, Relaxation, and Breathing
3. Warm-up: Whole Body Breathing
4. Purifying the Qi: Bone Marrow Cleansing
5. Purifying the Qi : The Healing Sounds
6. Healing Sounds Summary
7. Gathering and Circulating Qi: Standing Meditation
8. Principles of Standing Meditation
9. Gathering and Circulating Qi: Walking Meditation Part 1
10. Gathering and Circulating Qi: Walking Meditation Part 2
11. Dispersing Stagnation: Self Massage

### DVD 2- Qi Healing I:

1. Introduction to Qi Healing I
2. Healing Exercises: Stance of Power
3. Healing Exercises: Drop the Qi, Cleanse the Organs
4. Healing Exercises: Standing Meditation
5. Healing Exercises: Snake Standing
6. Energy Channels and Points
7. Healing Exercises: One Finger Zen
8. Wellness Energy Treatments: Balancing the Yang and Yin Meridians
9. Wellness Energy Treatments: Waving
10. Wellness Energy Treatments: Cleansing and Recharging

### DVD 3- Qi Healing II:

1. Introduction to Qi Healing II
2. Assessing Qi in Others
3. Hands on Spine Assessment
4. Intuitive Qi Assessment
5. Differential Qi Assessment: Hands
6. Differential Qi Assessment: Feet
7. Differential Assessment Review
8. Therapeutic Hand Positions and Gestures
9. Quick Recharge
10. Qi Healing For Tension
11. Qi Healing for Pain
12. Qi Healing for Low Energy and Balance
13. Conclusion: The Source of Healing

## The Practice of Qigong Meditation and Healing

### CD 1 -Introduction to Qigong

1. Introduction
2. What is Qigong?
3. Qigong Applications and Terminology
4. Ancient History of Qigong
5. Modern Developments

6. The Five Elements and Organs
7. Timing and Length of Practice
8. Where to Practice, Signs of Qi, Diet
9. Benefits of Qigong
10. Abnormal Reactions and Cautions
11. The Path to Mastery

### CD 2- Healing the Body

1. Introduction
2. The Complete Qigong Workout
3. The Five Stages of Training
4. Principles of Meditation: Posture and Focus
5. Bone Marrow Cleansing
6. Cleansing the Organs with Light
7. Standing Meditation: The Million Dollar Secret
8. Taoist Alternate Nostril Breathing
9. Dispersing Stagnation: Self Massage

### CD 3- Therapeutic Qigong

1. Introduction
2. Therapeutic Qigong
3. Inner Nourishing
4. The Six Sound Secret
5. The Mind Directs the Qi
6. Deer Exercise for Sexual Health: Males
7. Deer Exercise for Sexual Health: Females
8. Endocrine Energy and the Brain

### CD 4- Balancing the Emotions

1. Introduction
2. Principles of Emotional Balance
3. Fang Song: Deep Relaxation
4. Crane, Turtle and Deer: Conserving the Three Treasures
5. Purifying Organ/Emotion Qi
6. Sun and Moon Meditation

### CD 5 - Spiritual Qigong

1. Introduction

2. Spiritual and Magical Qigong
3. Sacred Music and Chant
4. Inner Viewing Meditation
5. Taoist Chakra Meditation
6. Purple Qi from the Stars
7. Swallowing the Sun's Qi
8. Astral Travel: The Big Dipper Journey
9. Exchange of Water and Fire
10. Five Directions Meditation
11. Spiritual Protection Meditation
12. Five-Colored Cloud Meditation
13. The Healing power of Kuan Yin

## Let's Begin!

For an overview and orientation, I suggest that you take time to watch each of the DVDs and listen to the introduction to Qigong on CD 1. You may also listen to the other CDs, but they are not as necessary in the beginning.

In the past most qigong and martial arts instructors and students considered their lineages complete or perhaps "perfect"—a kind of qigong fundamentalism—and had little or no interest in learning complementary styles. Today we have the advantage of books and visual media, as well as opportunities to network and share with colleagues. By 1980, as a result of my research, I came to the realization that various qigong styles fit together and that they tend to emphasize one or more of the following elements:

- Meditation
- Cleansing
- Recharging
- Circulating Qi
- Dispersing Stagnation

Your daily morning qigong workout should incorporate all of these practices. I also recommend some gentle stretching or yoga

either before or after meditation. Long muscles mean long life. If you are spiritually inclined, you may wish to also add one more element even before meditation—prayer or devotional service. I offer an example of a Buddhist spiritual practice on CD 5 Tracks

not a religion. Begin the day by honoring *your* religion—such as reciting the Lord's Prayer, if you are Christian. For more information about devotional practices, see "Devotion to the Sacred" on page 35.

I recommend practicing qigong twice a day, at sunrise and at either sunset or any other convenient evening time. Morning practice is the most essential because it gives you more energy and resistance to stress and illness throughout the day. There is also an interesting philosophical reason for practicing at sunrise and sunset. According to Taoist philosophy, the yang energy of the day is born during the two-hour period from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m.. At that time, the energy is just starting to shift, similar to the feeling of springtime in the air during February, a sense of new life hidden under the snow. The yin energy of the day begins 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.. With the noon heat, you know the day is waning.

During sunrise and sunset, yin and yang are in perfect balance. Twilight, whether at the start or end of the day, is a period when distinctions are blurred, when self merges with the universe.

Here are a couple of other things to be aware of as part of your practice:

**Prepare yourself. In the morning, before you begin,** take care of personal hygiene—go to the bathroom, shower, and drink a cup of hot tea to warm your body and relieve thirst. Then start the qigong. Remember not to eat until after practice.

**Don't get chilled.** Never drink ice-cold liquids immediately after qigong exercise or

meditation. Qigong gently warms the body. A sudden shock of cold prevents qi from flowing where it is needed. It 4+ helpful to drink warm liquids after qigong, especially tea.

**Respect your limits.** If you have a disability, find a comfortable variation on the techniques. For example, if you have arthritis in the neck or shoulder, it may be inadvisable to raise the hands higher than the chest. If you have a knee or hip problem, you can practice the exercises while seated in a chair. If you have hypoglycemia, you may need to eat something light even before qigong.

**Practice self-awareness at all times.** Self-awareness is the key to breaking bad habits. Thus, the more you are aware of the positive effects of qigong, the more long lasting these effects become. Every now and then take a break from your daily activities and do a thirty second body meditation, noticing if there have been any improvements in your posture, breathing, energy level, and well-being as a result of your qigong. If you practice qigong with patience, perseverance, awareness, and common sense, your health will continue to improve throughout your life.

## Your Daily Workout

The program is outlined below in *ten- or twenty-day practice sessions*. (According to the ancient Chinese calendar, ten was the number of days in the week.) Throughout the 100-day training, you may begin each day with a devotional practice or service. I also recommend *daily stretching or yoga*.

Here are the answers to a number of common questions you may have about your daily qigong workout:

**Question:** How early should morning practice be, and how late may I do the evening practice?

**Answer:** I can only tell you the tradition. You will still have to find out what works for you.

The ideal morning practice period is anytime between 5 and 7 a.m.. This is when the air is freshest and most invigorating. Evening practice may be either at sunset or later in the evening. Experiment a bit, and notice the effect that the evening meditations have on your state of mind and body. Many students find that evening meditation creates more restful sleep.

**Question:** How important are the suggested lengths of morning or evening practice sessions? Do I need to keep looking at the clock—and pausing, slowing down, or fast forwarding an audio or visual program—to find out if I did precisely ten or twenty minutes of a particular exercise?

**Answer:** Practice lengths are only suggestions. Yet, you may wish to pay special attention to the time element for the first few days that you explore a new practice, just to get the feel of the recommended period. Then, when you sense that you are ready, practice instinctively and intuitively, changing postures, exercises, or meditations at comfortable intervals.

**Question:** What if I miss a morning or evening practice or an entire day? Do I extend the basic 10-day training section or the entire course beyond 100 days?

**Answer:** I know that you are not living in a Taoist monastery and cannot predict when family or work responsibilities interfere with your practice schedule. If you *occasionally* miss a day—for example one day each 10 day "week"—just continue with the program schedule. No need to add days to the practice section. (You should, however, feel very guilty and do suitable penance—only kidding!) You will continue to progress if, during days off, you sometimes tune in to your qi by practicing five or ten minutes of slow, quiet, deep

breathing. There are plenty of opportunities to practice qigong in the midst of everyday life. You can even practice qigong posture while waiting in line for movie tickets!

**Question:** What if I become ill during the 100-day training and cannot do the suggested routine?

**Answer:** I recommend trying any of the following gentle healing methods: The Six-Sound Secret (CD 3, Track 4), Cleansing the Organs with Light (CD 2, Track 6), The Mind Directs the Qi (CD 3, Track 5), *Fang Song*: Deep Relaxation (CD 4, Track 3).

