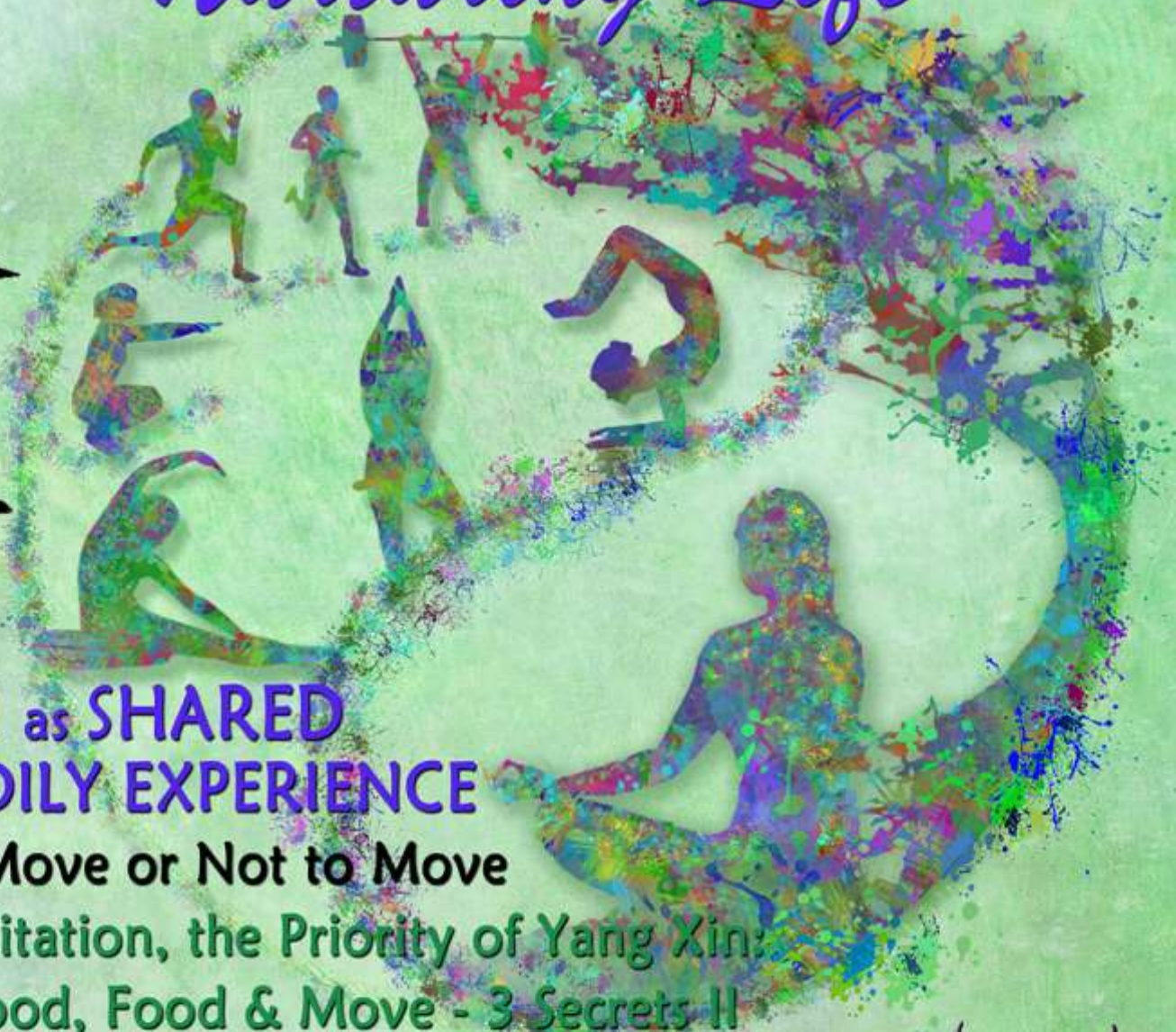


A Community of Health, Happiness & Harmony

# Yang-Sheng

## Nurturing Life

養生



### TAIJI as SHARED BODILY EXPERIENCE

- To Move or Not to Move
- Meditation, the Priority of Yang Xin:  
Mood, Food & Move - 3 Secrets II

### SEXUAL ALCHEMY:

#### Female Blue Water Snake Year

- Mindfulness in a Twittering World
- Is Stress Making You Sick & Sad?
- Seasonal Harmony...and more



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March-April, 2013  
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Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit



# Yang-Sheng

(Nurturing Life)

養生

A network for health, happiness & harmony

[www.Yang-Sheng.com](http://www.Yang-Sheng.com)



*When mind is simple, the world becomes  
simple, and happiness will grow;  
when mind is free, the life will be free,  
and joy will follow... :-)*

*心简单，世界就简单，幸福才会生长。  
心自由，生活就自由，到哪都有快乐！*

Yang-Sheng (養生 Nurturing Life) is a FREE e-magazine and a network for health care professionals - complementary medical practitioners, Qigong, Tai Chi, Yoga, Reiki and other mind-body and spirit cultivators. It promotes methods of self-healing, positive mindfulness and health preservation. Yang-Sheng merges traditional knowledge with modern scientific research and clinical evidence and combines ancient wisdom with modern experience to support health and well-being.

Your participation, contribution, sharing and feedback are truly appreciated.

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## From the Editor 编者的话

Welcome to the March-April issue of *Yang-Sheng Magazine*! This issue's theme is Meditation vs Exercises, and as many of our fine and informative articles point out, this is an area of life where balance between passive and active practices is frequently the "best medicine."

