

# **Chinese Inner Alchemy & Medical Qigong**



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## **Qigong (氣功) Introduced**

### **The Inner and Outer Universe**

We are parts of a vast network of universal intelligence, ranging from the tiniest subatomic particles to the spiraling galaxies. This web of natural phenomena, all flowing together in the most magnificent harmony, has quantum physicists and mystics alike in awe.

There is a constant play, interaction, and exchange between the inner universe of our experience (microcosm) and the outer universe (macrocosm). Qigong is the practice of creating and maintaining harmony within and between these internal and external universes. Our inner universe is composed of experiences such as physical sensations, physical or mental energy, thoughts, emotions, and intentions. Our external universe encompasses the thoughts, emotions, and actions of others, as well as social, political, and economic trends, the surrounding environment, weather conditions, and the seasons. Qigong is the science and art of bringing the internal and external environment into balance and harmony, creating an abundance of health, longevity, and inner wisdom.

### **What is Qigong?**

Qigong literally means "energy skill" or "energy manipulation." It is the ancient science and art of working with the subtle energy of earth, heaven, and one's self. Qigong incorporates simple yet powerful postures or movements, along with the breath and the focus of one's mind intention to achieve greater health, vitality, awareness, concentration, balance, tranquility, stillness of mind, and subtle awareness.

Along with Acupuncture, Herbs, Dietetics, and Asian Bodywork, Qigong is considered one of the five branches of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and has a history going as far back as 5,000 years. There are three varieties, or schools, of Qigong, all of which overlap to varying degrees.

- **Martial Qigong** (Nei Gong) – Focuses on structure and alignment of bones, tendons, ligaments
- **Medical Qigong** – Focuses on health and longevity
- **Spiritual Qigong** (Shen Gong) – Focuses on mind concentration, refinement of one's essence, and the cultivation of virtue.

It is important to remember that these categories are merely a mental construct for helping us understand the multifaceted nature of practice. In reality, a complete practice includes a blending and merging of each of the three schools of Qigong into a unified whole. To put it another way, one may think of Martial Qigong as the foundation, Medical Qigong as the house, and Spiritual Qigong as the conscious presence that dwells in the house. All three are absolutely important and interdependent with one another.

### **Martial Qigong**

Martial Qigong includes practices to cultivate awareness in structure, alignment, and linkage of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual body. Typically, these practices are designed to improve performance in the martial arts, usually the internal schools, such as Taiji, Ba Gua, and Hsing Yi. With the internal arts, emphasis is placed on physical, energetic, emotional, mental, and spiritual coordination and integration. This creates a unity of movement on all levels of a person's being, rather than merely at the physical, such that movements are integrated and whole rather than disjointed and separated. At the martial level, these forms may be used to condition the body to withstand injury and attack, while achieving a more potent and focused ability to attack an opponent. Additional goals include increased stamina, developing hidden and mysterious power,

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integrated speed, balance, root, and an astute sense of physical and energetic boundaries. Typically, the focus is on developing skills that prove vital in martial arts forms, competitions, and demonstrations. Additionally, however, martial art skills also serve as an integral part of Medical and Spiritual Qigong, as will be explained later in “The Spirit within Martial Arts” section.

Three types of power are developed in the course of training, including Obvious Power, Hidden Power, and Mysterious Power.

### Obvious Power

Obvious Power is derived purely from physical and muscular strength. Most of us are accustomed to this kind of power, as it is the most apparent, gross, and physical, and the easiest to increase. This power depends purely on the strength of the muscles, which can easily be developed through bodybuilding, strength training, and standard exercise. While it is important to have strong and healthy muscles, this kind of power lacks integration and coordination.

### Hidden Power

Hidden Power is derived from the proper integration and alignment of bones, joints, ligaments, and tendons. Unlike Obvious Power, the muscles are integrated into the whole physical structure and the body and mind move as one fully integrated unit. On the physical level, Hidden Power is pure physics in motion. Hidden Power refers to an *embodied* understanding of bones, joints, ligaments, and tendons, along with force, mass, and acceleration as well as torque, moment of inertia, and angular acceleration. It is the art of maintaining maximum structure and alignment, while using the least amount of effort for maximal effect, often “borrowing” force and momentum from the opponent to produce the desired results. More than this however, Hidden Power also includes the embodied understanding of the body’s internal and external energetic pathways, and an astute knowing of how to align them while in motion to gather, control, and discharge Qi in the most efficient manner.

At a martial level, Hidden Power is used for self-defense and attack. In terms of self-defense, one utilizes the astute knowledge of body mind integration and physics in motion to stay out of harm’s way and in a constant state of maximal physical and energetic readiness and alertness. In terms of attack, one uses assessment skills, the astute understanding of energetic anatomy, and Traditional Chinese Medicine theory to paralyze the opponent by striking specific acupuncture points, meridian pathways, and the internal organs. At a medical level, Hidden Power is used to help people in two ways. First, an *embodied* understanding of Hidden Power aids the doctor in maintaining proper structure and alignment while treating the patient, thus enabling the greatest ability to affect the patient. Second, the doctor is able to affect the patient’s health via the acupuncture points, meridians, and internal organs. Both of these aspects of Hidden Power will be explained later in greater detail.

### Mysterious Power

Mysterious Power is derived purely from one’s intention and mind concentration. This is the absolute highest level of training that one can achieve. At the martial level, one is able to attack an opponent with the mind, tapping into their emotional and energetic matrix and/or nervous system. One has the ability to read their every move ahead of time, manipulate their energy and unprocessed emotions, or override their energetic and nervous system causing a temporary period of shock and confusion. Since this is pure mind intent, it may be done during overt physical combat or subtly without ever having to engage the opponent physically. On the medical level, a Qigong doctor is able to tap into the emotional and energetic matrix of the patient purely with his or her mind. The doctor has an ability to read the patient’s state of health and disease, guide them to resolve their unprocessed emotions, release energetic patterns of disharmony, and work with their energetic system to restore health and balance, all purely with mind intent. On the spiritual level, one has an ability to uplift and help people purely with one’s clear mind and presence, which is the highest application of Mysterious Power.

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I was fortunate to experience the latter while traveling with my Guru, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi, commonly known as Amma, Ammachi, or the hugging saint. During the course of these travels, I was able to witness the powerful state of presence that She holds while thousands of people approach Her one by one, day after day, all of them looking for solace, comfort, blessings, and reassurance. Besides the fact that Her energy is directly palpable as Divine presence, many people report feeling uplifted, restored, and deeply touched by Amma either physically through Her embrace, by being in the same room, and even over long distances. I have personal experience with all three occurrences, the most profound being Her ability to render help over long distance. Amma is a powerful example of the absolute highest level of utilizing Mysterious Power.

### The “Spirit” within Martial Arts, Metaphysical Boxing

“Whoever is fond of training, will not escape the kicks.” - Rumi

How do we redirect or transform the energy that moves towards us on a daily basis? What if that energy triggers our non-thinking reflexive fight-or-flight reaction?

In life, we are bent out of shape, usually when we are challenged in one way or another. Martial arts, in the truest of sense, teach us how to accept and work with the challenges of life with grace, ease, and lightness. Martial arts teach us to be present, calm, and alert, even in the face of direct challenges to our person. In training, we work through all the personal issues that are triggered, the heavy layers of unconscious programming and “knee jerk” reactions, until we become more and more clear to respond to each challenge with clarity, peace, and consciousness. Each incoming fist, kick, or strike becomes a metaphor for incoming energy from the universe, and in the microcosm of our sparring session, we can observe, study, and practice our response. Did we react out of fear? Out of anger? Did we tighten up, or did we remain relaxed? Were we overwhelmed with ego, self preservation, or desire only to win and subdue the incoming force, or did we gracefully respond by gently redirecting or neutralizing it?

Martial arts training, in the controlled safe setting and right attitude of self exploration and transformation, will enable those latent memories of pain and fear, stored in our biological and energetic matrix, to surface and flood our present moment awareness. We are given the golden opportunity to transform blind reaction into conscious response. We learn to dissolve our association with past pain and fear, to come into the present moment during our sparring or push hands sessions. Push hands or sparring are the vehicles for our growth, helping trigger the latent pain and self preserving ego in us, to bring it all into the light of our presence.

In presence, that which is not presence becomes transformed and transmuted into presence. This is the true meaning of Inner Alchemy, of transforming base metal (our reactions arising out of separateness) into gold (presence and felt oneness with all that is). To be and to abide in presence is indeed more precious than gold. We awaken into who we truly are. We awaken out of the bundle of preprogrammed reactions based in pain and separation. A whole new dimension of awareness opens up. A mirage is simply seen as a mirage, and the shadow as shadow. There is no doubt as to what is real. This abiding state of presence, unspoiled by the conditioning of this world, is the golden elixir of life. And it is not something that is far away, but rather, it is who we truly are.

Thus one begins to dance through life, as if intoxicated!

### Medical Qigong

Medical Qigong includes Internal and External Qigong, and deals primarily with health and wellness. It can have any of the following applications:

- *Internal Qigong* may be practiced by oneself as preventative health care, increasing one's immune function, emotional health and sense of well being.

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- With *External Qigong Therapy*, a Qigong doctor emits Qi towards the recipient in order to purge, strengthen, and regulate their energetic matrix, addressing specific health issues or for overall health.
- *Internal Qigong* may also include the prescription of specific exercises to address distinct health conditions, such as insomnia, high blood pressure, or emotional imbalances, and is often used as an adjunct to External Qigong Therapy.

### Internal Qigong Practice

A regular Qigong practice can be used as preventative health care, aiding in relaxation, rejuvenation, restoration, stress reduction, emotional health, mental clarity, and well being. It can also be used to develop subtle healing abilities, energetic perceptions, and mental focus.

### Components of a Successful Internal Qigong Practice

A person who practices with sincerity, is regular in their practice, and has the guidance of a qualified Qigong doctor/teacher yields benefits, especially over time, that are profound. Sincerity simply means approaching the practice with an open mind and heart, and allowing energetic changes to occur and take their natural course. Regularity in practice is also important, because each practice session is initiating, creating, and nurturing new energetic patterns in the physical, emotional, mental, energetic and spiritual body. Regular practice ensures that these new patterns take root and are given a chance to unfold, while old and outmoded patterns are slowly rooted out. Even 10 minutes a day of sincere practice can have powerful results over time, in the same way that one small step taken each day adds up to a long journey in one year.