**Question:** On the DVDs and CDs you often introduce philosophy and other information before actually teaching the techniques. Should I listen to all of this every time I practice?

**Answer:** Please listen to the philosophy the first time you practice. Then fast forward or skip to the actual exercise or meditation on all subsequent days. Also, once you have memorized a technique, there is no need to play the DVD or CD; just follow the recommended sequence on your own!

### *Days 1-10*

#### **AM 30-35 minutes**

Principles of Meditation: Posture and Focus.  
CD 2, Track 4. 10 minutes

Warm Up: Whole Body Breathing. DVD 1,  
Chapter 3. 3 minutes

Purifying the Qi: Bone Marrow Cleansing.  
DVD 1, Chapter 4. 10 minutes

Gathering and Circulating Qi: Standing  
Meditation. DVD 1, Chapter 7. Practice  
approximately 1 minute in each of the 4  
postures.

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-Massage.  
DVD 1, Chapter 11. 3-5 minutes

#### **PM 10-15 minutes**

Inner Nourishing. CD 3, Track 3

### *Days 11-20*

#### **AM 45 minutes**

Principles of Meditation: Posture and Focus.  
CD 2, Track 4, 10 minutes

Warm Up: Whole Body Breathing. DVD 1,  
Chapter 3. 3 minutes

Purifying the Qi: Bone Marrow Cleansing.  
DVD 1, Chapter 4. 10 minutes. (Sometime  
during the week try the seated Bone Marrow  
Cleansing: CD 2, Track 5)

Gathering and Circulating Qi: Standing  
Meditation. DVD 1, Chapter 7. Practice  
approximately 2 minutes in each of the  
4 postures. (You may also review the  
instructions on CD 2, Track 7)

Gathering and Circulating Qi: Walking  
Meditation. DVD 1, Chapters 9 and 10.  
10 minutes

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-Massage. DVD 1,  
Chapter 11. 3-5 minutes

#### **PM 10-15 minutes**

Inner Nourishing. CD 3, Track 3

### *Days 21-40*

#### **AM 50 minutes**

Principles of Meditation: Posture and Focus.  
CD 2, Track 4. 10 minutes

Purifying the Qi: Bone Marrow Cleansing.  
DVD 1, Chapter 4. 10 minutes. Gathering and  
Circulating Qi: Standing Meditation. DVD 1,  
Chapter 7. Practice approximately 3 minutes  
in each of the 4 postures.

Gathering and Circulating Qi: Walking  
Meditation. DVD 1, Chapters 9 and 10.  
10 minutes

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-massage. DVD 1,  
Chapter 11. 3-5 minutes

*Fang Song*: Deep Relaxation (seated). CD 4,  
Track 3. 5-10 minutes

**PM 20 minutes**

Cleansing the Organs with Light. CD 2, Track 6.

**10 minutes**

Taoist Alternate Nostril Breathing. CD 2,

Track 8. 5 minutes

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-Massage CD 2,

Track 9. 5 minutes

*Day 41-50*

**AM 60 minutes**

DVD 1, the complete routine (Avoid the Healing Sounds routine if pregnant or menstruating).

Practice the 4 standing postures 5 minutes for each posture.

**PM 20 minutes**

Purifying Organ/Emotion Qi. CD 4, Track 5. 10 minutes

*Fang Song:* Deep Relaxation (lying down).

CD 4, Track 3. 10 minutes

*Days 51-70*

**AM 75 minutes**

Swallowing the Sun's Qi. CD 5 Track 7. 5 minutes, then DVD 1, the complete routine.

(By now you should have memorized the sequence. Avoid the Healing Sounds if pregnant or menstruating.) Standing 5 minutes for each posture. Before the closing self-massage at the end of this DVD, practice Crane, Turtle, and Deer: Conserving the Three Treasures. CD 4, Track 4. 2-3 minutes each.

**PM 15 minutes**

The Exchange of Water and Fire. CD 5, Track 9. 5 minutes

*Fang Song:* Deep Relaxation (lying down) CD 4,

Track 3. 10 minutes

*Days 71-80*

**AM 50-75 minutes**

Healing Exercises: Drop the Qi, Cleanse the

Organs. DVD 2, Chapter 3 This is a more intuitive purification qigong than the Bone Marrow Cleansing or Healing Sounds and may substitute for them. 10 minutes

Standing 5-10 minutes per posture, according to ability and comfort and Walking Meditation (all from the first DVD, but you know them by now!)

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-massage. (Again, you know what to do.)

**PM 20-25 minutes**

Inner Viewing Meditation. CD 5, Track 4.

5-10 minutes

Taoist Chakra Meditation. CD 5, Track 5.

**10 minutes**

(After some familiarity with the Chakra Meditation, you may occasionally substitute the Purple Qi from the Stars method on CD 5, Track 6.)

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-Massage. CD 2, Track 9. 5 minutes

*Day 81-90*

**AM 60 minutes**

Healing Exercises: Drop the Qi, Cleanse the Organs. DVD 2, Chapter 3. 10 minutes

Standing (5-10 minutes per posture, according to ability and comfort) and Walking Meditation (From the first CD, but you know it by now!)

Dispersing Stagnation: Self-Massage. (Again, you know what to do.)

**PM 20 minutes**

Sun and Moon Meditation. CD 4, Track 6.

*Days 91-100*

**AM 60 minutes**

You are ready to try the all of the healing exercises on DVD 2: Drop the Qi, Cleanse the Organs; Standing Meditation; Snake Standing, and One Finger Zen.

Enjoy watching the entire Qi Healing program on DVDs 2 and 3.

PM 20 minutes

The Healing Power of Kuan Yin. CD 5, Track 13.

## Graduate Training

After 100 days, use your intuition and creativity to develop the training routine that works best for you. We have not explored all of the healing imagery on the CDs. You may now listen to them at your leisure and incorporate various methods in your meditation. In addition, the Qi Healing DVDs will teach you new ways to develop energy sensitivity and healing skill.

Here is some information to help you get a handle on the methods and styles of this program:

### *Devotion to the Sacred* CD 5, Track 3

Here is the pronunciation and translation of the Chinese Buddhist chant, in case you wish to follow along.

#### The Triple Refuge Chant

*Zi gui yiffo*—I go to the enlightened teacher (the Buddha) for refuge

*Dang yuan zhong shou*—Vowing that all sentient beings

*T jie da dad*—Realize the great Tao

*Fa wu shang xin*—And manifest the highest consciousness.

*Zigui yi fa*—I go to the teachings (the Dharma) for refuge

*Dang yuan zhong sheng*—Vowing that all sentient beings

*Shen ru jing zang*—Enter deeply into the sacred texts

*Zhi hui ru hai*—And develop wisdom like the ocean.

*Zigui yiseng*—I go to the community (the Sangha) for refuge

*Dang yuan zhong sheng*—Vowing that all sentient beings

*Tong li da :bong*—Become a united whole

*!gie wu ai*—One and all without obstruction.

In addition to my qigong training, I am an interfaith minister—a graduate of the New Seminary, New York City, and lifetime member of the Association of Interfaith Ministers. I have met holy people from all of the world's major religions and discovered that we all speak the same language—the language of love and compassion, of the heart, and of spirit. I like to start the day with a devotional practice, a kind of daily reminder that there are things more important than my personal needs. For me chanting and prayer are part of meditation. They transform consciousness and invoke a spiritual presence more surely than burning frankincense or sandalwood. I firmly believe that spirituality is the only way to world peace. No religious leader has ever advocated narrow mindedness, selfishness, greed, or aggression.

Begin the day with worship—Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Bahai, Hindu, Muslim, Wiccan, Buddhist, Taoist, as you wish, but know that you are communing with that which transcends labels and limited understanding.

### *Warm-ups* DVD 1, Chapter 3

Whole Body Breathing is a gentle coordination of breathing with movement designed to release tension and energy blocks so that the qi can flow more smoothly and strongly. You can do these exercises as a qigong warm-up or before any other type of exercises.

### *Bone Marrow Cleansing*

DVD 1, Chapter 4 and CD 2, Track 5

Bone Marrow Cleansing (*Xi Sui Jung*) is attributed to the fifth century Buddhist monk, Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism. However, historical research dates it to the sixteenth century. There are two major variations of Bone Marrow Cleansing. One method uses

self-massage over various vital centers. The other method, presented in this program, consists of meditative postures and gentle movements. Bone Marrow Cleansing is primarily a cleansing or purification qigong. It has the following benefits:

- Improving posture and deepening the breath
- Purging the body of stagnant qi in the skeletal system
- Balancing the immune system.