Beginning with this issue, I am happy and honored to be able to serve you and the wellness community as the new Editor in Chief of *Yang-Sheng*.

Since 2006 I have been involved with this wonderful, supportive online community beginning as a columnist writing the "Illuminating the Dao" columns for Yang Sheng's precursor, the former *Qi Dao Newsletter* also published by Kevin Chen in conjunction with WISH, the World Institute for Self Healing. In 2011 and 2012, I also served *Yang Sheng* as an Associate Editor. I am fortunate in that I have seen this community grow into a vibrant, international resource for mind-body wellness! We promise to continue this trend as we expand both our online network, and explore additional avenues of communication such as the recent addition of a print edition of *Yang Sheng* in both English and Chinese. It is our sincere desire to fulfill our purpose, providing information and value to help you "Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind and Spirit."

My personal interest in body-mind-spirit wellness started in 1995 when I began my qigong practice and the study of herbal medicine. Many people whose interest perks in these fields do so due to health issues. I did not have any health complaints at that time, and continue to enjoy excellent health now, I was simply interested in the holistic and integrated nature of life, exploring the path to harmony with and within my physical, mental, and spiritual environment. At about the same time, I returned to the workforce beginning a second career as an educator where for several years I team-taught Grammar at the middle-school and high-school levels.

In 2005 I departed the school environment to pursue a career in holistic wellness, first earning a Holistic Relaxation Therapist degree from Natural Health Institutes for the body, and in 2011 becoming an ordained minister in the (original) Universal Live Church for the spirit.

From 2007 to 2012, I worked with clients privately as well as teaching qigong and meditation classes through Central Oregon Community College, and meditation classes for St. Charles Medical Center, both in Bend, Oregon. Also during this time, I worked as a free-lance editor and proofreader, helping other writers break into the market to publish both books and articles..

Today, as well as serving you as the Editor in Chief of *Yang Sheng Magazine*, I am writing my own book describing my pilgrimage to India where I traveled alone from October through December of 2012. Please visit my website: Michelle K Wood.com <http://michellekwood.com> Thank you!

Namaste,  
Michelle Wood  
Editor-in-Chief



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# Mindfulness In A Twittering World

Debi Dunn, MBA and Andrea M. Delligati, Ph.D.

I admit that I am the last person who should be writing anything about technology. Many of us “seasoned” psychologists have been catapulted into an electronic age that spawns fear and ambivalence. While I do value the capabilities of word processing, computerized test scoring, e-mail, and, yes, even Wikis, I have not been convinced that social networking is worth all the aggravation. I have a Web site and a profile on LinkedIn. What more could I need?

This was my conversation with a holistic health practitioner I met at a womens' conference in November as we sat in a presentation about social media. When we met for lunch a few weeks later, she was considering taking the plunge but had her reservations!

As a humble teacher of ancient movement therapies known as qigong and t'ai chi, she lives, teaches, and values a simple lifestyle that includes meditation, stress reduction techniques, proper nutrition and plenty of exercise. But how is it possible to live in the moment, stay centered, **focused and “mindful,”** when your cell phone has become your new communication appendage? It no longer just rings to let you know someone wants to talk to you, but it beeps and buzzes, leaving you messages in e-mail, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and more!

Everyone, it seems, is caught up in “Social Networking” and it requires a “new” vocabulary to help us communicate with each other in this fast-paced “e-world.” For example, you have “Friends” on Facebook who can friend and “unfriend” you if they don’t like what you have to

say. Facebook tends to be *very* social and people display little filtering in what they will post for others to see. Of course for psychologists Facebook provides lots of data for our study of human nature! Anyway, people can “Fan” you on a Facebook Fan Page which is more professional in content and is used to advertise your business, events, or products. People “Follow” you on



Image courtesy of iStockphoto.com / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Twitter where you can present public education messages, send people to your Web site for information, or advertise your business. The downside is Twitter’s 140 character limit within which to type a succinct message to capture attention or inspire others. LinkedIn began as a professional networking site utilized by larger companies to find talent. Currently, small businesses and professionals are developing a presence on LinkedIn. Finally, there is a Blog that is regularly updated with a “post” of a short paragraph on some topic.

Now, if you are like me, your head is swimming. There are not enough hours in the day to deal

with all these different means of electronic communication. Well, guess what? You can do the work just once because all can be linked together through a “platform” like Typepad for a Blog and TweetDeck to manage your FaceBook Fan Page and Twitter “tweets.” Other platform options are available, but regardless of which ones you choose, the “icons” for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Blog should appear on your Web site Home page so visitors can easily click over to these other sites. Believe it or not, this social networking is all about building communities of people who are interested in you and what you have to offer. The best part of all this is that it’s free on-line publicity for your business and for psychology! But, before you jump into any social networking site, please take the time to learn how to set up a secure and private environment through the use of the “Privacy Settings.”