### Receiving Adequate Guidance with Internal Qigong Practice

To progress quickly in the energetic arts, in addition to consistent and sincere practice, it is notably important to receive the help of a qualified Qigong teacher for various reasons. First, a teacher will make subtle corrections in the student's posture, breath, and focused intention to ensure that each minute spent in practice yields the most benefit. A teacher is also aware of the many energetic transitions that occur as a result of sincere practice, and will be available to answer the many questions and concerns that arise during these transitions, giving the student support based on first-hand personal experience. A teacher will also greatly accelerate the student's progress through direct energetic transmission of subtle teaching and healing, while also suggesting which Qigong practices to practice based on observing the student's needs and energetic constitution over time, both of which are always changing and evolving.

### External Qigong Therapy

In External Qigong Therapy, also known as Qi Emission Therapy, a Qigong doctor or master emits Qi towards the recipient in order to purge, strengthen, and regulate the energetic matrix, addressing specific health issues or for overall health. Qigong teachers may also use External Qigong to assist their students in accelerating their skills and abilities.

The Qigong doctor assesses the client's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual condition through a variety of techniques. Some of these may include assessment via the pulse, tongue, energetic palpation, observation, and a brief interview. A treatment plan and treatment goals are established based on this information, as well as the client's intended results. Specific Qigong exercises may also be prescribed based on the doctor's findings and assessment.

The doctor initiates the External Qigong Treatment session by a special meditation, thus creating a safe and nurturing space within which the treatment will occur. Next, the client's condition is assessed via energetic palpation skills. Finally, applying the methods and principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine theory, the doctor promotes health and well being within the client's physical tissues and energetic matrix via the doctor's trained ability to lead, guide, nurture, support, and

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emit Qi. Depending on the specific needs of the client, the doctor may purge excess, blocked, turbid, and/or stagnant energy from any of the client's tissues, organs and/or meridians. The doctor may also emit Qi into areas, organs, systems, or channels that are deficient and in need of energizing, bolstering and support. Finally, the doctor will regulate the client's entire energetic matrix, including the physical, mental, emotional, energetic, and spiritual aspects, via highly specialized Qi emission and guiding techniques.

Following the treatment, the doctor may prescribe distinct Internal Qigong exercises for the client to practice on their own time, which will be specific to both the needs of the client and the healing initiated in the treatment session.

### **Internal Qigong Prescriptions**

Internal Qigong exercises may be prescribed to address distinct health conditions, such as insomnia, high blood pressure, or emotional imbalances. Internal Qigong is often used as an adjunct to External Qigong Therapy. Internal Qigong exercises are also prescribed to Qigong students for developing distinct abilities to perceive, guide, and emit Qi.

The prescriptions may include simple movements designed to open the flow of Qi along specific meridians (energetic channels) in the body, or special tones designed to purge toxic Qi from any of the internal organs or systems of the body. For Qigong students, the prescriptions are designed to create specific openings and energetic development, aiding them on their path to mastery of Qi.

The prescribed Qigong exercises, when preformed with care and sincerity by the client or student, help create and nurture new patterns of health, vitality, and energy on the physical as well as mental, emotional, and spiritual level. The prescriptions may be practiced by themselves, or used to support and nurture healing initiated with External Qigong Therapy.

### **Spiritual Qigong**

Spiritual Qigong, sometimes referred to as Shengong, deals primarily with spiritual transformation and enlightenment. This includes cultivating deep inner peace, inner and outer harmony, a compassionate response to all of life's circumstances, and an awareness of oneself and one's connection to all that is. It also includes the practice of purely using one's intention to direct Qi, which is sometimes referred to as Mysterious Power. Shengong literally translates to "Spirit skill," where Shen means Mind or Spirit, and Gong represents skill, manipulation, or cultivation.

### **Three Regulations of Qigong**

The power of Qigong practice rests in the three regulations of posture, breath, and mind intention. These three regulations, when combined, create a multidimensional unity and depth in each practice that may yield extraordinary results. Therefore, Qigong practice is much more than simple exercise of the body, it is a way and a means to affect the totality of human experience, ranging from the most gross and physical to the subtlest aspects of human "Being."

- **Posture** – Utilizing physical movement, including gently stretching the meridians, as well as the alignment and integration of bones, tendons, and ligaments to lead and guide the Qi
- **Breath** – Utilizing breath to lead and guide the Qi
- **Intention** – Utilizing the focus of one's mind intention to lead and guide the Qi

### **Posture**

Through specific postures, which may be static or dynamic, qi is guided and directed for distinct purposes. A dynamic posture may be utilized to repeatedly stretch and then relax a specific meridian, or energetic pathway in the body, causing it to open and dilate. Subtle spiraling motions can also be used to encourage the spiraling motion of qi through the meridian, mimicking the

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spiraling flow of water in a pipe. Proper posturing is also used to increase the conductivity of the body to the flow of qi. Posture is associated with the Lower Dan Tian.

### **Breath**

Breath is another aspect or regulation of Qigong that is used to guide and direct qi. Inhalation may be combined with postural movement to ascend qi along one meridian, while exhalation along with a reverse postural movement may be used to descend qi along a different meridian, thus enabling qi to flow in a circular pattern. Emphasizing inhalation may also be used for tonification when energy is deficient, while emphasizing exhalation may be used for purgation when energy is excess. Breath is associated with the Middle Dan Tian.

### **Intention**

The third aspect or regulation of Qigong includes using mind intention to guide and direct qi. As mentioned, a postural movement along with inhalation may be used to direct qi to ascend along a meridian. Adding intention to the exercise, the qi is also directed to ascend with the mind. Imagination and specific visualizations are used to focus the mind on the specific activity. For example, steam may be imagined to ascend along a vertically flowing meridian in order to ascend the qi, and then water may be imagined to flow down another vertically oriented meridian to descend the qi. This is a common visualization for the Microcosmic Orbit meditation, which helps circulate energy in the Conception vessel and Governing channel, two very important meridians in Qigong and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Mind intention is associated with the Upper Dan Tian.

### **Three Treasures of “Man” and the Three Dan Tians**

The three dantians are reservoirs or pools of energy within the human being, located along the Taiji pole. The Dantians each have an energetic anatomical location inside the body, deep within the tissues, and exist on the physical, energetic, and spiritual plane. By viewing a midsagittal plane of the body, and using certain acupuncture points located on the GV and CV channels, one can easily define the areas of the body where the dantians are located. Drawing lines between various points on the body creates triangles within which the dantians are located. It is important to realize that these points and lines are not the dantians themselves, they are landmarks on the body that can be used to identify the location of the dantians.

#### **The Lower Dantian (下丹田)**

The Lower Dantian (LDT) is located in the lower abdomen. More specifically, the LDT is contained within a triangle formed by the acupuncture points CV-1 (Huiyin), CV-8 (Shenque), and GV-4 (Mingmen). This triangle points towards the earth at the CV-1 point.

The LDT is associated with the solid and dense energy of earth as well as physical existence and kinesthetic awareness. Energy in the LDT is often times perceived as heat. The LDT is a reservoir of Jing, a dense form of energy that is most closely related to physical and tangible matter. The LDT is connected to the first layer of Wei Qi, or protective energy, that surrounds and shields the body.

#### **The Middle Dantian (中丹田)**

The Middle Dantian (MDT) is located in the heart space within the chest. More specifically, the MDT is contained within the two triangles formed by first connecting CV-17 (Tanzhong) and GV-11 (Shendao), which forms the base of 2 triangles. The top point of the first triangle is located on the Taiji Pole, between CV-22 (Tiantu) and GV-14 (Dazhui). By drawing a line from this point down to CV-17 and GV-11, a triangle forms that contains the upper half of the MDT. To form the bottom triangle, one needs to find a point on the Taiji pole located in between the points CV-15

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(Shenfu) and GV-8 (Jinsuo). From this point, a line drawn to CV-17 and GV-11 forms the bottom triangle, containing the lower half of the MDT.

The MDT is associated with the fluid like energy of thoughts and emotions as well as empathic awareness. Energy in the MDT is often times perceived as vibration. The MDT is a reservoir of Qi, a fluid like form of energy that is most closely related to mental and psychological processes, as well as the breath. The MDT is connected to the second layer of Wei Qi, which encapsulates and protects the body as well as the first layer of Wei Qi.

### The Upper Dantian (上丹田)

The Upper Dantian (UDT) is located in the cranium in the area of the brain. More specifically, the UDT is contained within a triangle formed by the acupuncture points GV-20 (Baihui), Yintang (Extra Point), and GV-16 (Fengfu). This triangle points towards heaven at the GV-20 point.

The UDT is associated with the insubstantial, vaporous, and etheric energy of spiritual and intuitive awareness. Energy in the UDT is often times perceived as light. The UDT is a reservoir of Shen, vaporous and etheric energy that is most closely related to spiritual insight, communication, and awareness. The UDT is connected to the third layer of Wei Qi, which encapsulates and protects the body as well as the first and second layer of Wei Qi.



### The Three Treasures: Jing, Qi, and Shen (精氣神)

Qigong brings balance and harmony between the “Three Treasures of Man,” which correspond to the three dantians. These energies are all interdependent in the Post Heaven (physical) existence, therefore their balance and equilibrium is sought. On a deeper level, sincere practice transforms dense physical energy known as Jing into Qi, Qi into Shen, Shen into Void, and finally Void into Dao or Divine. This is a process of spiritual alchemy whereby the base metal (Jing) is transformed into higher and more refined forms until eventually, it is transformed, or merges back, into gold (Dao or Divine). The ancients used the alchemical process of transforming metal into gold as a metaphor for the alchemical transformation of dense energy (Jing) to more refined forms of energy (Shen and Dao) on the return path to the Divine.

Figure 1.1: Chinese Character for Dao

The Chinese Character suggests a master taking steps along a path. The Dao is seen as a Divine principle as well as the path to realizing the Divine through harmony of Self with Heaven, Earth, and one’s True Nature.

Upper Dan Tian	Shen	神	Heaven
Middle Dan Tian	Qi	氣	Person/Self
Lower Dan Tian	Jing	精	Earth

The three Dantians are often referred to as crucibles within which the spiritual alchemical process takes place. These transformations of energy can be viewed metaphorically as solid and substantial ice changing to less solid and less substantial, fluid water, and fluid water changing to even less substantial vapor or steam. Within the LDT, Jing is transformed into Qi. In the MDT, Qi is transformed into Shen. Within the UDT, Shen is transformed into Wuji. Finally, Wuji is merged into Dao or Divine.



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## The Great Dao (道)

Dao is the great and perfectly blended center of all things. Unnamable, timeless, and eternal, it is contained in all things, and the mother of all things. All that is known and unknown in the universe emerges from the Dao, and eventually dissolves back into the Dao. The Dao alone endures.