## *Healing Sounds*

### DVD 1 Chapter 5 and CD 3, Track 4

The Healing Sounds—known as the Six Qi Method (*liu qi fa*) or Six Word Secret (*liu zi jue*) in Chinese—consists of movements, meditations, and sounds that vibrate away toxic and stagnant qi from the organs. The method was first mentioned in a text on meditation written by the sixth century Buddhist, Zhi-yi, the founder of the Tian Tai School of Buddhism. He recommended it as a way for Buddhist monks to improve their health and prevent or relieve stiffness and stagnation that occurs after long periods of seated meditation.

The method I teach is a synthesis of two schools of Healing Sounds—the Taoist Mount Hua school that I learned originally from a colleague and corroborated in Zhang He's Chinese text *Shi Yong Qigong Yan Jut (A Study of Practical Qigong)*, Hong Kong, 1981), and the method of China's most famous modern master of the Healing Sounds, Dr. Ma Litang. I learned Dr. Ma's technique from his students and also studied his books and videos.

**Contraindications.** There are two kinds of Healing Sounds on this program. The DVD includes the Healing Sounds *Exercise*. The CD teaches the Healing Sounds *Seated Meditation*. You may practice the Healing Sounds Meditation

whenever you feel like it, whether you are well or ill. It has been used in China to both prevent and combat illness, and hospitalized patients even practice while lying in their beds. It is very gentle and enjoyable.

The Healing Sounds Exercise, however, is used to prevent illness or when you are first starting to feel ill (the "scratchy throat" phase of a cold). *It should not be practiced during the acute phase of an illness, particularly if there is fever or inflammation. And because it requires movement, it is obviously inappropriate after surgery or for the disabled. Additionally, I personally believe that it IS best to skip the Healing Sounds Exercise during menstruation and pregnancy, though there is no harm if you discover that you were practicing early in your term.* (The reason I say "I personally believe" is because my own teachers did not give me this warning. Rather, my understanding of the body and qi lead me to conclude that the Healing Sounds Exercise—not the Meditation—does not mix with pregnancy. Chinese medicine considers pregnancy a yang, "hot" condition, during which dynamic exercises should be avoided. Admittedly, as a devoted parent who has always loved children, I may be overly cautious in these matters. But I would be an irresponsible teacher if I didn't share my opinion.)

You will notice that the Healing Sounds Exercise and Meditation are each based on a different organ-element sequence. The Healing Sounds Exercise works on the lungs (metal), heart (fire), spleen (earth), liver (wood), and kidneys (water), in that order. They are not meant to follow the sequence of the five phases, but are rather ordered in a manner that creates a very dynamic and positive effect. First heal the lungs, the source of breathing; then the heart, which helps to pump breath throughout the body; then the spleen, the organ that absorbs

qi from food; the liver, which keeps qi flowing smoothly; and, finally, the kidneys, the organ responsible for the health of the bones and brain.

The Healing Sounds Meditation proceeds from one organ to the next according to the traditional Cycle of Creation: liver (wood), heart (fire), spleen (earth), lungs (metal), and kidneys (water). The overall effect is gentle healing and a feeling of self-nurturing.

### *Standing Meditation (Also called Qigong Stance of Power)*

DVD I, Chapters 7 and 8;  
DVD 2, Chapter 4; and CD 2, Track 7  
Standing Meditation is called *zhan zhuang*, "standing post," in Chinese. You learn to stand as still and stable as a post in the ground. It is both an energy gathering and energy circulating qigong and the single most important qigong exercise. Standing Meditation creates a very strong and stable posture, increases the body's supply of qi, and pumps it throughout the body. Standing Meditation creates warm, healing hands and gives practitioners a healing presence.

Because Standing Meditation increases the strength and range of the body's bioelectric (qi) field, it is the best way for a healer to prepare for administering massage therapy, therapeutic touch, acupuncture, or any other energetic therapy. Almost any balanced, upright posture can be held as a standing meditation, including individual postures from T'ai Chi Ch'uan or other martial arts forms. You may even freeze frame postures from your favorite sport and hold them as standing meditations (being careful to follow the "three tunings" and to keep the back straight).

The system of Standing I teach on DVD I is called *Yi Quan*, "Mind-Intent Martial Art" (also called *Da Cheng Quan*, "Great Achievement

Martial Art"), because it emphasizes awareness and concentration as the basis of the healing and martial arts. It was created by China's most famous master of Standing Meditation, Wang Xiang-zhai (1885-1963). On DVD 2, there is a specialized standing practice called Snake Standing. Because it is supple and fluid and can move very slowly or with lightning speed, the snake is a common Chinese symbol of qi. The principles to emphasize as you practice Standing Meditation include:

- Relax. Use minimal effort to maintain the correct stance.
- Especially relax the shoulders, hips, and all the joints.
- Root. Sink your weight and qi through the feet and into the ground—like a tree with deep roots.
- Keep feet parallel, flat on the ground, and weight even.
- Keep your knees slightly bent.
- Use rounded postures.
- Maintain the spine straight and long.
- Keep your chest relaxed, not distended or depressed.
- Make sure the shoulders are sitting, not lifted, hunched forward, or pulled back.
- Hold your head suspended. Imagine it held from above, like a puppet on a string.
- Keep eyes open, with a relaxed and peaceful gaze.
- Keep your mouth lightly closed, tongue touching upper palate.
- Breathe through the nose. Use natural abdominal breathing: inhale abdomen out, exhale abdomen retracts. Let the breath become slow, long, deep, smooth, and even. Your goal is to eventually breathe with both the lower abdomen and lower back,

so that both expand away from each other when you inhale, and both retract when you exhale. This is called dan tian breathing.

- Be Aware! Notice how you are breathing and feeling. Don't focus exclusively on any sensation. Rather than thinking about your experiences, just experience. Maintain inner silence, like a clear sky without clouds.

I usually close Standing Meditation by gently shifting my weight from toe to heel, from right to left, and in a circle, thus using the body's weight to awaken and massage each part of the foot. This is called *Xiu Xi Shi*, the Resting Stance.

### *Walking Meditation*

DVD 1, Chapters 9 and 10

Both Standing and Walking Meditation are part of the Yi Quan qigong system taught by Wang Xiang-zhai. In Standing, externally the body is still (yin), but internally there is movement (yang) of consciousness and breath. In Walking Meditation, externally the body is moving, but internally the mind seeks stillness. Thus Standing is yang within yin; Walking is yin within yang. By practicing both we learn how to maintain inner peace in the midst of change or turmoil.

Walking Meditation should feel like meditation in motion. You try to keep the mind, body, and breath as relaxed during walking as you were while standing perfectly still. If you begin to lose balance, don't tense up and become self-critical. Rather, like a musical performer, just continue and stay in the flow.

Concentrate on moving your body without any up or down motion. When your body moves on a plane, the qi settles in the lower abdomen, filling your energy reservoir. I like to compare level motion to the art of making Chinese tea. You add tea leaves to a tall cup and then pour in

hot water. The leaves float to the top. When the leaves have settled, the tea is ready. If you were to shake the cup up and down, the tea, like qi in the body, would never settle and the water would remain turbid.

Walking Meditation is one of the simplest and most effective ways to improve your balance. Maintain the principles of Standing Meditation posture described above. In addition, when you practice Walking Meditation concentrate on the following:

Feel your weight shifting from foot to foot. Notice how as one leg becomes "full" (with the weight), the other leg becomes "empty" (without weight). Always allow the empty leg to relax; there's no need to hold onto excess tension.

Don't lock your knees, even when you step. When you shift your weight, make sure that your knee stays comfortably aligned over your weight-bearing foot. Don't let the knee twist to the right or left. An easy way to correct your knee-foot alignment is to shift the weight through the middle of your foot. If you feel more weight on the inside or outside of your feet, you are probably twisting your knees. And if you are doing this during qigong, you are certainly making the same mistake during everyday life. Now is the time to correct it.

When advancing, step heel first. When retreating, step with the ball of the foot first. The heel or ball touch only for a moment. The foot flattens, and you shift onto the whole foot.

Keep the hips level; don't bob your body up and down.

Move fluidly.

Relax, breathe, and enjoy!

## *Drop the Qi, Cleanse the Organs*

### DVD 2, Chapter 3

Drop the Qi and Cleanse the Organs is the foundation of a system of qigong called Primordial Qigong (*Hunyuan Gong*). The purpose of the exercise is to purge the internal organs of toxic and stagnant qi and to unify your mind and qi with the intelligence and qi of the universe. To unify your internal qi with the qi of the universe is called "returning to the primordial state of being" (*qui yuan*).

#### Practice Reminders:

Stand in the Qigong Stance of Power with the feet shoulder width apart. Memorize four key terms: Intent, Eyes, Movement, Closing.