So, back to my friend, Debi, who as a “mindfulness”

practitioner, perceives the social networking movement as “a return to the ‘yin’ (feminine, emotional, social) vs. the

‘yang’ (masculine, less emotional, more independent) attitude.” In some respects it

is a refreshing change, but in others it is quite bothersome with so much information from so many different channels. She noted that some of the qigong, t’ai chi and mindfulness masters do not subscribe to this twittering world, while others have jumped in with both feet. So the real question was, “Should she succumb?” Here is her story:

“I said there was just no way in “my



mindful qigong world” that I had “time” to tweet, friend, fan or even follow all these communities of people. But that all changed with my first tweet! I already had the requisite website, [www.theheartofhealing.com](http://www.theheartofhealing.com), to which I attached a blog. I set up a Facebook page and created a separate Fan page called, “The Heart of Healing.” I already had a LinkedIn site for Debi Dunn. So, the last step was setting up Twitter, “[DebiDunnQigong](#)” and TweetDeck to manage Twitter and Facebook messages...and probably more which I haven’t even figured out yet. I sent out a 140 character “tweet” message and within 24 hours got followers from Australia, the UK, and Singapore. Overnight, I went global! A woman from the UK, a book publisher, read my tweet, checked out my Fan page on Facebook, went to my Web site, read my blog, and then emailed me to see if I would be on her BlogRadio show in April 2010 to talk about Qigong and my new Tranquil Journeys meditation CD. “Oh,” she added, “I would be glad to offer your two new Qigong DVDs and meditation





CD for sale on my Web site here in the UK if you would like! By the way, if you are planning to publish a work-book, I can also help you with that **through my new website for authors.** If this were not enough excitement, the following day I received an e-mail that said, **"The Dalai Lama is now following your tweets on Twitter."** That's all the confirmation I needed! All is **tranquil in my world...now back to my meditation...ohmmmm."**

Maybe we would all feel a bit more "tranquil" once we put aside our fears and embrace this new technology to advance our businesses, our profession, and psychology's value to the public. After this last year, I'm ready to give it a try!



Debi Dunn, MBA, is a Certified Level III Advanced Qigong Instructor through the National Qigong Association. She is also a professor of Stress Management at West Chester University, West Chester, PA, and holds additional certifications in yoga, meditation, Reiki, and is an EFT practitioner. Debi scripted and co-produced

two "Qigong for Everyone" dvds, "The Basics", and "Designing Your Own Practice", and a meditation cd, "Tranquil Journeys". She has studied qigong and t'ai chi with Master Nan Lu, Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, Brother Bernard Seif, Sifu Sara Gellhorn, and Ken Cohen. Debi also presents meeting breaks and stress management workshops at a variety of major corporations. In 2001, Debi survived successful brain surgery to remove a benign tumor and began to question her soul's purpose in life after 20 years in corporate life. She rediscovered her true inner self and rededicated her life's work to becoming a compassionate healing presence for others. As a holistic educator, she teaches students and clients how to take charge of their body-mind-spirit balance through integrated healing modalities. [www.nicelydunncoaching.com](http://www.nicelydunncoaching.com)



Andrea M. Delligatti, Ph.D., Consulting Psychologist, Executive Coach, Mediator, partners with corporate executives and business owners to creatively resolve people problems that derail business performance. By transforming problems into **solutions, she increases the organization's emotional intelligence.** In the process, she creates psychologically healthy workplaces where people excel and business prospers for a better bottom line. Her practice emerged from a marketplace need to combine quality professional services, exceptional customer satisfaction and the creation of a culture of value and integrity for the client organization. Clients describe me as a genuine, empathic person and creative problem solver who inspires them to achieve more than they ever envisioned for themselves.

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# Tai Chi : Got Gong

Jessi ca Sommar, MSc

Tai chi is like any art, sport or devotion – the more you do it, the more you build up what the Chinese call ‘gong’ or ‘benefit from work.’ We don’t talk much in the West about someone’s having ‘gong,’ but most of us can recognize ‘gong’ when we see it – it’s that person doing something that looks effortless, simple and grace-filled. They can be cleaning their kitchen, moving through a yoga sequence, washing their car, lobbing a tennis ball, performing a *pas de deux*, or teaching in a way that elevates your heart and mind to understand a new principle.

And ‘gong’ not only looks good, it does good.

Having gong means that body, mind, spirit and soul are moving together in harmony on a regular basis, building up a resonance and a deep inner strength. This resonance produces steady breath, balanced moods, a quiet mind and a peaceful heart – all beneficial states in themselves, but moreover triggering, according to modern science, the self-healing response and thereby re-

ducing the effects of stress.

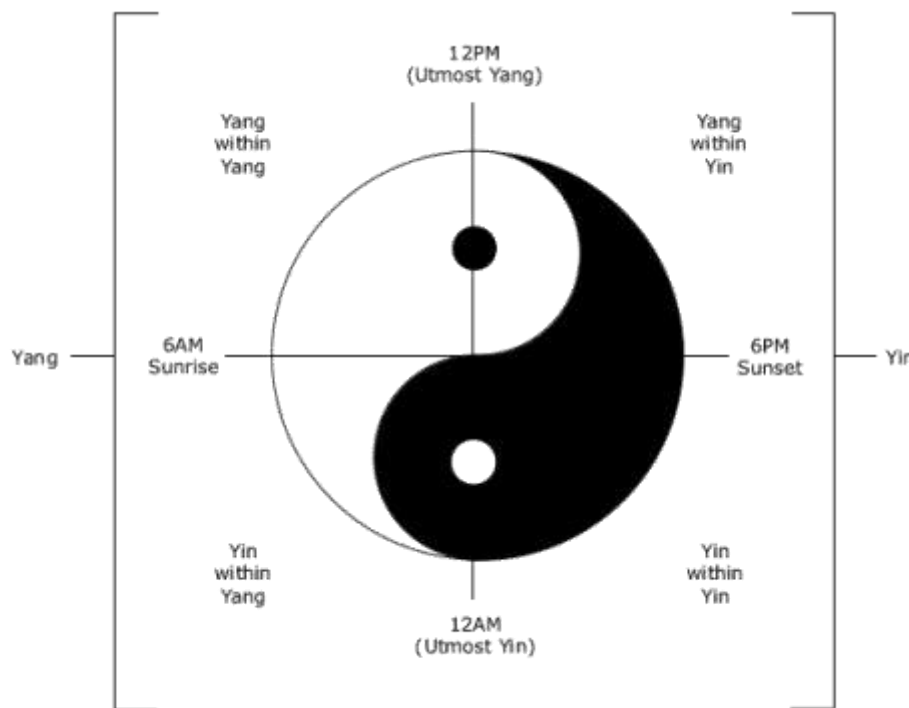
You Cannot Step Into The Same River Twice