Dao may be translated as the “Way,” and therefore can be seen not only as the Divine itself, but as the return path to the Divine as well. The ancient Chinese believed that we all emerged from the Dao, and therefore, we may return to that transcendental reality through conscious striving, effort, and practice.

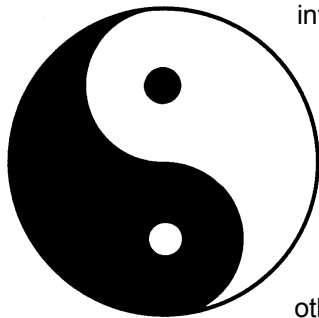
## Wuji, the Formless Void (無極)

Wuji is unmanifest and undifferentiated pure energy that exists as the void. This is a state of total and complete oneness where there are no distinctions, separations, or differences. While Wuji is complete void, it is teeming with possibility, and contains all potential. Dormant within its undifferentiated womb lay all the seeds of possibility for the totality of creation, and all probable realities are contained within it.

Looking at Wuji in terms of cosmology, it would be the point just prior to the big bang, when everything existed only as a potential and not yet as a tangible reality.

## Yin and Yang (陰陽)

As energy moves from unmanifest to manifest, the Dao, within the infinite space of the Wuji, becomes Taiji. This is represented by Yin and Yang, which are the perfect union of seeming opposites. These opposites are in reality still one,



continually flowing and changing into each other in perfect balance as a unified whole. Yin and Yang create each other, define each other, support each other, transform into each other, and consume each other. Yin and Yang may be infinitely divisible and still contain proportions of each other.

In order to create and sustain a manifest universe, the framework of polarity gives structure to the formless void, which creates a sense of distinction, separation, and difference. From one we have two. A sense of “I” and “not I” arises, as well as other distinctions, such as day and night, light and dark, difficult and easy. These opposite pairs are what give structure and form to the formless void, and enable the constant birth and death of all natural phenomena in the universe.

Yin	Yang
Dark	Light
Midnight	Noon
Night	Day
Earth	Heaven
Below	Above
Inside	Outside
Blood	Qi
Material	Immaterial
Substantial	Insubstantial
Solid	Hollow
Form	Energy

Yin and Yang is one of the most basic and fundamental concepts in Qigong practice, Daoist alchemy, as well as Traditional Chinese Medicine.

## Yin and Yang within the Microcosm of “Man”

Heavenly energy is considered Yang, while earthly energy is considered Yin. The human being is considered to be the point in the middle, composed of both the heavenly and earthly energies. A microcosm exists within each person, where the energies of Yin and Yang are constantly at play. It is by working with this microcosm through the practice of Qigong that we bring balance and harmony to our lives.

## The Five Phases of Energy (Wu Xing, 五行)

Taiji, symbolized by the Yin and Yang, further subdivides into the Wu Xing, which are the five phases of energy, or more commonly referred to as the five elements. From the Five Elements, it is said, “come the Ten Thousand things,” referring to the entire creation.

The five phases of energy/ five elements are:

**Water (水)**

**Wood (木)**

**Fire (火)**

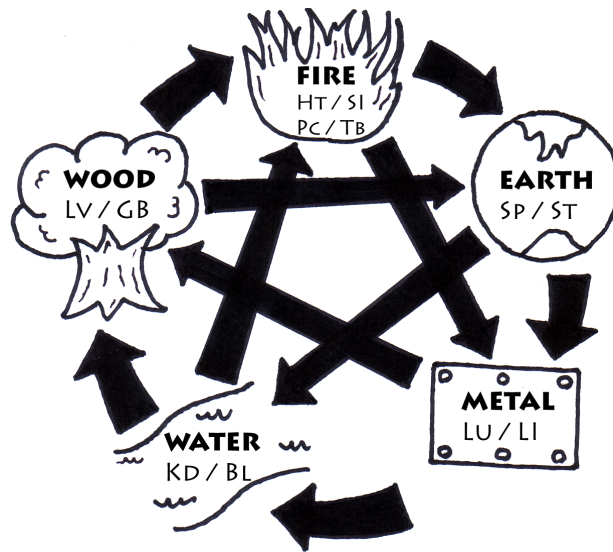
**Earth (地)**

**Metal (金)**

The five phases of energy are actually the cycle of Yin Yang broken down into five distinct periods. The most Yin phase in the cycle is Water, while the most Yang phase is Fire. As energy transforms from the Water phase into the Wood phase, Yin energy begins to decrease while Yang energy begins to increase. This continues until we have the peak of Yang at the Fire phase. From there, Yang energy begins to decrease while Yin energy increases, which continues in a gradual pattern until we reach absolute Yin again at the Water phase. At any point in the cycle, there is a precise amount of Yin energy as compared to Yang energy, and the proportion of each energy changes in a predictable pattern.

A perfect example of this occurs every 24 hours. The darkest portion of the night, which takes place around midnight, is the absolute Yin part of the 24 hours. However, just past midnight, Yang begins to increase while Yin begins to decrease. This continues until the noontime, when Yang reaches its zenith. However, just past that point, Yin energy again begins to increase as night approaches.

The diagram demonstrates how each element or phase of energy transforms into the next element or phase in the generating cycle, represented by the outer circular arrows. The inner arrows demonstrate the controlling cycle, which helps curb growth to maintain balance.



*Figure 1.3: The Five Element Generating and Controlling Cycles.*

**In the Generating Cycle, Water creates Wood, Wood creates Fire, Fire creates Earth, Earth creates Metal, and Metal creates Water. In the Controlling Cycle, Water controls Fire, Fire controls Metal, Metal controls Wood, Wood controls Earth, and Earth controls Water.**

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### **Generating and Controlling Cycles**

In the beginning, we tend to work with two of the four cycles of energy. This includes the generating and controlling cycles, which are pictured in the figure to the right.

- **Generating Cycle** – Water creates Wood, Wood creates Fire, Fire creates Earth, Earth creates Metal, Metal creates Water
- **Controlling Cycle** – Water controls Fire, Fire controls Metal, Metal controls Wood, Wood controls Earth, Earth controls Water

A simple story helps us remember the order of the elements in the generating cycle. We begin with Water, because it is the absolute Yin phase in the cycle. We take water and use it to water a tree, and as a result, Water generates Wood. We cut the tree down and built a fire, and in this way Wood generates Fire. The fire transforms into ash, therefore, Fire creates Earth. From the earth we get our precious metals, therefore Earth generates Metal. Finally, when we leave metal objects outside, especially overnight, water condenses on them, therefore Metal creates Water. Although these relations are simple, they help us remember the order of the elements in the generating cycle.

Typically, in treating patients or for personal cultivation, the generating cycle is used to tonify and regulate (ex. Taoist 5) while the controlling cycle is used for purgation (ex. Healing Sounds.)

### **Attributes of the Five Elements**

In the course of thousands of years of observation and experimentation, the Chinese discovered that the Five Elements have many qualities, attributes, associations, and relationships. Chinese doctors use this information to find the root causes of energetic and physical disorders, and as a basis for treatment. The table below lists the Five Elements and their attributes.

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### Five Element Table

	Water 水	Wood 木	Fire 火	Earth 地	Metal 金
<b>Yin Organ</b>	Kidneys 腎	Liver 肝	Heart 心	Spleen 脾	Lungs 肺
<b>Yang Organ</b>	Bladder	Gall Bladder	Sm. Intestine	Stomach	Lg. Intestine
<b>Color</b>	Dark Blue, Black	Forest Green	Red, Dark Pink	Golden Yellow	White
<b>Virtue</b>	Wisdom, Gentleness	Kindness, Flexibility	Order	Trust, Nurturing	Integrity, Letting go
<b>Acquired Emotion</b>	Fear, Shock	Anger, Frustration	Excitation	Worry, Over-thinking	Grief, Sadness
<b>Taste</b>	Salty	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent
<b>Season</b>	Winter	Spring	Summer	Every 3 <sup>rd</sup> mo.	Autumn
<b>Climate</b>	Cold	Wind	Heat	Dampness	Dryness
<b>Tissue</b>	Bones	Tendons, Nerves	Blood Vessels	All Muscles, Fascia	Skin, Hair
<b>Sense Organ</b>	Ears	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose
<b>Sense</b>	Hearing	Sight	Speech	Taste	Smell
<b>Agent</b>	Zhi 志	Hun 魂	Shen 神	Yi 意	Po 魄
<b>Healing Sound</b>	Yu Descending	Guo Descending	Jang or Ha Flat	Gong or Who Flat	Shang Descending

*Figure 1.4: Five Element Table*

### Five Elements Out of Balance

When the Five Elements are out of balance, our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual body may exhibit predictable patterns of disharmony. Typically, when a person seeks the help of a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine, whether an acupuncturist, herbalist, Asian body worker, dietitian, or Medical Qigong doctor, the practitioner will identify the apparent patterns of disharmony and find the root cause of the imbalance. Once the root is known, the practitioner, depending on their area of expertise, may apply needles, herbs, bodywork techniques, diet changes, external Qigong therapy or specific Qigong prescriptions to help correct the imbalance and restore health. Life style changes may also be recommended to restore balance and harmony.

The following outline is a simplified list of the Five Elements and the various symptoms that may manifest as a result of their imbalance. Traditional Chinese Medicine is a vast art and science, which contains many complexities. Therefore, this list should not be used to take the place of a qualified professional's advice, nor to diagnose and treat diseases.