1. **Intent** (Yi). Send your mind into the universe.
2. **Eyes**. Open your eyes widely to see the qi of the universe.
3. **Movement**. Embrace the qi of the universe.

As your hands pause for a moment at a point slightly in front of the crown (front fontanel), turn your senses inwards, half-close the eyes, and mix the original energies of life (qi of the universe) with the primordial qi within your body, like fog blending with dew. As your hands descend, send the mixture through the internal organs, pausing over any organ that needs extra healing. After cleansing all of the organs, pause for a moment with the hands on either side of the navel. Imagine good, healing qi flowing into the energy reservoir behind the navel. Then, bend over until the hands reach the knees, simultaneously imagining that unneeded qi is discharged through the feet. Repeat for a total of nine times.

4. **Closing**. When you finish, rest your hands over the abdomen and quietly center and

calm the mind by focusing on the breath for about thirty seconds.

**Important Note:** Breathe slowly, evenly, and naturally throughout this practice. Your inhalation and exhalation do not have to match any particular phase of the exercise. In order to prevent "energy pollution", imagine that when you discharge unneeded energy, it goes into the ground and is burned up in the center of the earth.

## *One Finger Zen* DVD 2, Chapter 7

Although usually called One Finger Zen, the full name of this system is Shaolin Temple Internal Energy One Finger Zen (*Shaolin Nei Jin Yi Zhi Chan*). The Shaolin Temple is associated with Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism. Bodhidharma was an Indian Buddhist monk who brought the practice of Buddhist *jhana* (meditation) to China in the fifth century A.D. Jhana was pronounced "zen-na" in ancient China or zen for short. The full name of this qigong system means "a meditative internal energy healing system that trains the fingers and hands to sense and transmit qi."

One Finger Zen begins with a *mantra* (healing syllables or chant) OM AH HUNG, which may be chanted with one continuous exhalation or with three separate in-breaths before each syllable. This mantra invokes the power of creation (OM), the unfolding of creation (AH), and the withdrawal of the world into the primordial being (HUNG). It also invokes the presence and power of Kuan Yin, the Buddhist symbol of the healing power of compassion, caring, and love. (Listen to my Sounds True audio *Qigong Meditations* to learn the ancient Chinese song to Kuan Yin) The syllables have physical as well as spiritual effects. OM awakens the energy center between the eyebrows. AH

awakens the energy center in the throat. HUNG awakens the energy center in the heart.

### Practice Reminders

Stand in the Qigong Stance of Power.

- Lift the arms up from the sides of the body, and bring them overhead with palms touching. As you slowly float the arms down the front of the body, chant OM AH HUNG while you concentrate on the third eye, throat, and heart.
- *Lao gong* points (acupuncture points in the centers of the palms) face each other, raise to solar plexus.
- Push palms back, point fingers to the waist (the "belt meridian").
- Hands extend straight ahead while turning palms downwards.
- Five to ten minutes One Finger Zen standing meditation posture. Forearms are the height of the solar plexus. Your palms may be either flat or in a "stair" pattern in which the index fingers are slightly higher than the middle fingers, the middle fingers slightly higher than the ring fingers, and so on.
- Both palms remain facing down and move towards each other to align right *neiguan* (acupuncture point on inside of forearm, two inches from wrist, between the tendons) over left *wai guan* (acupuncture point opposite *nei guan* on outside of forearm). Hold for approximately thirty seconds.
- Palms face upwards, left *nei guan* faces up to align with right *wai guan* above it. Hold for approximately thirty seconds.
- Hands descend to lower abdomen, left *lao gong* facing up to align with right rear *lao gong* (on back of hand) above it. Hold for approximately thirty seconds.
- turn right palm down, *lao gong* facing *lao gong*. Hold for approximately thirty seconds. Raise right hand up to *ren zhong* acupuncture point, just below the nose. The hands are still lined up, one over the other, one hand below the navel, the other below the nose. Hold for approximately thirty seconds.
- Pulse the upper hand up and down three times, sensing or "listening" for any energetic response in the lower palm, upper palm, or between them. (Students commonly report sensations of warmth, pressure, or tingling.)
- Circle the upper palm three times one direction, three times the opposite direction, again listening to the energy between the hands.
- Extend the middle finger towards the lower palm. Pulse up and down three times. Listen to the energy.
- Circle the middle finger three times one way, three times the other, as though you are shining a beam of light on your lower palm. Listen to the energy.
- Open both hands into a flat palm position and bring them towards each other until the right palm is over the left.
- Extend the hands out in front of you.
- Make circling movements with both hands as though playing with an energy ball, three circles one way, three circles opposite direction.
- Separate arms to shoulder width, turn left palm downwards so that both palms now face down.
- Lower the arms to solar plexus height, hold the standing meditation posture for five to ten minutes.
- Repeat f to r, reversing sides (left hand moves over right hand).
- Float both arms down to the sides.

## *Tranquil Sitting and Visualization*

### CDs 1–5

On the accompanying CDs, we will be practicing two kinds of qigong meditation: *jing zuo*, "tranquil sitting" and *cun si*, "visualization."

In *jing zuo*, there is no object of meditation, nothing to concentrate on. You are just *being*, experiencing the nature of mind and awareness. Our minds are often like monkeys, flitting here and there, jumping from thought to thought, moving so quickly that we miss the scenery and lose enjoyment of life. In tranquil sitting, we learn to slow down, to "stop, look, and listen." It is the foundation for effective qigong.

The complementary practice, *can si*, consists of visualizations (that is, "healing imagery") that train intent (*yi*) and mental focus. You learn to experience a phenomenon—whether a body part, a tree, a subtle energy—fully because your whole being is concentrated. Normally, part of ourselves is distracted and scattered. We think about the dishes while cooking. We worry about finances while selecting furniture. We watch TV while running on the treadmill.

*Cun si* teaches us how to integrate consciousness, how to do one thing at a time and to do it well. It also opens the mind to a magical, transcendent realm beyond the ordinary senses. At first, we might visualize the body filled with starlight. Later, we simply see the stellar qi whenever we wish, like turning on an interior light switch. Our senses are no longer limited to the consensus reality created by our culture and language. *Cun si* is not imagination; it is, rather, a process that trains the mind to perceive realms normally hidden, but no less real.

## *Dispersing Stagnation: Self-Massage*

### DVD 1 Chapter 11, CD 2 Track 9

It is beneficial to conclude your qigong work-out

or meditations with self-massage, *an-mo gong* in Chinese. Self-massage means to lightly rub, chafe, or tap any areas of the body that are tight, congested, uncomfortable, or that need to be energetically awakened. Self-massage has been an important part of qigong from the most ancient times.

The most important areas to massage are the lower abdomen, the lower back, and the bottoms of the feet.

**Massaging the dan tian:** Place one palm on your abdomen, the other palm on top. Use your joined hands to make light circling movements, either eighteen or thirty-six times in one direction, and then the same number of times in the opposite direction. This technique is called *mo tan tian*, "massaging the dan tian," or *yuan qi gui yuan*, "returning the original qi to the origin."

**Massaging the gate of life:** Make circling motions with the fists or palms, rubbing the lower back. This technique is called *mo ming men*, "massaging the gate of life."

**Massaging the bubbling spring:** To massage the feet, use your palm to chafe across the middle of the foot. Then switch sides. You are rubbing, warming, and stimulating an important acupuncture point—the bubbling spring (*yang quan*), the first point on the kidney meridian. This point absorbs qi from the earth.

Self-massage, like conventional massage therapy, is relaxing. It also decreases stress and increases your energy level. You may creatively design your own self-massage techniques for any areas that feel tight. For example, if your legs are tired, rub the thighs and calves and lightly circle your knees until they are warm. If your shoulders are tight, lightly slap them with the fingers and then make caressing circles with the palms.



## CHAPTER 5 EXTERNAL QI HEALING

On the Qi Healing DVDs, we are learning how to use qi to heal others. However, external qi healers must also practice self-healing qigong to stay in an optimal, fully "charged" energy state. Regular qigong practice can make you a better example of positive healing energy and a more sensitive and effective healer. Very importantly, with regular qigong practice, you are in no danger of losing personal *energy*. Why is this true? Think of an electric circuit as a metaphor for qi. For electricity or qi to flow, the circuit must be:

**Grounded.** As a qigong metaphor, "grounded" means that you feel the ground under your feet. Imagine that you are a tree with deep roots. This image keeps fresh healing energy flowing through your body.

**Unbroken.** A broken circuit will not transmit electricity. Similarly, your inner electricity, the qi, must be fluid and circulating. The more relaxed and supple you are, the more energy can flow. The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Zi said that a stiff tree branch is easily broken. But a living tree branch, filled with the sap of life, is difficult to break.