How to get this ‘gong?’ Daily practice. I’ve been practicing Taichi for over seven years and every

day is a new day. When I go outside and prepare for practice, I am never the same person, mentally, physically, emotionally; my breath is not the same, the weather is not the same, and the world is not the same. Only the Taichi form remains the same and I do it and repeat it.

Every day I practice, I learn some-

thing new about myself, the world, Taichi and others. Taichi talks about the principle of ‘stillness within movement and the movement within stillness.’ As I move through the form, a breeze stirs, my breath changes, a creature stops by to watch, the clouds dance and I am transported. I feel as though I am a still-point in the





middle of a chaotic universe, even while I am in motion.

No matter the resistance that comes up – to stay in bed, to sleep a little more – **once I'm outside** and in motion, the benefits reveal themselves and I am astounded and grateful.

And then there are times when the daily practice feels disappointing – flat, dull, heavy and routine. **That's when I remember my master saying: 'conscious practice, unconscious results.'** Even though I feel as if I have not advanced at all, that I am just a beginner after seven years, that I am fuddling and clumsy, I remember that I cannot judge my advancement. I bring my consciousness to my practice and the results will reveal themselves in time.

### Seasons

I follow Daoist teachings regarding how I practice my Taichi. The Daoists have broken up the days and seasons into yin and yang. Yin being the feminine, dark, fertile, receptive, passive and yang being the masculine, light, dry, outgoing and active principle. The interplay of yin and yang are what creates the 10,000 things and so the Daoists **revere the yin/yang symbol you've probably seen:** a circle divided by black and white segments with a bit of black in the white and a bit of white in the black. This symbol is called the great Taichi.

I have developed my own practice schedule to harmonize myself with heaven and earth: in the spring which is a growing yang season, I practice at dusk a growing yin time. In the Summer, a high-yang time, I practice at midnight a high-yin time. In the autumn, a waning yang time, I practice at noon, a high-yang time and in winter, a high-yin time, I practice at noon, a high-yang time.

If this all sounds complicated, please know that this is my own schedule developed through trial and error. The only suggestion by the masters throughout the centuries is daily practice of Taichi in order to develop healing, balance and

gong!

**Now, I've missed days of practice – I'm only human – but my intention to practice is always at the forefront. Try a 90 and 90 practice – practice for 30 minutes once a day for 90 days and see if you don't notice you've got gong!**

I encourage you to find a good teacher and practice diligently. The rewards you will never lose and the benefits will grow over time.

Dao Blessings.



Jessica Sommar, is an author/ instructor in Classical Yang Family Style Taijiquan and Daoyin at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in the Berkshires. She has trained in Daoist alchemy, Taijiquan fist and weapons forms and daoyin [yang

sheng practices] and apprenticed in TCM — acupuncture and eastern herbs for six years, including living two years in Hangzhou, PRC. In the past two decades her training includes western herbs, western astrology, various energy healing modalities and she is a CPE-certified Interfaith Chaplain. She recently graduated as a 200-hour certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher and works as marketing and administrative coordinator for the Kripalu Schools of Yoga and Ayurveda. Learn more about Jessica at her blog or from her Facebook page **Jess' Daoyin & Taijiquan** at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Jess-Daoyin-Taijiquan/112494282179657>.



# Mind-body Medicine Research Update

*Compiled by Kevin Chen, Ph.D.*

Advantage of meditation over exercise in reducing cold and flu illness is related to improved function and quality of life. *Influenza Other Respi Viruses*. 2012 Nov 21. By Obasi CN, Brown R, Ewers T, et al. from Dept of Family Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI, USA.

**Purpose:** To examine whether apparent advantages following training in meditation over exercise can be attributed to specific symptoms, functional impairments, or quality-of-life indicators assessed by the Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symptom Survey (WURSS-24).

**Methods:** Results from the randomized controlled trial "Meditation or Exercise for Preventing Acute Respiratory Illness" showed mean global severity and total days of illness were worse in control (358, 8.9) compared with exercise (248, 5.1) or meditation (144, 5.0). Global severity of illness was estimated using area under the curve from daily self-reported severity scores on the WURSS-24. For this project, we estimated within-group WURSS item-level severity and between-group effect sizes (Cohen's "d" statistic) relative to control. The item-level effect sizes were grouped into (i) symptom and (ii) function and quality of life domains.

**Results:** Among the three groups, mediators showed the lowest severity estimates for 21 of 22 WURSS items. Item-level Cohen's "d" indicated most benefit was evident in WURSS items representing function and quality of life. Com-

pared with exercise, meditation fostered larger reductions in illness severity, although due mostly to improved function and the quality of life domain ( $d=-0.33$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) compared with symptom domain ( $d=-0.22$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusions:** The apparent advantage of training in meditation over exercise for reducing cold and flu illness is explained more by improved function and quality of life than by a reduction in symptom severity.