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- I. **Water. Associated Tissues: Bones. Associated Climate: Cold**
  - a. Fear / Shock / Phobia
  - b. Affects Fertility / Sexuality
  - c. Knee & low back pain
  - d. Yin deficient
    - i. Insomnia
    - ii. Night sweats
    - iii. Hot flashes
    - iv. Heat appears excess
  - e. Yang deficient
    - i. Cold extremities
    - ii. Frequent urination, incontinence
    - iii. Lowered sexual energy
- II. **Wood. Associated Tissues: Tendons. Associated Climate: Wind**
  - a. Anger / Frustration / Irritation
  - b. Stiff / Tight (tendons)
  - c. Unable to flow (flexibility) with the changes of life
  - d. Pain may migrate (Wind)
  - e. Wood rising excessively (Yang pathogen)
    - i. Headache
    - ii. Dizziness
  - f. May invade / overcontrol Earth (Sp / St)
- III. **Fire. Associated Tissues: Blood Vessels. Associated Climate: Heat**
  - a. Over-excitation
  - b. Flares upward (Yang pathogen)
  - c. Insomnia
  - d. Restlessness
  - e. Fever
  - f. Red Face
  - g. Full, rapid pulse
  - h. Red tongue (tip)
  - i. Mouth ulcers
- IV. **Earth. Associated Tissues: Muscles. Associated Climate: Damp**
  - a. Worry / Over-thinking
  - b. Dampness
    - i. Weak earth leads to excess Dampness
    - ii. Is heavy and turbid in nature (Yin pathogen)
    - iii. Swelling, bloating
    - iv. Obstructs channels
    - v. Body aches and pains (Damp obstruction)
    - vi. Fullness of head, heavy limbs
  - c. Loose stools / Diarrhea (rebellious Sp Qi)
  - d. Nauseousness, Emesis (rebellious St Qi)
- V. **Metal. Associated Tissues: Skin. Associated Climate: Dryness**
  - a. Unresolved Sadness or Grief
  - b. Trouble letting go
  - c. Rashes, eczema (skin)
  - d. Illnesses of Lungs:
    - i. Cough / colds
    - ii. Asthma
    - iii. Allergies
  - e. Constipation (Dryness)

# Chinese Inner Alchemy & Medical Qigong

## Benefits of Qigong Practice

As a result of sincere practice, a person may experience increased energy, sensation, range of motion, awareness, relaxation, peace and clarity of mind, and reduced pain. Special Qigong exercises may also be prescribed to address issues such as headaches, insomnia, high blood pressure, or emotional imbalances. External Qigong treatments, where a Qigong doctor emits Qi towards the patient, can also play a role in creating balance, regaining and maintaining health.

On a fundamental level, poor health, as well as mental and emotional agitation, are the results of something coming out of balance. Qigong seeks to create balance and restore harmony. The vast science of Traditional Chinese Medicine arose from thousands of years of practice and experimentation with Qi. Qigong, a vital branch of Traditional Chinese Medicine, contains a vast and incredible foundation of tested knowledge and wisdom.

The following is a partial list of the many benefits that may be derived from practice. They are divided into physical, mental/emotional, as well as spiritual benefits.

### Physical Benefits

- Deep relaxation, rejuvenation, and physical restoration
- Reduced pain and stress
- Increased immune function (fewer colds, less prone to illnesses)
- Increased vitality and stamina
- Increased core strength and integration
- Increased circulation of Blood and Qi
- Faster recovery from illness and surgery
- Increased absorption of nutrients from food and supplements
- Greater balance, posture, and alignment to reduce physical discomforts

Qigong practice can have very powerful physical benefits, which may include the correction of long standing disease patterns and health complications. In our modern scientific age, many researchers are becoming interested in Qigong and some testing of its effectiveness is available for review. While more studies are needed to build a substantial database of scientific proof, it is encouraging to see that evidence is growing in favor of Qigong.

### Qigong and Cancer Research

In a research study entitled, "A Review of Qigong Therapy for Cancer Treatment", presented in the *Journal of International Society of Life Information Science Vol. 20 (2). 2002*, Doctors Chen and Yeung report that there was significant evidence suggesting that Medical Qigong therapy has an inhibitory effect on cancer growth, in both in-vitro and in-vivo studies, as well as in clinical observation. Doctors Chen and Yeung cite over fifty-four studies, which document the beneficial effects of External Qigong (Qi emitted by a Qigong doctor) as well as Internal Qigong (Qigong exercises performed by cancer patients) for inhibiting cancer growth. While more research is needed to scientifically prove the effectiveness of Qigong, the preliminary studies do suggest what the Chinese have known for thousands of years, that Qigong, when practiced under the care of a qualified professional, is a very powerful treatment modality.

### Mental and Emotional Benefits

Chinese Medicine recognizes deep correlations between physical health and the mental, emotional, and spiritual states of each person. The practices therefore address each individual as a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual being, and the whole being is addressed in order to maintain and regain health and vitality.

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- Greater clarity and focus of mind
- Increased confidence and sense of well being
- Reduced mental and emotional stress
- Purging and transformation of deep-seated emotional trauma
- Greater emotional management, balance and harmony
- Improved sense and awareness of emotional and energetic boundaries
- Increased emotional and intuitive intelligence

### **Spiritual Benefits**

- Cultivation of virtue, clarity, and life purpose
- Refinement of one's energy and vibration
- Increased ability to sense and project energy
- Greater integration of body, mind, emotion, energy, and spirit

### **Different Types of Intelligence**

Qigong practice develops various forms of intelligence as well as their integration. Some of these forms include physical, emotional, social, natural, intuitive, and spiritual intelligence. Sincere practice causes natural openings within these arenas, corresponding to the practitioner's particular intention and emphasis of cultivation.

### **Energy in the East, Form in the West**

In modern society, a great deal of emphasis is placed on developing the mental faculties and logical mind. As a result, Western culture has made tremendous advancements in math and science, holding the fields of engineering, computer science, and biotechnology in exceedingly high regard. Other forms of intelligence, however, have been neglected, resulting in a decline within those arenas. As an example, the decline of natural intelligence has led to the massive destruction of the planetary ecosystem, toxic pollution of unparalleled proportions in air, water, and food, and a general disregard of nature in favor of short-term financial gain. Western culture has also allowed physical, emotional, and spiritual intelligence to decline. This results in a culture of people who are disassociated from their bodies, emotions, and spiritual purpose, and leads to disease, depression, and feelings of uncertainty, meaninglessness, insignificance, or worthlessness. Placing emphasis on one type of intelligence typically produces an unbalanced society, with resulting weaknesses in the underdeveloped fields of intelligence.

In ancient times, various societies placed a much greater importance on other types of intelligence, and as a result, other dimensions of human potential were explored, emphasized, and advanced. Ancient China held some of these other forms of intelligence in very high regard, and in a way similar to the current attitude of Western culture towards math and science. Chinese society at various times supported the fields of inner alchemy, shamanic practice, deep meditation, and energetic medicine, and therefore excelled in those arenas. Generally speaking, in terms of medicine, the Chinese endeavored to study energy, while the West focused on studying form. Each culture excelled in their particular arena of study, while neglecting to see and understand the reality of the other arenas.

Through deep meditation and movement practices, the Daoist masters of antiquity developed incredibly high degrees of these other types of intelligence. Thus they were able to perceive the various patterns of energetic flow in the body, resulting in mapping the meridians and acupuncture points without the use of scientific instrumentation to measure the electrical conductivity and resistance along the skin. Through their natural intelligence, they were able to perceive patterns in nature, including that of Heaven and Earth, as well as within the microcosm of the human body, which led to the development of foundational theories in Chinese Medicine. They were also able to perceive, to astoundingly accurate levels, the effects of various foods, herbs, and minerals on the human body, and evolved the fields of nutrition and herbology.

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Of course, just as in the modern fields of engineering and medical science, the development of these fields was no without errors, mistakes, or miscalculations. The resulting bodies of knowledge and wisdom, however, are a tremendous gift to human life, and a brilliant testimony to the depth of human existence.

### **Qigong as a Pathway to Greater Intelligence**

By utilizing the special principles of the ancient Daoist and Qigong masters, we also have the capacity to develop these other forms of intelligence, and to delve deep into the realms of awareness from which Chinese Medicine and Daoist Magic originated. In this way, we not only understand the theories mentally, but also have direct tangible experience from which to draw on when we endeavor help others as well as ourselves.



## **Exploring Ancient Chinese Metaphysics**

The Chinese view of life encompasses spirituality, psychology, and physiology as a whole. Therefore, unlike in the West, where each body of knowledge seems to exist independent of the others, the Chinese view these bodies of knowledge and experience as inseparable from each other. The integration of these bodies of knowledge creates opportunities to observe, know, and understand the interdependence between them, providing a holistic approach to health and wellness.

An open understanding of the interrelationships between various levels of matter, energy, and consciousness helps create a framework within which to understand our multidimensional experiences in life as well as within our Qigong and meditation practice. These ancient Chinese metaphysics are the roots of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which is brilliant in its comprehension of the interrelatedness between various levels of human existence, and in mapping how this leads to health and disease.

Following is a brief discussion of the various levels of consciousness and how they relate to the cosmos and our human soul. A chart on the following page gives a graphic illustration of these various aspects of existence.

### **The Dao (道)**

Dao is the Divine itself, as well as the return path to the Divine for all things living and nonliving. Dao is the totality of existence. Every occurring phenomena in all realms of existence is a manifestation of the Dao. It is the substratum from which all things are made, and the mother of all that is. The Dao, however, cannot be named, conceptualized, or understood, for it is beyond all names, concepts, and understandings, while it is also their source. The totality of Dao rests in non-existence, as well as within the substratum of all existence.

Some schools maintain that about one third of this Divine presence is within the manifest universe, giving rise to endless forms that are born from it and die into it. All beings and all the many upon many worlds, galaxies, and other realities are composed of this one third that is at play with manifestation. The other two thirds was perceived by ancient sages, who pierced the veils of separateness into the realms of pure oneness, as non-being in a state of non-existence.

All words simply point to these transcendental realities, and are not the realities themselves. Therefore, the sages of old left pathways for beings, which, caught in the experience of separateness from the whole, wish to return to that primordial reality. These pathways are also the Dao, or “the Way,” which seekers of the truth can follow, much like a roadmap.

These pathways, often referred to as Inner Alchemy (內丹), were said to confer immortality to its devout practitioners. Many understood immortality to mean that one would never have to face the death and decay of the physical body. In many cases, there was a genuine obsession with preserving the life of the body, especially when the life one enjoyed included high social standing, wealth, prestige, and power. However, the immortality to which the doctrines refer is a kind of tuning of one’s individuated consciousness, which ever dwells on the objects and desires of this material world, inwards towards the eternal and immortal nature of the soul, and in turn, towards the eternal Dao of which it is a part.

### **Ling Shen (靈神) - Supernatural Soul / Spirit**

The Ling Shen (Supernatural Spirit) is considered a spark of the Divine that breaks off from the Supreme Fire (Dao). While considered a fragment of the Divine, it also contains the totality of the Dao within it’s being.

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The immortals are Ling Shen, or deities, that preside over the order of the universe, while fully realized masters and saints are Ling Shen that have taken incarnation in order to guide humanity towards greater alignment with their true nature (their Divinity or “Christ within”) and the Dao. The immortals, both living and “non-living,” were often the object of worship and ritual, performed by the ancient Daoist sages, who, on behalf of the people, implored their help on various matters. Many of these rituals still survive today, and are practiced by monasteries and devout followers all over the world. While their effects are often unseen to the untrained, these rituals help maintain a balance of energies within the universe.