**Insulated.** How do you insulate your wiring? Learn to conserve energy by not over-reacting or getting stressed out. In everyday life, use the minimum amount of strength or effort needed to complete any task. In other words, don't use a sledge hammer to swat a fly!

### The Qigong Stance of Power

The Qigong Stance of Power is simply another name for Standing Meditation. It is a standing position that incorporates the Three Tunings (see page 12).

**Remember that when you transmit qi, you are still practicing qigong.** In fact, a powerful External Qi Healing session should look, to the outsider, beautiful and graceful, as though you are doing a qigong dance around your seated or supine partner.

### External Qi Healing Preparation

The External Qi Healing preparation includes three qigong exercises:

1. Drop the Qi and Cleanse the Organs (*Jiang Qi Xi Zang Gong*)
2. Basic Standing Meditation (*Zhan Zhuang*) and Snake Standing Meditation (*She Xing Zhuang*)
3. One Finger Zen (*Yi Zhi Chan*).

Practice them in order. To shorten the workout, you may practice 1 followed by 2 or 3.

### Rules for the Qi Healer and Partner

These rules apply to both wellness treatments and methods of treating imbalance:

**Remove jewelry.** Remember to take off eyeglasses, rings, and jewelry (both healer and partner).

**Remain clothed.** All External Qi Healing treatments are practiced with both you and your partner fully clothed. Clothing does not block qi reception or transmission.

**Create the right environment.** Practice in an uncluttered, comfortable, and nurturing environment.

**Be aware of your eyes.** The healer's eyes are generally open. Your partner may have his or her eyes open or closed. Closing the eyes is generally preferred, because it helps the External Qi Healing recipient to tune in more easily to inner sensations, feelings, and symbolic images that may occur during healing.

**Tune into the power of love.** Qi is both energy and information. It carries your thoughts and feelings. Thus, whenever you treat another person, keep your mind tranquil, and maintain a compassionate and caring attitude. The ancient Taoists said, "If the wrong person uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way." This means that even a correct treatment method may be harmful if you transmit qi while dwelling on harmful feelings or thoughts such as resentment and anger. On the other hand, if you make a mistake in the "means" or External Qi Healing method, but you are the "right person"—that is, you have love in your heart—then the wrong means can still produce healing effects. Love is the greatest healing power. (This principle applies to the gentle and safe energy healing methods that I have chosen for the *Qi Healing* DVD program. Even love cannot override misapplication of invasive therapies. If a loving acupuncturist, pharmacist, or surgeon makes a serious mistake, you are in trouble!)

**Pay attention to your breathing.** The quieter, slower, and more tranquil your breathing, the more sensitive and effective the healing. This is true for both healer and partner.

**Staying Connected.** The healer should imagine that s/he is a hollow conduit for the qi of Heaven and Earth (the universe). S/he is like a radio that receives and transmits the appropriate signal. Because mind controls qi, if you maintain

the idea that you are connected to the qi of the universe, you will never use your own qi or be exhausted by External Qi Healing. In fact, you may find yourself refreshed.

**Make sure you're healthy.** The healer should not administer External Qi Healing treatments when pregnant or ill. (See "Answers to Commonly Asked Questions" on page 49.)

**Practice Reaching the Qi.** The healer should always practice *de qi* "reaching the qi" while assessing or treating. *De qi* means to use your mind and sensitivity to reach energetically through your partner's clothing and skin to the body's underlying current of life energy. When you touch this current, healing takes place. Sensing is healing.

**Let the request for healing happen.** A qi healer should not brag about healing abilities or try to convince or coerce others to accept his services. A person in need of healing must ask for healing (unless incapacitated by stroke, coma, or other condition).

**Offer comfort.** A healing session should be comfortable and enjoyable. Advise your partner to tell you if there is any discomfort or pain so that you may change or cease treatment.

**Know your limitations.** Make referrals to licensed health-care practitioners whenever necessary. All healing systems have strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. No healer or therapy can treat all human ills.

## Wellness Treatments

Wellness treatments are for general healing and well-being. They treat the whole body rather than a particular condition. They are energy "tune-ups." Wellness treatments, although wonderful by themselves, may also be integrated into therapeutic healing sessions. When I am treating imbalance, I like to start or conclude a session with one of the wellness treatments.

### **Balancing the Yin and the Yang**

Your partner is seated in a chair. You are standing in the Qigong Stance of Power beside her, with your two hands facing each other, just above your partner's head. Slowly lower the hands down the front and back midline of your partner's body, with each hand about six inches from your partner's clothing. Sense the energy field. Follow the contours of the energy field. Sometimes your hands will seem to push away, sometimes they will draw closer together. Do not attempt to change or manipulate what you sense. When you reach the sacrum and lower abdomen, release the gesture and start again at the head. Make a total three passes from crown to abdomen.

This technique balances the qi of the Governing Channel (or Vessel) and Conception Channel, two major qi meridians. The Governing Channel, the superhighway of yang qi (warm, active energy), runs up the spine and over the crown, ending at the upper palate. The Conception Channel, the superhighway of yin qi (cool, receptive energy) starts at the tip of the tongue and moves down the front center of the body, passing the navel, and ending at the perineum. Balancing the Yin and the Yang also balances the qi of the body's major energy centers, including the three *dan tian* of Taoism (third eye, heart, and lower abdomen) and the *chakras* of Indian yoga.

### **Waving**

Your partner may be standing, or he may sit in a chair with the feet flat on the ground. Stand in front of your partner; stretch one arm forwards, palm facing down. Your fingertips should be about a foot from your partner's body or any distance that allows you to sense the warmth, energy, or qi of your partner. Your other arm is at your side with the fingertips pointed towards

the ground; imagine that this arm connects with a limitless source of qi in the earth. Remember the principles of the Qigong Stance of Power: do not lock your knees or elbows; stand straight and relaxed; breathe abdominally.

Wave your extended arm slowly up and down, intending that qi reach from your partner's head to his feet. Continue making broad sweeping movements with your arm from one side of the body to the other and then back again to the original side. Then go behind your partner. Again sweep up and down, from one side of the body to the other. When you finish, stand at your partner's side, with your palm over his crown. Make small circling movements over the crown, several times counter-clockwise and several times clockwise.

Waving helps to release pain, discomfort, and stagnant qi. It encourages a smooth flow of qi through the meridians.

### **Cleansing and Recharging the Major Organs with Qi and Light**

Your partner is lying on her back on a comfortable surface or on a massage table. You are seated or standing beside her, as necessary. Throughout this treatment method, you may transmit qi with one or both hands.

Use your hands to slowly sweep your partner from head to foot. Imagine that your qi reaches into your partner's body and drives out unneeded and toxic qi from the entire body, especially the internal organs. The impure qi is emitted from your partner's feet. It is as if you are doing the self-healing qigong "Drop the Qi and Cleanse the Organs" to another person.

Now place your hands a few inches above your partner's liver. While holding them still, send green light through your hands into her liver. Maintain this position for a few minutes,

until you can visualize clearly that the liver is glowing with healthy green light. Then bring your hands over the heart. Imagine red light flowing into her heart. When the heart is glowing with healthy red light, move on to the spleen. As you hold your hands for a few minutes over the spleen, yellow light fills the spleen. Then go to the Lungs. White light flows from your hands into your partner's lungs. Move your hands over the kidneys. Transmit healing ocean blue light into the kidneys.

#### Quick Reminder:

Liver-Green  
Heart-Red  
Spleen-Yellow  
Lungs-White  
Kidneys-Blue

**Important Note:** In paired organs, such as the lungs or kidneys, you may treat both sides at once or hold your hand(s) over the left or right organ first, and then transmit qi to the other side.

### Qi Assessment

How do we sense if a person's qi is balanced and healthy?

During all forms of qi assessment, note the *temperature, rate, and quality* of qi near different parts of the body.

- **Temperature:** hot (too much energy) or cold (too little energy). Health is a state of gentle warmth.
- **Rate:** the pulse of qi. Can you feel a gentle vibration or tingling? This is generally a sign of healthy qi.
- **Quality:** What is your subjective impression of your partner's qi? Is it clear or turbid, happy or sad, fluid or stuck, deep or

superficial, silky smooth or coarse like sandpaper, etc.

1. **Hands on Spine.** Your partner is seated. Place one palm on the upper spine, just below the large seventh cervical vertebra in the neck (Governing Channel acupoint #14, Da Zhui). Your other palm is on the lower back, opposite the navel, an area called the ming men "gate of life." Sense the temperature, rate, and quality of qi. "Hands on the Spine" gives you a general impression of your partner's energy. Try to remember your impression. Each of the following assessment methods will give you more details.