Randomized controlled trial of mindfulness meditation for generalized anxiety disorder: effects on anxiety and stress reactivity. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2013 Mar 13. By Hoge EA, Bui E, Marques L, et al. from Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA 02114 [ehoge@partners.org](mailto:ehoge@partners.org)

**Purpose:** Mindfulness meditation has met increasing interest as a therapeutic strategy for anxiety disorders, but prior studies have been limited by methodological concerns, including a lack of an active comparison group. This is the first randomized, controlled trial comparing the manualized Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program with an active control for gener-





alized anxiety disorder (GAD), a disorder characterized by chronic worry and physiologic hyperarousal symptoms.

**Method:** Ninety-three individuals with DSM-IV-diagnosed GAD were randomly assigned to an 8-week group intervention with MBSR or to an attention control, Stress Management Education (SME), between 2009 and 2011. Anxiety symptoms were measured with the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAMA; primary outcome measure), the Clinical Global Impressions-Severity of Illness and -Improvement scales (CGI-S and CGI-I), and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). Stress reactivity was assessed by comparing anxiety and distress during pretreatment and post treatment administration of the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST).

**Results:** A modified intent-to-treat analysis including participants who completed at least 1 session of MBSR ( $n = 48$ ) or SME ( $n = 41$ ) showed that both interventions led to significant ( $P < .0001$ ) reductions in HAMA scores at endpoint, but did not significantly differ. MBSR, however, was associated with a significantly greater reduction in anxiety as measured by the CGI-S, the CGI-I, and the BAI (all  $P$  values  $< .05$ ). MBSR was also associated with greater reductions than SME in anxiety and distress ratings in response to the TSST stress challenge ( $P < .05$ ) and a greater in-

crease in positive self-statements ( $P = .004$ ).

**Conclusions:** These results suggest that MBSR may have a beneficial effect on anxiety symptoms in GAD and may also improve stress reactivity and coping as measured in a laboratory stress challenge.

An update on mindfulness meditation as a self-help treatment for anxiety and depression. *Psychol Res Behav Manag.* 2012;5:131-41. By Edenfield TM, Saeed SA. From Dept of Psychiatric Medicine, Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, USA.

In recent years, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) treatments have increased in popularity. This is especially true for treatments that are related to exercise and mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in the treatment of both mental and physical illness. MBIs, such as Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which are derived from ancient Buddhist and Yoga philosophies, have become popular treatments in contemporary psychotherapy. While there is growing evidence that supports the role of these interventions in relapse prevention, little is known about the role that MBIs play in the treatment of acute symptoms of depression and anxiety. Even less is known about the importance of specific components of MBIs (eg, mindfulness meditation [MM]) and the overall impact that these interventions have on the experience or expression of psychological distress. Moreover, few studies have rigorously evaluated the dose-response relationship that is required to effect positive symptom change and the mechanisms of change that are responsible for observed improvements. This review will define meditation and mindfulness, discuss the relationship between stress and health and how MM relates to therapeutically engaging the relaxation response, and review the empirical findings that are related to the efficacy of MM in the treatment of depression and anxiety symptoms. Given the paucity of research that examines the applications of these treatments in clinical populations, the limitations of applying these findings to clinical samples will be mentioned. A brief review of

the issues related to the possible mechanisms of change and the dose-response relationship regarding MBIs, particularly MM, will be provided. Finally, limitations of the extant literature and future directions for further exploration of this topic will be offered.



Physical exercise intervention in depressive disorders: Meta-analysis and systematic review. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*. 2013 Jan 30. By Josefsson T, Lindwall M, Archer T. from School of Social and Health Sciences, Halmstad University, Halmstad, Sweden.

Previous meta-analyses investigating the effect of exercise on depression have included trials where the control condition has been categorized as placebo despite the fact that this particular placebo intervention (e.g., meditation, relaxation) has been recognized as having an antidepressant effect. Because meditation and mindfulness-based interventions are associated with depression reduction, it is impossible to separate the effect of the physical exercise from the meditation-related parts. The present study determined the efficacy of exercise in reducing

symptoms of depression compared with no treatment, placebo conditions or usual care among clinically defined depressed adults. Of 89 retrieved studies, 15 passed the inclusion criteria of which 13 studies presented sufficient information for calculating effect sizes. The main result showed a significant large overall effect favoring exercise intervention. The effect size was even larger when only trials that had used no treatment or placebo conditions were analyzed. Nevertheless, effect size was reduced to a moderate level when only studies with high methodological quality were included in the analysis. Exercise may be recommended for people with mild and moderate depression who are willing, motivated, and physically healthy enough to engage in such a program.

Complementary medicine, exercise, meditation, diet, and lifestyle modification for anxiety disorders: a review of current evidence. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*. 2012; 2012:809653. By Sarris J, Moylan S, Camfield DA, et al. from Dept of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC 3000, Australia.

Use of complementary medicines and therapies (CAM) and modification of lifestyle factors such as physical activity, exercise, and diet are being increasingly considered as potential therapeutic options for anxiety disorders. The objective of this meta review was to examine evidence across a broad range of CAM and lifestyle interventions in the treatment of anxiety disorders. In early 2012 we conducted a literature search of PubMed, Scopus, CINAHL, Web of Sci-





ence, PsycInfo, and the Cochrane Library, for key studies, systematic reviews, and meta analyses in the area. Our paper found that in respect to treatment of generalized anxiety or specific disorders, CAM evidence revealed current support for the herbal medicine Kava. One isolated study shows benefit for naturopathic medicine, whereas acupuncture, yoga, and Tai chi have tentative supportive evidence, which is hampered by overall poor methodology. The breadth of evidence does not support homeopathy for treating anxiety. Strong support exists for lifestyle modifications including adoption of moderate exercise and mindfulness meditation, whereas dietary improvement, avoidance of caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine offer encouraging preliminary data. In conclusion, certain lifestyle modifications and some CAMs may provide a beneficial role in the treatment of anxiety disorders.