### **Xian Shen (仙神) - Eternal Soul**

The Eternal Soul may be viewed as a further subdivision of the Shen Ling. It is the portion of the Shen Ling that descends and extends into physical life, while other portions of the Shen Ling extend into other realities. The Xian Shen passes through a membrane, known as the Zhi Yi Tian (志意天) as it descends into physical life at the time of conception and pregnancy. It roots itself in the Heart and Taiji Pole of the fetus, which are its residence for that lifetime.

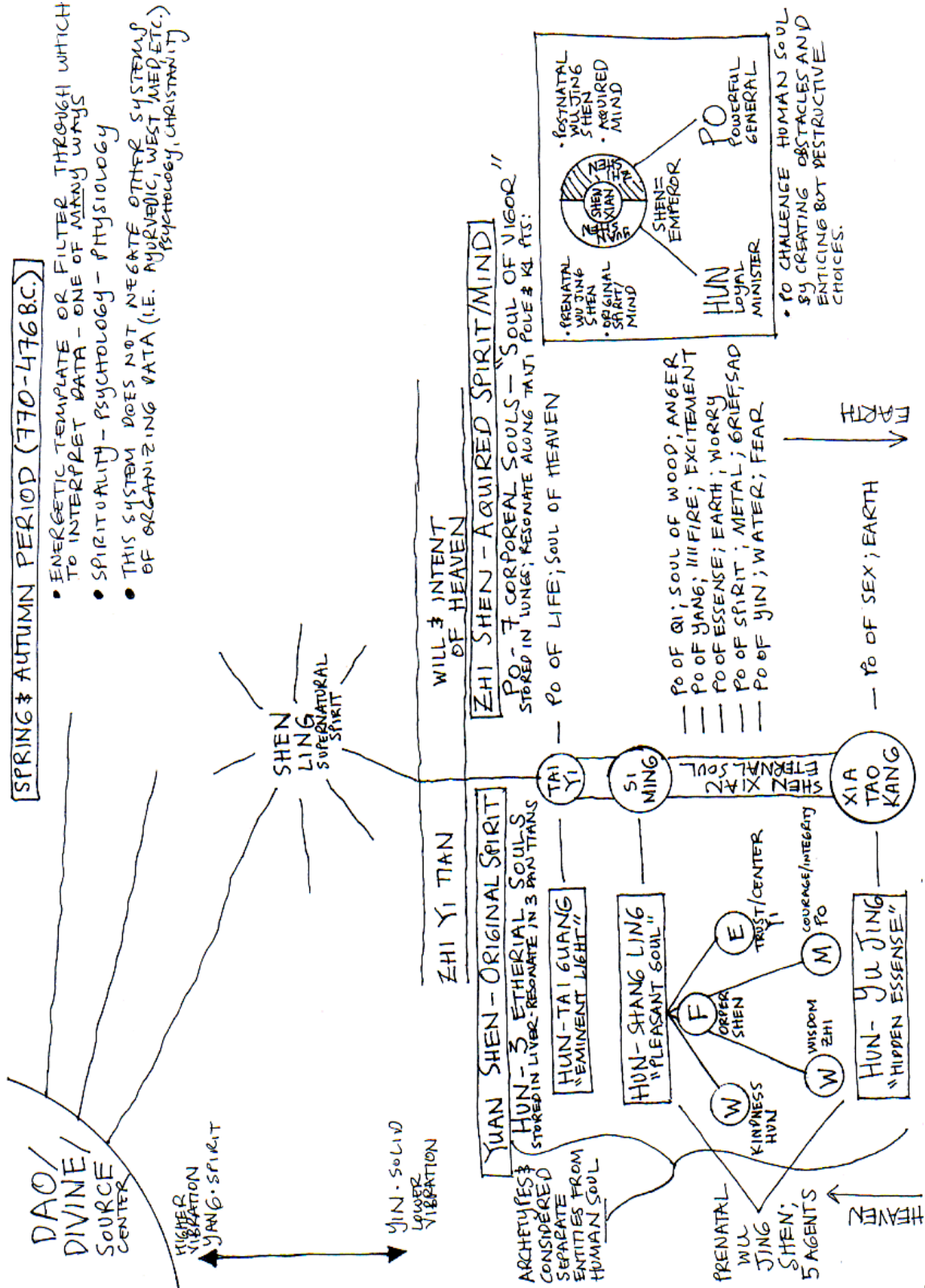
### **Yuan Shen (原神) - Original Spirit**

The Yuan Shen, or Original Spirit, is the aspect of the Xian Shen that extends out into physical life from the Heart and Taiji Pole. It is the lowest aspect of the Xian Shen that interacts with the world of form, bringing the Divine consciousness into material reality. This is also the portion that longs to reconnect with the Dao, and is influenced by the Hun, or Ethereal Soul. The five congenital virtues of Wisdom, Kindness, Order, Trust, and Integrity are regulated by the Hun and help support the Yuan Shen in living a virtuous life.

### **Zhi Shen (志神) - Acquired Spirit / Mind**

Zhi Shen is the acquired spirit or mind, which is activated with the first breath, when the post-natal Qi first enters the body. This is the sum total of all our memories, experiences, thoughts, and learned behaviors that accumulate over a lifetime. The acquired mind is our personality, or ego consciousness, that assists the Xian Shen in operating within the physical dimension. The Po, or Corporeal Soul, influences the Zhi Shen via the post-natal acquired emotions of Fear, Anger, Excitation, Worry, and Grief.

The chart that follows helps picture the various components of ancient Chinese metaphysics. These views were prevalent in the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C.). I apologize for the crudeness of the chart, in time I hope to recreate it using Photoshop.



## **About Qigong Exercises**

### **Categorizing Qigong Practices**

There are several ways to categorize Qigong exercises and meditations. These categorizations help explain their effect on the individual, as well as aid in communication, and can serve as guidelines for choosing or prescribing Qigong practices. Some of these categories include:

- Categorization According to the Original Purpose
- Categorization According to the Three Regulations
- Categorization According to Yin and Yang (Dynamic or Quiescent)
- Categorization According to the Five Elements
- Categorization According to Energetic Action

### **Categorization According to the Original Purpose**

Qigong practices may be categorized by whether the exercises are designed to increase overall health, immune function, and protect the body, or whether they are used to address specific patterns of disharmony.

#### **Qigong for Overall Health**

Qigong practices that are used for overall health and balance can be likened to foods or herbs that are taken as tonics to maintain health. In this case, the exercises are chosen based on the person's overall constitution, emotional states, living environment, diet, and the current season. The primary purpose is to strengthen and tonify the internal organs as a whole, and to support the overall health of the individual.

#### **Qigong to Address Specific Patterns of Disharmony**

Qigong practices that are used to address specific patterns of disharmony in the body can be likened to herbs that are taken for specific conditions. In this case, the exercises are chosen based on the person's overall constitution, emotional states, living environment, diet, and the current season, as well as the particular energetic dysfunction. The purpose is to clear excess conditions, tonify deficiencies, and to regulate the organs and channels, thereby restoring health and vitality.

### **Categorization According to the Three Regulations**

Qigong practices may be categorized by which of the three regulations of posture, breath, and intention they emphasize. This includes Postural Qigong Practice, Respiratory Qigong Practice, and Metal/Intention Qigong Practice.

#### **Postural Qigong Practice**

These practices focus primarily on the posture of one's body, including the structure and alignment of bones, tendons, and ligaments. Through specific postures, which may be static or dynamic, Qi is guided and directed for distinct purposes. A dynamic posture may be utilized to repeatedly stretch and then relax a specific meridian, or energetic pathway in the body, causing it to open and dilate. Subtle spiraling motions can also be used to encourage the spiraling motion of Qi through the meridian, mimicking the spiraling flow of water in a pipe. Proper posturing is also used to increase the conductivity of the body to the flow of Qi. Posture is associated with the Lower Dan Tian. Some categories of postural training include walking, standing, sitting, lying, massaging, and Mudras.

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## **Respiratory Qigong Practice**

These practices focus primarily on the breath, which is another aspect or regulation of Qigong that is used to guide and direct Qi. This includes various methods of inhalation, exhalation, as well as healing sounds and tones that are used to move or affect Qi in the body. For example, inhalation may be combined with postural movement to ascend qi along one meridian, while exhalation along with a reverse postural movement may be used to descend Qi along a different meridian, thus enabling qi to flow in a circular pattern. Emphasizing inhalation may also be used for tonification when energy is deficient, while emphasizing exhalation may be used for purgation when energy is excess. Healing Sounds may be aspirated to produce vibration within various tissues and organs to promote health. Breath is associated with the Middle Dan Tian.

## **Mental or Intention Qigong Practice**

These practices focus primarily on the use of mind intention to guide and direct Qi. This includes the use of affirmation, visualization, and imagination to move or affect the Qi in the body. These practices emphasize a single pointed focus of the mind on the specified object or process, both of which yield tremendous results. As an example, an object of focus may be the LDT, thereby creating deep and profound relaxation as well as tonification. A process may include visualizing steam ascending along a vertically flowing meridian in order to ascend the Qi, and then water may be visualized flowing down another vertically oriented meridian to descend the Qi. This is a common visualization for the Microcosmic Orbit meditation, which helps circulate energy in the Governing and Conception Vessel.

## **Categorization According to Yin and Yang (Dynamic or Static)**

Yin and Yang, when applied to Qigong practices, depict the states of static quiescence or dynamic action. There are four universal principles of Yin and Yang that are initiated in each Qigong exercise or meditation. These include Tai Yang (motion within motion), Shao Yang (stillness within motion), Tai Yin (stillness within stillness), and Shao Yin (motion within stillness).

### **Tai Yang (Motion within Motion)**

These are the most Yang, or active Qigong practices. They include motion on the physical plane as well as motion on the energetic plane. Any exercise that includes motion of the physical body as well as motion of the energetic body is a Tai Yang exercise. Imagine a Taiji master playing a form while at the same time focusing on moving energy through the meridians.

### **Shao Yang (Stillness within Motion)**

These are lesser Yang Qigong practices. They include action on the physical plane, but stillness on the energetic plane. Any exercise that includes motion of the physical body but encourages stillness of the energetic body is a Shao Yang exercise. Imagine a Taiji master playing a form while at the same time holding a one pointed focus of energy in the LDT.

### **Tai Yin (Stillness within Stillness)**

These are the most Yin, or quiescent, Qigong practices. They include stillness on the physical plane as well as stillness on the energetic plane. Any meditation that includes stillness of the physical body as well as stillness of the energetic body is a Tai Yin meditation. Imagine a Taiji master in sitting meditation while at the same time holding a one pointed focus of energy in the LDT.