**Important:** This is the only assessment method in which you physically touch the body. Your touch is a very light and gentle. Light touch communicates caring and connection, like a warm handshake. However, it is generally inadvisable to practice this technique if your partner has suffered physical, especially sexual, abuse, as any form of touch may be threatening.

2. **Intuitive Assessment.** Your partner is seated. Hold your hands a few inches from your partner's body, at a distance that allows the clearest sensation of energy. Move your hands slowly to sense the qi field all over your partner's body. Follow the contours, the mountains and valleys, of energy. Make a mental note of any unusual imbalance in temperature, rate, and quality. The next assessment method will confirm or clarify your assessment.

3. **Differential Assessment.** Your partner may be seated or supine. As you hold the tip of a finger or toe, your other hand is held a few inches above a related internal organ. Hold a man's left finger or toe, a woman's right. You, the healer, may use either hand to connect with the finger/toe and either hand to connect with the qi of the organ. For example, to assess a man's

lung qi, hold his left thumb tip lightly between any of your fingers. Your other hand is held over the lungs. Move your hand slowly around and through the qi-field of the lungs to sense the temperature, rate, and quality.

## Finger-Toe Correspondence

### *Hand,*

Thumb-Lungs

Index Finger-Large Intestine

Middle Finger-Pericardium (the fibrous sac that encloses the heart) and Reproductive System (Prostate, Ovaries)

Ring Finger-Third Eye (Intuition) and Thyroid

Little Finger-Small Intestine and Heart

### *Feet*

Big Toe-Liver and Spleen

Second Toe-Stomach

Third Toe-Blood Circulation (not used in assessment)

Fourth Toe-Gall Bladder

Little Toe-Bladder

Bubbling Well Acupoint (bottom of foot, one third of the way from the toes to the heel, in the depression formed when the toes curl)-Kidneys

## Hand Gestures

You can vary the intensity of qi treatment by using various hand positions. The major ones include:

- **Flat Palm.** Gives a "broad-beam" treatment over a large area. Qi is transmitted from the entire inside of hand, including the fingers. Or qi may be transmitted from the center of the palm (*huyong* point) to your partner's body.
- **Fingers.** All of the fingertips of a hand or hands point towards your partner's body. This provides a slightly more intense beam of qi.

- **Single Finger.** The index or middle fingers may be used to send an intense and concentrated "laser" beam of qi. Or the index and middle fingers may be extended together, with the other fingers folded into the palm. This gesture is called "Sword Fingers" (*Jain Zhi*). Single Finger or Sword Finger gestures send qi to a small area. For example, they may be used over a precise spot of tension or blockage (an "energy cyst") or over an acupuncture point.

Acupuncturists may use these gestures to transmit qi into an acupuncture needle. The fingers are held a few inches from the needle, sensing the qi field around the needle.

## Hand Movements

The healer can vary the quality of projected qi and thus the effect of treatment by using any of the following movements:

**Energy Field.** One palm is held in the qi field on one side of a distressed or imbalanced area, the other palm is opposite. You are essentially doing Standing Meditation with the imbalanced area between your hands. Your body and hands remain completely still. *This method is the safest of all External Qi Healing methods.* It creates a resonant effect, like one tuning fork causing another to vibrate. You are not attempting to transmit qi. You are just caringly present. If, after assessment, you are unsure what method to use, remember the Energy Field. It may be a complete treatment all by itself.

**Circling.** Circling your hand or fingers clockwise (from your viewpoint) is called "tonifying." It adds heat, energy, and stimulation. It is indicated when you sense coolness or low energy over an area of the body. Counterclockwise circling of the hands or fingers is called "sedating."

It takes away excess heat, excess energy, and inflammation. It is indicated when you sense heat or excess energy over an area of the body.

**Pulsing.** Slowly and gently pulse the palm open and slightly closed over any area of the body where you sense stagnation or poor circulation of qi. Pulsing stimulates qi and circulation without adding heat. Think of energy being emitted from your lao gong point whenever your hand opens. Advanced Variation: Acupressure and acupuncture therapists may pulse qi by moving either the lao gong point, single fingers, or sword fingers repeatedly towards and away from the acupuncture point or tip of the acupuncture needle.

**Waving.** Use your fingers to wave up and down or side to side over a tense, painful, or congested area. Waving sweeps away blockages. The gesture is identical to that used in the Waving Wellness Treatment.

**Scooping.** Use your cupped hand to scoop away concise areas of dense, knotted, toxic, or clearly unneeded qi—the qigong equivalent of a tumor, bone spur, or cyst. This is one of the most powerful External Qi Healing techniques and should only be used when clearly indicated by your assessment.



## CHAPTER 6 ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Is Qigong the same as T'ai Chi?** Yes and no.

Qigong is at least 3,000 years old. T'ai Chi (also written Taiji Quan) is both qigong and martial arts. Although exercises similar to T'ai Chi may have been practiced by Taoists 1,000 years ago, today's popular styles of T'ai Chi were created in the 1600s. T'ai Chi consists of four main stages of training: the slow motion exercise for health, coordination, and balance; push-hands sensitivity training; self-defense; and weapons (sword, saber, staff, spear).

**What is the difference between Qigong and Chi Kung?** The spelling. Qigong is the standard way to represent the Chinese characters in English.

**Are physicians interested in Qigong?** Yes. I have trained many physicians and lecture regularly at medical conferences. Right now more than two thirds of medical schools in the U.S. offer courses in alternative medicine, often including Qigong.

**What do you think about doctors who are skeptical of Qigong?** They are passing away from hardening of the paradigms!

**Can you really learn Qigong from audio/visual media?** Yes! The styles taught on this program were carefully selected out of hundreds

of Qigong styles because they *can* be learned without a teacher.

**Are there any dangers?** Only if you use Qigong instead of necessary medical treatment or if you practice excessively or forcefully. Qigong is generally as safe as taking a walk. Remember the importance of patience, moderation, and common sense.

**Are you giving away the secrets in this program?** The only secret in Qigong is practice! No one can practice for you. Even if you read the "secrets" or see the exercises on a DVD, you can only learn the mystery and wonder of Qigong through regular practice. Sorry, but there is no instant secret to power, and there are no real shortcuts in life.

**I have already studied Qigong. Do your products teach something new?** Some of China's most noted grand-masters have attended my courses and use my books and Sounds True products. Since there are many millions of Qigong practitioners and thousands of styles, I doubt that you have already learned my system. Everyone has something new to teach.

**How long does it take to become a Qigong teacher?** Generally a minimum of 3 to 4 years. You may contact the Qigong Research & Practice Center (See the Resources at the end of this book) for a description of the Teacher

Training program. I personally instruct all teacher trainees.

**At what age can someone begin Qigong?**

**Until what age can one practice?** Young children already know Qigong. They are aware of the life energy inside and around them. They do not need Qigong exercises nor do they have the patience for it. As a parent, you can reduce their future need for Qigong by spending time with them, loving them, cooking healthy food and creating a healthy lifestyle, and affirming the importance of their dreams. Young people generally become interested in Qigong after age 16.

I have students who began practicing in their 90s. You are never too old to learn.

**I am disabled. Can I practice Qigong?**

Absolutely. All Qigong exercises can be practiced from a chair or wheelchair. If movement is difficult you can create simple variations. And everyone can practice the healing meditations and visualizations.

**Buddhism is so popular. Why do we never hear anything about Taoism?** Taoism is more difficult to fit in a neat intellectual box. It teaches people to be self-reliant, content, and open to the beauty and wisdom of nature. Neither monasteries nor gurus are necessary for Taoist cultivation. The essence of Taoism is summarized in the phrase, "See the unbleached silk, embrace the uncarved wood, lessen selfishness, reduce desire." In other words, appreciate the raw and wild qualities of life rather than trying to carve and manipulate life according to selfish desires. Find contentment in simplicity. My audio course *Taoism : Essential Teachings* explores the history, philosophy, and practice of Taoism.

**What is your opinion of feng shui?** Feng shui really works. It teaches you how to create a more beautiful and peaceful home and how architecture and landscape influence your health, happiness, and prosperity. I studied feng shui during the 1970s as part of my apprenticeship with Taoist Abbot Huang and became one of the first feng shui practitioners/teachers in the United States. I summarize Abbot Huang's teachings and my most recent feng shui research on the Sounds True audio program *The Beginner's Guide to Feng Shui*.

**I don't know Chinese medicine or acupuncture points. Can I practice External Qi Healing?**

Yes. Chinese energy healing techniques were founded by indigenous Chinese shamans and Taoists many thousands of years ago, long before the laws and meridians of Chinese medicine were codified or widely understood. Taoists originally had their own healing methods based on prayer (*zhu you*), meditation, and qigong. Today, it is possible to practice External Qi Healing according to the model of Traditional Chinese Medicine—which requires knowledge of meridians—or you can practice more intuitively, similar to the ancient Taoists. This program emphasizes the latter. (The relationship of External Qi Healing to ancient Chinese medicine is discussed in my book *The Way of Qigong*.)