<http://www.hindawi.com/journals/ecam/2012/809653/>

The effects of qigong on anxiety, depression, and psychological well-being: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med.* 2013;2013:152738. By Wang F, Man JK, Lee EK, et al. From Psychological Department, Guang'an Men Hospital, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, Beijing, China.

**Introduction:** The effect of Qigong on psychological well-being is relatively unknown. This study systematically reviewed the effects of Qigong on anxiety, depression, and psychological well-being.

**Methods:** Using fifteen studies published between 2001 and 2011, a systematic review was carried out and meta-analyses were performed on studies with appropriate homogeneity. The quality of the outcome measures was also assessed.

**Results:** We categorized these studies into three groups based on the type of subjects involved as follows: (1) healthy subjects, (2) subjects with chronic illnesses, and (3) subjects with depression. Based on the heterogeneity assessment of available studies, meta-analyses were conducted in three studies of patients with type II diabetes in the second group, which suggested



that Qigong was effective in reducing depression (ES = -0.29; 95% CI, -0.58-0.00) and anxiety (ES = -0.37; 95% CI, -0.66-0.08), as measured by Symptom Checklist 90, and in improving psychological well-being (ES = -0.58; 95% CI, -0.91-0.25) as measured by Diabetes Specific Quality of Life Scale. Overall, the quality of research methodology of existing studies was poor. **Conclusions:** Preliminary evidence suggests that Qigong may have positive effects on psychological well-being among patients with chronic illnesses. However the published studies generally had significant methodological limitations. More high-quality studies are needed.

<http://www.hindawi.com/journals/ecam/2013/152738/>

Tai Chi practitioners have better postural control and selective attention in stepping down with and without a concurrent auditory response task. *Eur J Appl Physiol.* 2013 Mar 14. By Lu X, Siu KC, Fu SN, et al. from Dept of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China.

To compare the performance of older experienced Tai Chi practitioners and healthy controls in dual-task versus single-task paradigms, namely stepping down with and without performing an auditory response task, a cross-sectional study was conducted in the Center for East-meets-West in Rehabilitation Sciences at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong. Twenty-eight Tai Chi practitioners



( $73.6 \pm 4.2$  years) and 30 healthy control subjects ( $72.4 \pm 6.1$  years) were recruited. Participants were asked to step down from a 19-cm-high platform and maintain a single-leg stance for 10 s with and without a concurrent cognitive task. The cognitive task was an auditory Stroop test in which the participants were required to respond to different tones of voices regardless of their word meanings. Postural stability after stepping down under single- and dual-task paradigms, in terms of excursion of the subject's center of pressure (COP) and cognitive performance, was measured for comparison between the two groups. Our findings demonstrated significant between-group differences in more outcome measures during dual-task than single-task performance. Thus, the auditory Stroop test showed that Tai Chi practitioners achieved not only significantly less error rate in single-task, but also significantly faster reaction time in dual-task, when compared with healthy controls similar in age and other relevant demographics. Similarly, the stepping-down task showed that Tai Chi practitioners not only displayed significantly less COP sway area in single-task, but also significantly less COP sway path than healthy controls in dual-task. These results showed that Tai Chi practitioners achieved better postural stability after stepping down as well as better performance in auditory response task than healthy controls. The improved performance that was magnified by dual motor-cognitive task performance may point to the benefits of Tai Chi being a mind-and-body exercise.

Associations Between Tai Chi Chung Program, Anxiety, and Cardiovascular Risk Factors. *Am J Health Promot.* 2013 Mar 7. By Chang MY, Yeh

SC, Chu MC, et al. from the Graduate Institute of Integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine With Western Nursing, College of Nursing, National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences, Taipei, Taiwan.

**Purpose:** To examine the effects of a Tai Chi Chung (TCC) program, an efficiency approach, on anxiety and cardiovascular risk factors. **Design:** A quasi-experimental study. **Setting:** A community in Taipei City, Taiwan. **Subjects:** One hundred thirty-three adults aged 55 years and older. **Intervention:** Sixty-four participants (experimental group) attended a 60-minute Tai Chi exercise three times per week for 12 weeks, whereas 69 participants (control group) maintained their usual daily activities.

**Measures:** Anxiety states, systolic blood pressure (SBP), diastolic blood pressure (DBP),



body mass index (BMI), and waist circumference (WC) were assessed at baseline, 6 weeks into the experiment, and 12 weeks into the experiment. Generalized estimating equations were used to evaluate the changes.

**Results:** Participants showed a greater drop in anxiety levels ( $\beta = -2.57$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and DBP ( $\beta = -7.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ) at the 12-week follow-up than did the controls. SBP significantly decreased in the 6-week follow-up and 12-week follow-up tests. The participants in the intervention achieved a greater drop in BMI at the 6-week and 12-week follow-up visits than the controls. The interventions demonstrated decreased average WC at the 6-week and 12-week follow-up visits as compared to the controls.