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## **Shao Yin (Motion within Stillness)**

These are lesser Yin Qigong practices. They include stillness on the physical plane, but motion on the energetic plane. Any meditation that includes stillness of the physical body but encourages movement of the energetic body is a Shao Yin meditation. Imagine a Taiji master in sitting meditation while at the same time focusing on moving energy through the meridians.

When the universal principles of Tai Yang, Shao Yang, Tai Yin, and Shao Yin are depicted using the Yao lines, the top line will always indicate what is happening on the level of the physical body, while the bottom Yao line will indicate what is happening on the level of the energetic body.

## **Categorization According to the Five Elements**

Qigong practices may be categorized according to which of the Five Elements they affect.

## **Categorization According to Energetic Action**

Qigong practices may be categorized according to their energetic action of purgation, tonification, or regulation.

## **Three Main Objectives of Medical Qigong**

The three main objectives of Qigong practice are to purge excess conditions, tonify deficient conditions, and to regulate Qi and Blood.

### **Qigong for Purgation**

Qigong exercises or meditations may emphasize the purgation of excess conditions. Some examples include the Healing Sounds, or the Bag Exercise for Clearing Liver Fire.

### **Qigong for Tonification**

Qigong exercises or meditations may emphasize the tonification of deficient conditions. Some examples include the inhalation of Five Element colors, Beating the Drum breathing, or Standing Yiquan postures.

### **Qigong for Regulation**

Qigong exercises or meditations can also emphasize the regulation of Qi and Blood. These may be employed in cases of excess and deficient conditions existing at the same time, or to create balance and equilibrium after Qigong training or treatment. Some examples of regulation exercises include the Microcosmic Orbit, Ascend the Yin and Descend the Yang, and the Swimming Dragon exercise or meditation.

## **The Objectives of Training for a Medical Qigong Practitioner**

There are several training objectives for the Qigong practitioner. These include:

- Walking through the process of personal clearing, healing and transformation
- Developing one's sensitivity to Qi
- Developing one's ability to project and control Qi
- Increasing and Strengthening one's Qi

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### **Personal Clearing, Healing, and Transformation**

It is imperative for the aspiring Qigong practitioner to perform a diligent Qigong practice. The personal practice gives each practitioner his or her own unique experience of the healing and transformation process. It is by walking through this process first-hand, by truly embodying the movements and integrating the theory through personal practice, that one gains the real world experience necessary to be able to help others.

The Qigong practice will initiate healing on the physical, mental, emotional, energetic, and spiritual levels. It is by experiencing the transformation of energy at all of these levels that one begins to truly comprehend the depth of the practice, and one begins to get a true sense of its effectiveness. In addition, the personal transformation process enables each practitioner to be a clear vessel through which the energy of Heaven and Earth can move to help others. By clearing our own deep-seated wounds, energetic blocks, and areas of blindness and personal agendas, we become the bright shining examples of the effects of Qigong. We also become practitioners transparent to the will of the Dao or Divine when we help others in the healing process.

### **Developing Sensitivity to Qi (Sensory Skill)**

Each Qigong practitioner develops skill in perceiving energy. These perception skills enable the practitioner to assess their patients according to the Eight Parameters and Five Elements. Practitioners are able to perceive, for example, Damp Heat in the Lower Burner, Excess Liver Fire, Deficient Kidney or Spleen Qi, Stagnant Liver Qi, Invasion of External Cold, ect.

### **Developing Projection and Control of Qi (Motor skill)**

Practitioners develop their ability to project Qi for healing. This includes the ability to project Qi to tonify and strengthen areas of deficiency, as well as an ability to reduce and clear areas of stagnation and excess. Practitioner's also develop and embody the ability to gather the Qi of Heaven, Earth, and the environment to use during treatment, so as to avoid energetic depletion and burnout.

### **Increasing and Strengthening of Qi**

Practitioners learn to increase and strengthen their Qi. This includes exercises and meditations for increasing the strengthening and resilience of the Wei Qi, as well as the strength, resilience, and refinement of their Jing, Qi, and Shen. Their reservoirs of Qi become full of vibrant and well-refined energetic substance.

## Specific Qigong Exercises

### Wuji

Actions: Embodiment of the Void. Beginning standing posture for all exercises.

- Feet shoulder width apart and parallel to each other
- Distribute weight on the inside and center of the feet
- Knees slightly bent
- Pelvis tucked under, flattening the lower back
- Belly soft and relaxed
- Chest and ribs gently open and expanded
- Round the back
- Shoulders relaxed and fully resting (not elevated)
- Shoulder blades gently expanded, pressing out to opposite walls, causing arms to suspend slightly away from the body, i.e. creating a small space between the arms and torso.
- Chin slightly tucked in
- Crown point gently raised to ceiling, gently stretching cervical spine
- Tongue is to the roof of the mouth (Fire point) and anal sphincter is *slightly* and *gently* closed

You should feel a gentle expansion in the spine as you tuck the pelvis under and gently press your crown to the ceiling. Expand and create space in the joints. Allow yourself to relax into the posture. If you choose to stand in the Wuji for meditation, follow the sitting meditation instructions to concentrate and disengage the mind.

Wuji represents the void or undifferentiated energy as it existed prior to manifestation. From Wuji, as energy moves from unmanifest to manifest, it becomes Taiji. Because everything comes from the eternal Dao (contained within the Wuji) and eventually returns to the Dao, we begin and end our Qigong practice with this posture.

It is important to remember that embodiment of Wuji is a life long process of natural unfolding and progression into deeper and deeper levels of experience. The following exercises will help with embodiment of the Wuji posture.

### Standing with the Wall Exercise

This exercise, containing two parts, helps build a conscious connection between the Yongquan-Bubbling Springs (Kd-1) and Mingmen (GV-4).

#### Part I

- Stand about 5 to 6 inches away from a wall, facing away from it
- Gently allow yourself to fall back against the wall
- Flatten the spine against the wall
- Flatten the Ming Men into the wall
  - This is accomplished by tucking the pelvis under
  - You should not be able to slide your hand between the wall and your Lumbar Spine
- Follow the above recommendations for the Wuji posture

This exercise helps the student experience what it feels like to really flatten the lower back, engage the Ming Men and tuck the pelvis under. Because these areas tend to be underutilized in our society, this exercise can serve as an excellent template so that conscious awareness can be brought into these areas, and in time the student will have a cellular memory of what it feels like to engage the Ming Men.



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## Part II

- Very gently press the big toes into the ground
- Relax and press again, each time with less and less force, but with more and more awareness
- Bring awareness into the area of the Ming Men
- Begin to feel the connection from the big toes to the Ming Men
- With each press of the toes, there should be a corresponding movement in the Ming Men

This exercise helps bring a conscious and physical connection between the toes all the way through the legs and into the Lower Dan Tian and Ming Men. With time and practice, this connection becomes stronger and stronger, and is felt in all Qigong movements. Eventually, the student develops a very strong connection running from the Bubbling Springs (Kd 1) points at the bottom of the feet, drawing Qi in from the Earth, and running it up the Kidney meridian into the Hui Yin (CV 1) point just in front of the anus, and then up the Governing Channel into the Ming Men. This energetic connection constantly pumps Earth energy into the Gate of Life, bringing energy, vitality, and strength to the body.

## Suspension Bridge Visualization Exercise

As you stand in the Wuji, call up an image of a suspension bridge in your minds eye. Imagine that the bones of your body form the towers of the bridge. The towers are designed to take all of the downward force of gravity acting on the bridge and translate it into the ground. Therefore, imagine and feel your bones translating all of the weight of your body into the ground. Now, imagine the cables of the bridge. The cables are designed to translate the weight of the bridge onto the towers, which displace it into the ground. Therefore, imagine that your tendons are the cables, and your tendons translate all of the weight of your body onto the bones, and the bones translate it into the ground.

Create gentle expansion in all of your joints. This includes the fingers, elbows, shoulders, chest, spine, hips, knees, ankles, and toes.

## The Building Blocks of Qigong Practice

From the Dao and the infinite space of the Wuji emerges Taiji. When Yin and Yang are made manifest, dynamic movement occurs. Because Yin and Yang are at constant play with each other, their movement has infinite variety and diversity in motion and change within the macrocosm. The movements of Yin and Yang may be reproduced within the human body, providing an access point to (and a reflection of) the movements of the larger macrocosm, as well as a laboratory for exploring life and energy within the microcosm.

## From complex to simple

All Qigong movements may be broken down into basic building blocks or manageable units. These units, which are easier to learn individually rather than as parts of more complex sequences of movements, are practiced repeatedly until they are burned into the energetic memory and become embodied deep into the practitioner's energetic matrix. Once mastered, these building blocks may then be translated into any Qigong movement, or martial art form, and serve as a powerful foundation. To put it another way, the movements of Qigong are dissected into small units, which are then embodied on their own. Once mastered, the units are recombined into the original and more complex series of movements. This allows a tremendous amount of mindfulness, body awareness, and energetic skill to be acquired within each minute movement, which then flows into the more complete sequences of movement. These basic units of movement include 1) shifting the weight, 2) folding at the hips, and 3) pumping and rippling the spine.

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### **Shifting the Weight**

Starting from the Wuji posture, gently begin shifting your weight from side to side, keeping the weight in the center and on the inside of the feet. Gently begin to feel the side-to-side motion. Imagine that you are standing on two large coiled springs, and feel their compression as the weight shifts onto one foot, and their expansion as the weight shifts towards the other foot.

As you stand in the Wuji, you are bi-weighted, melting into the great void. When you begin to shift your weight, the perfect balance of the Wuji is transformed to the polarity of Yin and Yang. The leg that takes more of your weight is the Yin or substantial leg. The leg that takes less of your weight is the Yang or insubstantial leg.

Allow all of your conscious awareness to flow into your legs and especially your feet. As you do the exercise, you are not only developing tremendous awareness in movement, but are also training the mind in single pointed focus, which is a key to relaxation as well as success in the Shengong (spirit skill) meditations that will be introduced later.

### **Waiders example (water from left to right and right to left)**

A variation on shifting the weight is to imagine that you are wearing fisherman's waiders. Unlike in their conventional use, in this exercise, the water is inside your waiders rather than outside. As you stand bi-weighted, imagine that your waiders are filled with water about halfway up to your knees. As you shift the weight onto the right leg, imagine that the water is pouring over to the right leg as you shift. When you are about 70 percent of your weight on the right leg, imagine that the right waiders is completely filled with water, and the left is completely empty. Feel the weight of the water, and feel the water density around your leg, which amplifies the solidity and substantiality of the leg. Meanwhile, the left leg feels light and empty, and is taking only about 30 percent of your body weight. Now, begin to shift your weight onto the left leg, and as you do so, imagine the water pouring over to the left leg, and repeat the same imagination for the left as you did on the right.