**I am a licensed health care professional. Can I use External Qi Healing methods in my work?** Absolutely. External Qi Healing methods cultivate a healing presence and a deeper understanding of health and illness. For example, if you are an acupuncturist, qi assessment can confirm traditional Chinese medical diagnostics (such as the pulse and tongue color) and add

tremendous power to your treatment. If you are a psychotherapist, External Qi Healing treatments may help some clients feel more centered and relaxed. Unfortunately, psychotherapists may be permitted to practice only those methods that do not involve direct physical contact. (United States licensing boards prohibit psychotherapists from touching clients.)

**Can I do External Qi Healing to myself?** You cannot project qi to heal yourself because that would be like trying to lift your feet off the ground with your hands. You need outside input, an outside source of power. The way to build and harmonize your own qi is through personal qigong healing exercises and meditations.

**Do you have to believe in qi for External Qi Healing to work?** No. It even works on skeptics and animals.

**Is External Qi Healing scientific?** There are thousands of scientific abstracts documenting the healing effects of External Qi Healing. Here are a few examples:

*Pneumocystis carinii*, an opportunistic infection that often afflicts human AIDS patients, was injected into 80 rats. The rats were divided into a control group and another group treated by a qigong master. Both groups were given the same standard diet and medication. 92.3 percent of the control group developed the infection. Only 50 percent of the treated group developed the infection. In other words, External Qi Healing prevented a significant number of the animals from becoming sick.

In another experiment rat brain cells (neurons) in a cell culture were exposed to toxic free radicals—highly reactive molecules that would normally damage the cells. (Free radicals

are a major cause of human aging.) External Qi Healing protected a significant number of cells from damage, compared to controls.

At a Navy hospital in Beijing, laboratory animals with diabetes were treated by a Qi healer. After 4 weeks of regular therapy, urinary glucose levels decreased to almost normal levels.

**How long is a External Qi Healing session?**

Qi assessment includes three methods: hands on spine, intuitive assessment, and differential assessment. The entire assessment process generally takes approximately twenty minutes. Treatments may last from ten to forty minutes.

**Is External Qi Healing the same as Reiki or Therapeutic Touch?** They are all different. Reiki and Therapeutic Touch are beautiful and effective systems of healing. However, they are recent creations or innovations and do not have the long history of External Qi Healing. Nor do they include time-tested personal training methods by which the healer can systematically increase the sensitivity and power of treatment.

**Can pregnant women practice or receive External Qi Healing?** Many qigong teachers see no harm in allowing pregnant women to practice healing others with qi or to receive emitted qi. However, *I advise against it*. I personally believe pregnant women should not take the slightest chance of depleting themselves by projecting qi to others. Nor should they receive qi from an energy healer unless their own intuition tells them that it is necessary. Personal qigong practice is another story. Chinese doctors believe that T'ai Chi and other kinds of gentle qigong may help a pregnant woman stay in good health and have an easier delivery.

**Can I practice External Qi Healing when I am ill?** No. Take care of yourself. You should never attempt to transmit qi when you have a fever, are in the acute phase of an illness, or are depleted from serious or chronic disease (i.e. cancer, chronic pain, heart failure, etc.). Students with medically manageable long-term illnesses that do not interfere with ordinary life activities (i.e. diabetes, some forms of arthritis) may practice External Qi Healing. You should never transmit qi when you are emotionally upset or depressed. Students who are being supervised and *successfully* treated for psychiatric disorders may also be able to practice. However, I strongly advise anyone with a serious medical problem to consult with their physician and health-care providers to determine if External Qi Healing training, practice, or treatments is recommended.

**Do external qi healers practice distant healing, projecting qi to a person far away?** Some do. Distant External Qi Healing techniques are mentioned in Taoist texts as early as the fourth century A.D. Distant healing is, however, beyond the scope of this program.

**How many Qigong teachers does it take to screw in a light bulb?** Only one, but a hundred others will say, "No, not like that!"

## Closing Words

As you practice the self-healing and External Qi Healing methods covered in this program, you may find yourself thinking "I knew that already," or, "Of course, that makes sense!" Energy healing is part of the common heritage of humanity. It was practiced by the ancient Egyptians. It is still practiced by American Indians, African tribes, and Australian aborigines.

One of the greatest benefits of learning qigong is that you awaken your own hidden potentials and learn more about who you are. As you tap into the well of universal qi, you increase your sense of belonging, of being at home in the world. Qi, like breath, is the foundation of life. We use it every day but are seldom aware of it. It is the most ordinary thing in the universe, yet the source of the most extraordinary insight and energy.



## CHAPTER 7 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON A QIGONG LIFE

It is hard to believe that I ever *began* qigong—it is so much a part of my life. Nor can I imagine

a time when the practice will end or the learning will stop.

My introduction to Chinese culture was the result of a "mistake." In 1968, I attended a weekend seminar at Bucks County Seminar House, a country retreat center in Pennsylvania, with the renowned author and Buddhist scholar Alan Watts. At age 16 I was the youngest participant. During one of the lectures, Alan spoke about the relationship between music and meditation. Because I was, even then, an enthusiastic student of western classical music, I listened attentively.

"Music, like meditation, requires a focus on the present. There is no goal when you listen to music. You don't listen to music to reach the end; if that were true, music would consist of nothing but finales. Rather, like meditation, it is an unfolding of the Eternal Now." To follow up on these themes, Alan recommended a book called *Sound and Symbol* (Princeton University Press) by Zuckerkandl, a German musicologist.

As I rode home on the subway that afternoon, I realized that in my haste I had mistakenly purchased another book of the same title but by a different author. Instead of a book about music, I found myself reading one of the rarest and finest introductions to the Chinese language, *Sound and Symbol* by

Bernhard Karlgren. Before the subway ride ended, I was hooked. I realized that by studying a foreign language I could learn how language molds categories of thought that influence one's perception of reality. Perhaps I could, in the process, free myself of the preconceptions hidden in my own language, English, and learn to perceive the world more truly. Within a few months, I began to study the Chinese language and, not long thereafter, qigong.

As I reflect on this story, I realize that it explains not only how I began Qigong but why I have continued. Foreign language study can clear the mind of culture-bound assumptions. Similarly, Qigong liberates the student from preconceptions held in the body—immature and inappropriate strategies for living frozen in posture and breathing. The qigong posture has deep psychological implications. To stand straight is to express confidence and strength. To breathe slowly is to take life as it comes, without allowing memory or expectation to interfere. As the body becomes quiet, the mind becomes quiet. The qi flows not only within the body, but between oneself and Nature. In breathing, the external world becomes you. Yet you do not own it, you let it go and return breath to its source—what Chinese call the Tao.

In 1973 Alan Watts accepted me as one of five scholarship students to study Taoism with him at his library in Muir Woods, California. It was an idyllic summer, each day began with early morning meditation, a Japanese Tea Ceremony,

and then three or more hours of lectures and discussion. Afterwards, I would teach Taiji to the group and sometimes stay for lunch. Alan became a mentor and friend, and on his recommendation, I published my first magazine articles in *Dragonfly Quarterly*, a journal of haiku poetry. Alan passed on in the fall of that year.

A year later I had a life-changing experience while teaching my first seminar at a wellness center in Amherst, Massachusetts. One evening, during the dinner break, I decided to take a walk outside; snow was falling and hanging heavy on the pine trees. Wouldn't it be wonderful, I thought, to practice qigong in this environment?

As I began, something very odd happened. Normally, I experienced qigong movements as arising from deep within, generated by the power of the breath and by the slow shifting of the weight. But this time *I disappeared*; I felt that I was not doing qigong. Rather, the falling snow, the trees, the air, the ground itself were unfolding through the various postures. Nature was practicing qigong, and I was just part of the process. I became a sphere of energy whose center was everywhere.

This was a kind of spiritual rebirth in qigong; I learned that mind and body could become truly empty, that inside and outside could become a unified field of awareness. I cannot claim the experience as my own, because the experience was without any distinct parts—no self, no I. But I do know that my qigong has never been the same. Thus, another key to my motivation and, I hope, to your motivation: practice qigong to learn that you are part of Nature. When you breathe, it is nature that breathes you!

My commitment to Qigong also has much to do with the effect it has had on my health. I was a weak and sickly child, a victim of the poor medical practices of the time. Doctors

prescribed antibiotics for every cold and scratchy throat, leading to a downward spiral of poorer and poorer health. Qigong cured my chronic bronchitis, weak immune system, poor sleep, and low energy. I look for ways to bring these same benefits to my students.