Conclusion. The results highlight the long-term benefits of a TCC program in facilitating health promotion by reducing anxiety and risk factors for cardiovascular diseases.

Effect of an office work-site-based yoga program on heart rate variability: outcomes of a randomized controlled trial.

BMC Complement Altern Med. 2013 Apr 10;13(1):82. By Cheema BS, Houridis A, Busch L, et al.

Background: Chronic work-related stress is an independent risk factor for cardiometabolic diseases and associated mortality, particularly when compounded by a sedentary work environment. The purpose of this study was to determine if an office work-site-based hatha yoga program could improve physiological stress, evaluated via heart rate variability (HRV), and associated health-related outcomes in a cohort of office workers.

Methods: Thirty-seven adults employed in university-based office positions were randomized upon the completion of baseline testing to an experimental or control group. The experimental group completed a 10-week yoga program prescribed three sessions per week during lunch hour (50 min per session). An experienced instructor led the sessions, which emphasized asanas (postures) and vinyasa (exercises). The primary outcome was the high frequency (HF) power component of HRV. Secondary outcomes included additional HRV parameters, musculoskeletal fitness (i.e. push-up, side-bridge, and sit & reach tests) and psychological indices (i.e. state and trait anxiety, quality of life and job satisfaction).

Results: All measures of HRV failed to change in the experimental group versus the control group, except that the experimental group significantly increased LF:HF ( $p = 0.04$ ) and re-

duced pNN50 ( $p = 0.04$ ) versus control, contrary to our hypotheses. Flexibility, evaluated via sit & reach test increased in the experimental group versus the control group ( $p < 0.001$ ). No other adaptations were noted. Post hoc analysis comparing participants who completed  $\geq 70\%$  of yoga sessions ( $n = 11$ ) to control ( $n = 19$ ) yielded the same findings, except that the high adherers also reduced state anxiety ( $p = 0.02$ ) and RMSSD ( $p = 0.05$ ), and tended to improve the push-up test ( $p = 0.07$ ) versus control.

Conclusions: A 10-week hatha yoga intervention delivered at the office work-site during lunch hour did not improve HF power or other HRV parameters. However, improvements in flexibility, state anxiety and musculoskeletal fitness were noted with high adherence. Future investigations should incorporate strategies to promote adherence, involve more frequent and longer durations of yoga training, and enroll cohorts who suffer from higher levels of work-related stress.

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/13/82/abstract>



Kevin W Chen, Ph.D. – is an associate professor at the Center for Integrative Medicine, University of Maryland. Dr. Chen was educated in the universities of both China and the United States, and has years of experience and training in blending eastern and western perspectives, and in the

practice of life-nurturing methods. As a long-time practitioner of Qigong Yang Sheng, he is one of the few scientists in the U.S. to have both hands-on knowledge of mind-body practice, and an active research career in mind-body medicine, which is funded through grants by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and various foundations. Dr. Chen devotes his career and life to the practice of Yang Sheng, and promotion of self-healing and mind-body-spirit integration through the non-profit organization, World Institute for Self Healing (WISH) (<http://www.wishus.org>).

# To MOVE Or Not To MOVE

Chun Man Sit

There are two major types of qigong methods:

- 1) stillness qigong
- 2) moving qigong.

## Stillness Qigong

Stillness qigong includes sitting qigong and standing qigong. Students hold a certain posture and remain in that posture for 10 to 30 minutes or so, without any movement. This is also referred to as standing or sitting meditation.

For example: Embracing the tree is a popular standing qigong. Small Heavenly Circle is a famous Daoist sitting qigong.

## Moving Qigong

Moving qigong methods are very popular in China. They are usually simple and easy to learn and they promote physical strength, as well as improving qi.

For example: 8 pieces of brocade and 6 healing sounds method are great for health and healing. They are both easy to learn.

There are also combination qigong methods that include both moving and stillness qigong. For example: Golden Bell Cover qigong and Taiji neigong 24 are very famous combination qigong methods.

## Opinions from the Masters

Different qigong masters have different opinions



on which types of qigong are best for students to practice. Some experts think moving is better than stillness; other teachers might consider sitting qigong the best, some think students should practicing only standing qigong.

To understand why there are so many different opinions, we must look at history.

## Simple Facts About Qigong

Before 1930, all qigong practices were kept as secrets. One learned qigong from a master who would only teach a few disciples; and the teaching was always one on one. At that time a student learned one style of qigong from a master. He had no choice of what he could learn. There were no books, no video and no internet. Therefore he had no way to compare different types of qigong methods. **He simply didn't know. If a student wanted to learn three different qigongs from three masters, it could take 10 years, plus lots of money and good karma.**



Nowadays it is completely different. We can join a different qigong workshop each month if we wish. And if we go on-line, we can find hundreds of qigong methods posted for our viewing, at no cost. There is no secret and restriction. We can learn as many qigongs as we wish.

As we are over-exposed to so many qigong methods; and also some teachers are over-selling their styles, it has become necessary for students to choose the right teachers and the right methods, should they want a good result from qigong practice.

### The Principles of Qigong

The principles of qigong are quite clear and simple:

- Calm and focus the mind; avoid too much thinking.
- Keep correct body structures and relax the body as much as possible.
- Breathe deeply, naturally and slowly.



No matter what method you choose to practice, you should follow these three principles. In the art of qigong, how you practice is more important than what you practice.

### Conclusion: To Move or Not to Move

We should practice both moving and stillness qigong. For beginners, first learn a moving gong method. After a month or so, add on either a standing or sitting gong. Please note that Tai-

jiquan is considered a kind of moving gong.