You may use the breath to help direct the water, letting the exhalation fill the waiders to fullness. Your inhalation will start pouring the water to the opposite side. In other words, exhale as you move from the midline away from the body, and inhale as you move from the outside towards the midline (and bi-weighted position).

Once you feel complete with the exercise, return to the Wuji bi-weighted position, and allow water to fill both waiders to fullness. Feel the weight and density of the water around your legs, pulling you into the earth. Allow the waiders to become fuller and fuller, expanding out like balloons, becoming heavier and heavier. You may use inhalation to draw water from the earth through your Bubbling Spring Kd-1 points into your LDT, and exhalation to fill the waiders with water. Make sure the Mingmen is properly engaged, and stand for as long as you wish. To finish, you may allow the water to drain back into the earth, or pull it into your LDT for tonification.

### **Folding**

Another aspect of Qigong movement is folding at the hips to turn the torso, rather than allowing turning to occur anywhere along the spine. A common visualization is to imagine that the torso is a sack of rice or concrete, heavy and incapable of movement. The sack is stacked on the pelvis, and the only point of movement should occur at the hip joint (lateral and medial rotation). To isolate the hip joint, one can focus on the knees, and begin making small movements by pressing one knee forward and the opposite knee backwards, never fully extending either knee joint. The knees maintain a forward and backward movement, and never side to side (they were not designed to do that!). Resting the palms on the thighs sometimes aids in focusing and concentrating, as well as isolating the movement. When the movements are kept small, the Wuji posture is not compromised. In time, with practice and patience, one can learn to more easily isolate the muscle groups that perform the lateral and medial rotation.

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## Pumping and Rippling the Spine

Another aspect of Qigong movement is pumping and rippling the spine, which may be broken down into two distinct steps for ease of integration, and then recombined into one movement. The two steps begin with pumping, and then rippling is added to the pumping exercise.

### Pumping

*From Wuji Position (bi-weighted)*

Bring awareness into the feet, legs, and pelvis by standing in the Wuji. Begin gently rocking the pelvis back and forth, oscillating between an anterior and posterior tilt. You will engage the iliopsoas, gluteus minimus, and the adductors (among others) for the anterior tilt, and the piriformis, gluteus maximus, and hamstring muscles (among others) for a posterior tilt. Feel the sensations of connecting the feet, legs and pelvis to make this action, and notice any changes or sensations in the body. Next, press the big toes into the ground, and engage the adductors (insides of the thighs) along with the piriformis, gluteus maximus, and hamstring muscles while moving the pelvis into a posterior tilt. Relax the toes and muscles while moving into an anterior tilt. Again, notice any changes or sensations in the body. The anal sphincter may also be gently squeezed and pulled upwards while moving into the posterior tilt to increase the movement of Qi.

### *Energetic Action*

Performing this action engages the LDT and establishes its connection to the Earth. In chakra terms, the first chakra is stimulated and energy is drawn up from the earth through the bottom chakra gate and brought into the body. In terms of TCM, the Kd-1 Bubbling Springs are engaged at the bottom of the feet (by pressing the big toe) and energy is funneled up the legs (by engaging the adductors and other muscles) and into the CV-1 Meeting of Yin point, and into the LDT. Energy also travels up the GV channel and stimulates the GV-4 Gate of Life point, especially during the posterior pelvic tilt. A more advanced form of training is to guide the energy along the Sea of Marrow, starting at the toes and traversing up the bone structure and into the LDT. The gentle squeezing and relaxing of the muscles along the bones also activates the piezoelectric effect, thereby increasing resonant vibration in the body.

### *From a Folded Position*

Assuming a fold into the right, pumping is initiated by grasping with the toes and pushing away from the earth with the right foot. Pressing the right big toe into the ground helps this action. Next, the adductors are engaged along with the piriformis, gluteus maximus, and hamstring muscles (among others) for a posterior tilt. The Ming Men is fully engaged by moving the pelvis from an anterior pelvic tilt to a posterior pelvic tilt, flattening the lower back. The body is then allowed to return to its start position, relaxing the toes, muscles, and pelvis (allowing it to return to an anterior tilt). As in the exercise above, work to feel the connection and integration of bones, ligaments, tendons, and muscles as one unified whole.

### *Energetic Action*

Performing this exercise from a folded position has a similar effect to performing it in the Wuji position. The difference is in the energy being funneled up the right leg as opposed to both legs in the bi-weighted position. The energetic action on the root chakra is also slightly different in that more emphasis goes on funneling the energy up the right leg.

## Rippling the Spine

Rippling the spine is an extension of the pumping exercise. As mentioned, in the Wuji position, the energy is brought into the LDT via the CV-1 and GV-4 points. While rippling the spine, the energy is gently guided to flow up the GV channel along the back of the spine. Energy may also be guided along the spinal column, and internally along the Sea of Marrow, up to the GV-14 Big

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Vertebra point, and out into the arms, hands, and fingers. The energy may be extended out through the fingertips, or through the PC-8 Palace of Labor point located at the center of the palm.

The exercise is initiated from the Wuji just like the previous pumping exercise. The posterior tilt of the pelvis initiates a wave traversing up the spine, which is accomplished by properly and sequentially engaging the abdominal muscles, and rounding the shoulders to propagate the energy upwards.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The exercises described above, although simple enough in theory, generally take a very long time to master. The help of a qualified instructor can greatly aid in the process, however, still perfecting these movements takes a considerable amount of practice and patience.

The above exercises, being more than a basic workout, are designed to integrate the body on very deep levels. As connections are made, energetic blockages and past traumas may surface as they unwind and are being cleared away. Practicing these exercises increases hidden power, as described in an earlier section under Martial Qigong. The refinement of these movements serve as a foundation for propagating energy in Medical Qigong for self healing and cultivation, or in Medical Qigong treatments.

### **Specific Qigong Exercises**

Many of the exercises and meditations that follow originate from the International Institute of Medical Qigong MMQ (Master of Medical Qigong) certification program. Dr. Seth Lefkowitz, my Medical Qigong instructor, as well as my lineage in the Dragon Gate sect of Daoism, influenced these meditations, and provided several new Shengong exercises and many insights. My personal experiences, studies, and explorations also lead to subtle and sometimes overt modifications. Many of these meditations can be found in their original form within books written by Professor Jerry Alan Johnson, founder of the IIMQ.

### **Pulling Down Heavens**

Actions: Clearing, Regulating, and Harmonizing, depending on one's intention

Start from Wuji. While you inhale, raise your arms, pointing fingers away from your body. When your arms become parallel with the earth, rotate palms to heaven, and continue raising arms until fingers point to heaven. Exhale lowering arms with palms facing earth until they return to the Lower Dan Tian, then repeat.

Pulling Down Heavens can help bring balance and harmony to the three treasures.

Pulling Down Heavens should be done at the beginning and end of your practice, as well as in between each of the exercises listed below.

### **Qi Scatter**

Actions: Cleanses body of stagnant energy accumulated by stress, tension, etc.

- **Counter Swing**  
Exhaling, gently twist to one side as one arm swings in front of your body and the other arm swings behind your body. Inhale coming back to Wuji. Then exhale twisting to the opposite side, and swinging the opposite arm in the front and back of your body.

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- **Dropping the Post**

Placing feet 1 to 2 inches apart and applying the rules of Wuji posture, make small gentle bounces. Work to feel springiness in the feet, and a wave that moves from the earth all the way to the hands, which you first perceive physically and later energetically.

- **Trembling Horse**

Alternate pushing off from the ground with each foot causing an X pattern in the body (left leg to right shoulder, right leg to left shoulder). You may eventually feel a standing wave in the body, especially in the spine.

### **Swaying**

Actions: Cleanses and energizes the Yang Organs: Urinary Bladder, Gall Bladder, Small Intestine, Stomach, and Large Intestine

Inhale, bending at the elbow while hands come up and in towards your body, with elbows bent towards the earth, palms facing away from you, and fingers pointing to heaven. Exhale while hands drop. At the end of this motion your fingers point towards the earth, with your palms facing behind you. Repeat.

With each inhale, gather clean energy from the earth up your legs and into your body, and with each exhale, allow the turbid, stagnant, and unclear energy to come out your fingertips and into the earth. You may think of an old water pump that draws water up from a well when pumped. Eventually, there is only clean energy that flows from the earth through your body and out your fingertips as you clear away all the turbid, stagnant, and unclear energy.

### **Microcosmic Orbit**

Actions: Regulates Qi, Connects and harmonizes the 12 terrestrial branches

Shake hands so that qi flows to your palms. Bring palms close together until energy is felt. Place palms facing up, with fingers pointing towards each other but not touching, at Lower Dan Tian area. Allow your hands, with palms facing up, to come up to the top of your chest while inhaling. Then gently rotate palms to face towards the earth, with fingers still pointing at each other. While exhaling, bring your palms back down to Lower Dan Tian area. Then, rotate palms to heaven again and repeat. With imagination, your breath, and your palms, guide qi up your back (Governing Channel, Du Mai) as steam and down your front (Conception Vessel, Ren Mai) as water.

When we practice the Microcosmic Orbit Meditation (MCO), we are activating very special points along its pathway called the Twelve Terrestrial Branches, which also coincide with the twelve gates of the chakras. Because of this, the benefits of this meditation can be absolutely profound. When we balance ourselves (our microcosm) with the whole of creation (the macrocosm) in this way, our experiences give way to peace, tranquility, trust, healing and health, well being, compassion, and greater understanding. When out of balance, we find ourselves fighting against the currents of life, trying to advance when we should be retreating, or trying to retreat when we should be advancing. This, of course, is a recipe for stress and ill health. As we begin to distrust what life will bring, understanding narrows and we find ourselves continually off target. When we are synchronized with life, we beautifully ride the inevitable waves of change and growth. When we are dis-synchronized, the very same waves may drag us along the ocean floor. Because the Microcosmic Orbit is a microcosm reflection of the macrocosm, practicing this simple meditation is a powerful way to harmonize one self with the whole of creation, bringing greater health, peace, balance, and awareness.