I applaud the scientists who are looking for the *mechanism* of Qigong—how it works—and who are designing experiments to validate Qigong's efficacy as a form of complementary medicine. Science has already demonstrated Qigong's powerful healing effects on cancer, heart disease, and chronic pain. However, people who practice Qigong with an open mind do not need proof to know that it works. They *experience* it. Science has yet to prove that the sun exists. Yet this does not prevent us from enjoying its light and warmth. Yes, trust science. But trust yourself even more.



## GLOSSARY

**Assessment.** the process of sensing the quality of a person's qi. The term "diagnosis" is generally reserved for medical practitioners.

**Bai Hui.** "Hundred Convergences" point number 20 on the Governing Channel, located at the crown of the head, approximately five inches behind the front hairline at the midpoint of a line connecting the earlobes. A spiritual acupuncture point that connects the body with the energy of the sky.

**Bubbling Well** or Bubbling or Gushing Spring. The first acupuncture point on the kidney meridian, found on the bottom of foot, one third of the way from the toes to the heel, in the depression formed when the toes curl.

**Conception Channel** (*Ren Mai*). The body's major yin qi meridian, running along the front midline of the body, from the perineum to the tongue. A common focus of meditation.

**Dan Tian.** "Elixir Field", an energy center or reservoir of qi. Although commonly referring to the abdomen, there are also dan tian between the eyebrows (upper dan tian), in the chest (middle dan tian), and elsewhere.

**External Qi Healing.** a branch of qigong that teaches how to assess another person's qi and how to project qi to restore health and balance.

**Five Elements or Phases (Wu Xing).** Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water, the interacting forces that are the basis of all natural and biological cycles.

**Governing Channel** (*Du Mai*). the body's major yang qi meridian, running along the spine, over the crown, and ending at the upper palate. A common focus of meditation.

**Healing.** restoring the body, mind, and/or spirit to balance and harmony. "Curing" is a medical term that refers to a measurable and physiological change from a state of disease to a state of improved health. Healing means making whole and includes quality of life. One may be healed *and* cured or one may be healed without being cured and vice versa. I contend that healing is the proper focus of qigong.

**Jing.** life essence energy; the germ of life, vitality, and sexual energy. One of the three treasures that animate the body. A yin form of qi.

**Lao Gong.** "Work Palace", an acupuncture point in the center of the palm, found by bending the ring finger into the palm and noting where the fingertip meets the palm. Point #8 on the Pericardium Meridian.

**Meridians.** the subtle energy channels that carry qi throughout the body.

**Ming Men.** "Gate of Life" the fourth acupuncture point on the Governing Channel, on the lower back opposite the navel, below the second lumbar vertebra. Stimulates and regulates kidney qi.

**Nei Guan.** "Inner Gate", the sixth acupuncture point on Pericardium Meridian, located on the inside of the forearm, two inches from the wrist, between the tendons.

**Qi.** life energy, vital energy, breath of life.

**Qigong.** the art and science of refining the qi through movement, breathing, and meditation.

**Shen.** spirit, spirituality, awareness, intuition. One of the three treasures that animate the body. A yang form of qi.

**Taoism.** the ancient Chinese philosophy and religion founded by Lao Zi in the fourth century B.C. Tao means spiritual mystery and the way of nature. Taoists learn to commune with this mystery and seek harmony with nature through ritual, art, and meditative practices, including qigong. The goal of Taoism is to become an Immortal (*xian*), a sage who is attuned to the timeless processes of nature.

**Three Treasures (San Bao).** the three major energies of life: jing, qi, and shen.

**Wai Guan.** "Outer Gate", an acupuncture point on the back of the forearm, opposite the Nei Guan.

**Yang.** one of the polar principles that create life. Yang qualities include light, creative, warm, solar, masculine, active, outside. Excess

yang may result in fullness, congestion, or inflammation.

**Yin.** one of the polar principles that create life. Yin qualities include dark, receptive, cool, lunar, Feminine, passive, inside. Excess yin may result in depletion or weakness.



## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER TRAINING

For educational materials and information about Ken Cohen's national and international teaching schedule, contact:

**The Qigong Research & Practice Center**  
P.O. Box 1727  
Nederland, CO 80466 USA  
303-258-0971  
[www.qigonghealing.com](http://www.qigonghealing.com)

### To find a teacher in your area:

- Check the listings at [www.qigonginstitute.org](http://www.qigonginstitute.org).
- Read listings in *Qi: The Journal of Traditional*  

- Seek referrals from a Chinese medical school or acupuncturist.
- Investigate continuing education programs at your local college or university or in the various holistic and alternative newspapers common in most cities.

What about qigong organizations? There are several, such as the National Qigong Association, and they provide important networking and information services. You can find them on the web. Personally, I do not like large organizations, as the larger the organization, the more likely that it will become antithetical to the principles on which it was founded. Thus, large churches become greedy and impersonal; universities

discourage learning in favor of careers linked with funding institutions, large democracies erode personal freedom and ignore the needs of minorities. The list goes on and on. Maybe I am wrong. Perhaps someday I will join a large qigong group or trade my independent scholar's life for faculty meetings. But not yet.

Remember that an advertisement is not a guarantee of quality. When you visit a qigong school, all that matters is your feeling about it. Apply the same standards of excellence, professionalism, and ethics that you would apply to any other field. Is the teacher personable or on an ego trip? Does the teacher know his or her subject and communicate it clearly? Are the fees reasonable? Is there evidence of both open-mindedness and critical thinking, or is the school a cult? Does the male teacher treat female students with respect, and vice versa?

### Also by Ken Cohen

*The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Ch'ien Energy Healing* (Ballantine Books) Includes comprehensive information on the philosophy, science, and practice of qigong for healing self and others. Available at your local bookstore or you may purchase a personally inscribed edition through the Qigong Research & Practice Center.

*Honoring the Medicine: The Essential Guide to Native American Healing* (Ballantine Books)

Published by Sounds True

*Audio*

*Chi Kung Meditations*

*Taoist Healing Imagery*

*Healthy Breathing*

*The Beginner's Guide to Healthy Breathing*

*The Beginner's Guide to Feng Shui*

*The Power of Qi*

*The Practice of Qigong Meditation and Healing*

*Taoism: Essential Teachings of the Way and Its Power*

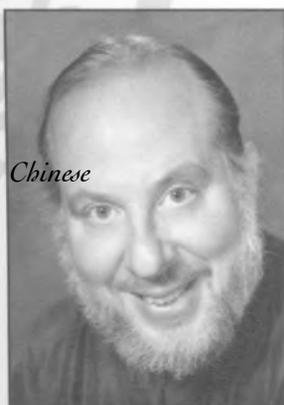
*Native Wisdom: 7 Keys to Health and Happiness*

*Video and DVD*

*Qigong: Traditional Chinese Exercises to Heal the Body,  
Mind, and Spirit (included in kit)*

*Qi Healing: Energy Medicine Techniques to Heal  
Yourself and Others (included in kit)*

## ABOUT KENNETH COHEN, M.A., M.S.TH.



Ken Cohen is a renowned health educator, Qigong Master, and scholar/practitioner of indigenous medicine with more than thirty-five years experience. A former collaborator with Alan Watts, he is the author of the internationally acclaimed books *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Energy Healing* and *Honoring the Medicine: The Essential Guide to Native American Healing* (both published by Random House) as well as more than 200 journal articles. Ken graduated from the William C.C. Chen School of T'ai Chi Ch'uan in 1974 and completed advanced studies in Taoism at the University of California. He speaks and reads the Chinese language. Ken was the principal apprentice to Dr. Huang Gengshi, acupuncturist and Taoist Abbot from China's sacred mountains. In the 1980s he enrolled in the theology program at the New Seminary (NYC) and graduated in 1989 as an ordained interfaith minister, with an advanced degree in spiritual therapies.

On Native American reservations, Ken is highly respected as a practitioner of traditional Native American medicine. He trained extensively with several Cherokee medicine people and also worked with elders among the Seneca, Cree, and other nations. In 1987, he was formally adopted by a Cree Indian family from Saskatchewan, Canada.

The winner of the leading international award in complementary and alternative medicine, *The Ebner and Alyce Green Award for Innovation in Energy Medicine*, Ken Cohen is a world leader in the dialogue between spirituality and science. He was one of nine "exceptional healers" studied in Menninger Clinic experiments. He has lectured at medical schools, scientific conferences, and numerous universities. Ken's sponsors have included the American Cancer Society, the Association of Asian Research Scholars, the Canadian Ministry of Health, the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, and the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine. He lives among pines, aspens, flowing streams, and wild columbine at 9,000 feet elevation in the Rocky Mountains.