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## Daoist 5

Actions: Open and dilate the meridians affecting the 5 Yin Organs / 5 Elements

- **Kidney**  
(Element: Water, Color: Bark Blue, Virtue: Wisdom, Acquired Emotion: Fear, Shock)  
Taking a wider stance, left hand goes behind touching the right Kidney, right hand in front at navel level, with palm pointing to heaven. While exhaling, gently bend down to the ground as if making a scooping motion with the right hand. You can imagine it dipping into water. While inhaling, come back up rotating the right palm to earth, bringing it all the way up to chest level. Repeat the motion. This exercise should also be done with the right hand touching the left Kidney, and the left hand in front with palm pointing to heaven. Remember to inhale as you come up and exhale as you come down.
- **Liver**  
(Element: Wood, Color: Forest Green, Virtue: Kindness, Acquired Emotion: Anger)  
Hands will push forward and pull back in an alternating pattern. Exhale as each hand is fully extended and inhale while hands are alternating.
- **Heart**  
(Element: Fire, Color: Red or Dark Pink, Virtue: Order, Acquired Emotion: Over-excitation)  
Begin by holding the energetic ball with the right hand at chest level, palm facing earth, and the left hand at navel with palm facing heaven. The right hand drops from chest level to navel and then presses out to the left side. At the same time the left hand at the navel rotates out to the left side and elevates to chest level. Both palms face away from the body. Return to holding energetic ball position, this time with the right hand at the navel and the left hand at chest level, palms facing each other. Repeat with the left hand dropping to the navel and then pushing out to the right side, while the right hand at the navel rotates out to the right side and elevates to chest level. Exhale while hands rotate and push away from the body. Inhale while hands return towards the body into holding the energetic ball position.
- **Spleen**  
(Element: Earth, Color: Golden Yellow, Virtue: Centeredness, Acquired Emotion: Worry, Over-thinking)  
Raise hands to forehead touching the tips of thumbs and index fingers, making an opening. Gently twist to the right while exhaling. Return to center while inhaling. Twist to the left while exhaling.
- **Lungs**  
(Element: Metal, Color: White, Virtue: Courage, Acquired Emotion: Sadness, Grief)  
Arms are stretched out in front with palms facing earth. With inhalation, open arms to right and left. Rotate palms to heaven, and while exhaling, bring the arms back out in front of the body.

## Healing Sounds

Actions: Purge and detoxify the organs, create space

When practicing the healing sounds, it is important to allow approximately 80% of one's breath to make the sound, and then simply exhale the last 20% without sound. The breath and sound should be relaxed. Take care not to force either the breath

Element	Organ	Sounds	Strong Sounds
Wood	Liver	Xu (Shu)	Guo
Fire	Heart	Ke (Ha)	Zheng (Jong)
Earth	Spleen	Hu (Who)	Gong
Metal	Lungs	Si (Sssss)	Shang
Water	Kidneys	Chui (Chre)	Yu (You)
Fire	Triple Burner	Xi (She)	Xi (She)

*Figure 2.1: Healing Sound Table*

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or the sound, as forcing the sounds can create tightness and strain, which will cause the energy to become knotted and obstructed. Maintaining relaxation enables the maximal therapeutic effect.

Healing sounds can be practiced in three distinct ways. These include loud, soft, and sub-vocal sounds. Loud sounds are typically practiced in cases of severe stagnation. Soft sounds are practiced to clear physical, mental, and emotional energetic obstructions. Sub-vocal sounds are practiced to clear mental, emotional, and spiritual obstructions.

One may consider the vocal sounds to act like wind blowing leaves, while the sub-vocal sounds act like wind blowing mist or fog. These poetic images help one to imagine the effects of both types of sounds.

### Ascend the Yin and Descend the Yang

Actions: Regulates Qi, Returns awareness to the body, and connects to Di Qi (Earth Qi)

Start at the medial tip of the big toe, inhaling with palms ascending up the yin channels, i.e. inside of the leg, all the way up to GV-1, and then around the Belt Vessel. Next, exhale with palms descending down the yang channels, i.e. down the buttocks and the outside of the leg all the way to the lateral tip of the little toe. On the exhale, make sure to wrap the palm around the buttock covering point GB-30

### Point Clearing (Massage or Tapping)

Actions: Helps regulate the person after completing Qigong practice.

For some of these points, we introduce gentle tapping to help clear stagnation, energetic blocks, and to activate the point's inherent qualities and properties, while for others we use gentle massage techniques. Because the points are subtle energetic centers, both the tapping and massaging should be gentle and relaxed. Tapping too hard or too aggressively can create further stagnation and energetic blockages.

- **LI 4 (Wood Element)**
  - Between thumb and index finger
  - Clears Heat, Cold, Wind, and pathogenic Qi from the Lungs
  - Tap or massage
- **PC 6 (Fire Element)**
  - Base of wrist
  - Regulates and Tonifies Heart, calms the spirit
  - Tap
- **LI 11 (Metal Element)**
  - Elbow crease
  - Clears Heat, Wind, and pathogenic Qi from the Lungs
  - Tap or massage
- **Ht 1 (Fire Element)**
  - Under armpit
  - Regulates Heart
  - Massage
- **GB 21 (Wood Element)**
  - Base of neck at shoulder
  - Clears Heat, Cold, Wind, redirects rebellious Qi down
  - Tap
  
- Clearing down the Conception Vessel (Ren Mai) and around the Belt Channel
- Knocking on the Kidneys, Ming Men (Gate of Life), and then GB 30 (Buttocks)
- Clapping down the outside of you leg (Yang channels) and then up the inside of your leg (Yin channels)
- Rubbing Belly with the flow of digestion

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To finish, you may pull down heavens as many times as you like. With the last pull down, stop at your Lower Dan Tian to collect and store the energy there, as described in Returning and Storing the Qi in the Lower Dan Tian.

### **Returning and Storing the Qi in the Lower Dan Tian**

Actions: Returns and stores Qi in the Lower Dan Tian. Grounds the person back into the physical body and plane of awareness after Qigong practice.

Face palms towards the body and rest them on your Lower Dan Tian. Specifically, align Lao Gong (PC 8) of each palm directly over Chi Hai (Ren or CV 6) for returning and storing the Qi in the Lower Dan Tian. Hold these points together while standing in Wuji, breathing into the lower abdomen, and focusing the mind there. This helps return the Qi and is very important after practice, so as not to dissipate the benefits of practice, and to root the consciousness back into the body.



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### Daoist Meditations and Shengong Training

Wu Zang Meditation (Wu = 5, Zang = Yin or Solid Organs)(五臟)

Taken from *Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy*, by Jerry Allan Johnson, Vol. 3; Ch. 30; p. 263-265

The Wu Zang meditation is primarily used for protection.

As a preparation, complete the 1-10 meditation (or the 1-4 meditation if you don't know 1-10 yet)

- 1) Light the Center Core: Imagine Baihui (crown) opens up to receive Divine white light from above. Light fills the entire body, then coalesces in the center core. Imagine the core like a tube from top of head to perineum, or like a light bulb filament, shining brightly.
- 2) Yellow Mist Rising: Imagine yellow mist rising from the earth, filling and permeating the entire body, and connecting to the Spleen organ. Then imagine the golden yellow energy merging and synergizing with the core of white light. This represents the Yi (Intention) which will root and stabilize your power.
- 3) Red Phoenix: Center your focus and feeling awareness in the Heart organ, imagine and feel a portal opening in front, and, like a mist, red fiery energy emerges to the front of you, condensing and coalescing to form a red phoenix. This represents your Shen (Spirit), alive and graceful, yet powerful, ready to protect you.
- 4) Dark Blue/Back Turtle & Snake: Focus on feeling your Kidneys and Mingmen area. From there, energy, like a mist, flows backwards like water, forming a large black turtle and snake. Turtle protects you like a mighty shield, and snake is ready to strike at anyone who may approach from behind. These animals represent your Jing (Essence) and ancestral energy behind you, as well as your Zhi (Will) to survive.
- 5) White Tiger: Place your feeling awareness in the Lungs. A portal opens under your right ribs and a white mist flows out to your right, forming a white tiger, strong as steel. Tiger represents your Po (7 Corporeal Souls) and the body's animal nature ready to protect you with an animal passion for survival.
- 6) Blue/Green Dragon: Place your feeling awareness in the Liver organ. Feel and imagine the energy like a mist flowing to your left, flowing out from the Liver and out of your body from underneath your left ribs, and forming a large blue/green dragon. See its sinewy and resilient nature, like bamboo. This represents the Hun (3 Ethereal Souls), spiritual awareness guarding and protecting you, and a spiritual passion for victory.
- 7) Rotate the Animals: Use your intention to revolve the animals in a counter-clockwise direction. Keep focus on each animal, and allow the rotations to increase in speed and momentum. Each animal circles you and offers you protection. Eventually, the speed increases to such a degree that the animal colors and powers blend together in a mighty wind surrounding your body, forming an energetic bubble.
- 8) Return the Animals: After you create the rainbow bubble of protection, bring each of the animals back home to its organ (Red - Heart, Black - Kidneys, White - Lungs, Green - Liver)
- 9) Fill the Bubble with Light: As the animals return, imagine and feel a white mist and white light emitting from your pores, filling up the energy bubble that the animals just occupied. This connects the internal organs with the external energy.
- 10) Big Dipper: Imagine and feel the 7 stars of the Big Dipper descending and sparkling like diamonds above your head. This represents your connection to the "Will of Heaven." This represents the aligning of your personal will with the Divine Will.

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## Chinese Inner Alchemy & Medical Qigong

### What is the Inner Alchemy Center?

The Inner Alchemy Center is a network of holistic and alternative practitioners. This includes Tom's service of conveying ancient wisdom for the betterment of people's lives. Tom teaches and leads classes, workshops, and retreats in Qigong, Meditation, and other spiritual practices, as well as Medical Qigong treatments and private instruction.

Drawing on the ancient wisdom of traditions he sincerely practiced and cultivated for many years gives Tom exceptional skills in leading, guiding, and helping people individually or in a classroom setting.

With unwavering dedication and commitment, Tom refined his Medical Qigong skills and practice to a high degree of proficiency, while his deep connection with Sri Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma) continually opens his heart to serve the highest good of each individual as well as the community.

### About Thomas Leichardt

Tom integrates many traditions into a beautiful expression of service to his community in the form of classes, workshops, treatments, and private instruction.

Tom graduated with a Doctorate of Medical Qigong (DMQ) from the International Institute of Medical Qigong, the oversees college of Henan University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (China).

Additionally, Tom received lineage into the Dragon Gate sect of Taoism at Qīngchéngshān (青城山) in China, where he was given his Taoist name Li Zhong. Li means fire, while Zhong indicates center.

Tom also received Mantra Initiation from Sri Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma), as well as his spiritual name Yogeshwar. Tom serves Amma on staff during some of Her tours and participates in other humanitarian activities.

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