All qigong methods are good for qi, health and spiritual harmony. This is true if students practice correctly. However, different methods can promote slightly different results.

The general ideas are:

- Moving gong methods are good for exercising the body and improving qi.
- Sitting gong methods can also help improve the spiritual aspect, or enlightenment.
- Standing gong methods are great for martial artists seeking power and rooting.

For best result there is a golden rule:

Practice correctly, regularly; and practice a lot. Miracles can happen if you follow this rule.



Chun Man Sit was born in the 1950s in southern China, his family moved to Hong Kong when he was six years old. He lived in Hong Kong for twenty years and in 1976, he moved to the United States. Master Sit began

his martial arts training in 1969 and has studied and practiced continually for forty years; learning many styles such as Karate, Tai Chi, Qigong and Kungfu. He is the expert on Wu style Taiji, Tai Hui Six Elbows Kungfu, and many Qigong methods, including 6 Healing Sounds, Drifting Cloud Moving Qigong, Nei Gong, Silk-reeling Gong, etc. Master Sit has been a chief judge in many national Tai Chi and Kungfu tournaments in the United States of America for the last 18 years and has taught Tai Chi, Qigong, and Kungfu workshops. His articles appear regularly in Tai Chi and Kungfu magazines and he is currently writing a book on Tai Chi. Master Sit and his wife Mary Ann, live in Overland Park, Kansas.

# Sexual Alchemy: Female Blue Water Snake Year

By Michael Winn

Dear Lovers of Snake Qi, the embodiment of Sexual Alchemy,

This Water Snake Year is going to bring up very deep issues that relate to our core sexual identity and the mythic "fall" of humanity into male and female bodies - the Adam & Eve & the biblical serpent story. Chinese myth has interesting parallels, and holds that the first humans, the brother-sister pair Fuxi and Nuwa, are part serpent. I've spent decades researching this topic, and my conclusion is that Humanity's sexual split is at the root of most suffering on the planet today.

Snake archetypally is very spiritual. It swallows its tail to flow its Qi (Chi) perpetually in a Microcosmic Orbit that integrates male and female energy. It

wisely sheds its outer skin to allow inner forces to surface. Snakes both fascinate and terrify us with their sexual potency that, like a sudden erection, comes slithering out of the earth. Their bite can bring pain and poison as well as wisdom and divinatory powers. Snake-charming cults exist worldwide.

Slip into your own snake skin before reading this letter. Consider viewing my wife Jem's undu-

lating Water Snake dance on Youtube.: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPKCSOCPP\\_s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPKCSOCPP_s)

The video runs for 9 captivating minutes...the flow of a Water Snake cannot be rushed. Get into a quiet space where you can relax. Let go of your busy life. Let the native american flutes, viola, gurgling water and Grand Canyon stillness sink into your soul. Jem undulates like a water snake beside a stream that carved an incredible gorge called Matkatamiba.

Jem's Water Snake Dance is really a powerful whole-body transmission. We reached this amazing water paradise by rafting down the Colorado river on our honeymoon last summer (photos of the trip are in Tao News archives). I've rafted it 41 times and "Matkat" is still my favorite. It's

widely considered the most beautiful side canyon in the entire Grand Canyon.

## Living Astrology vs. Symbolic Astrology

Unlike the media crowd, I didn't post my Year of the Female Water Snake letter during the Lunar Chinese New Year Feb. 10, 2013. I preferred to wait and actually FEEL the energy of this 2013



Photo Credit: Mirshka



Snake Year in this cycle of Time. An important part of the inner alchemy training I offer is Living Astrology. We talk to deep earth forces, planets & star beings, to get beyond the mental abstractions that astrologers offer as a kind of private language.

I'm interested in cultivating deep skill in evolving my Self, not merely skimming the surface for culturally interesting myths and symbols. These symbols are fascinating and potent, but unless symbols are digested fully into our body, the information is soon forgotten. Afterwords we're stuck with our old Self. In ancient times, symbols and myths would penetrate into our right brain. In modern left-brain culture, the information overload has mostly become "garbage in, garbage out." The symbols are not digested. The bowels of our brain are overloaded with too much merde.

Asians who use pictographic writing are right-brain dominant according to scientific studies. They can still feel the power of Animal cycles and the feng shui lines of Qi in the earth. This gives them a different kind of wisdom than we have in the West. One of my favorite "ancient" Chinese proverbs: Change yourself, before Change kicks you in the ass. **This year it's "inoculate yourself with Snake Qi, before it bites you unexpectedly."**

Taoist internal alchemy is the spiritual science of Change. It decodes Nature's yin-yang and 5-phase operating system across multiple dimensions. It shows how they function inside our own body. Our body is sexed male or female, which makes sexual polarity the driving force in human alchemy.

Alchemy can give us a license to drive our own destiny instead of having it driven for us. Do you want to stay a teenager all your life, begging your (cosmic) parents for a ride? We have the opportunity to speed up our growth - if we allow this Female Snake to change us, NOW. But how?

The first question to ask yourself: Did you feel the shift into Snake Year Qi? On the solar start date of the New Year, Feb. 4, 2013, I was out beside the ocean doing multiple qigong ceremonies to meet Ms. Water Snake for myself. I invited her

to enter my body, to dance inside me, to align our destinies. She won't do that unless you ASK. If we don't ask, we risk sudden snake bite later in the Year.

I got a very clear answer: Snake Qi is similar to Dragon Qi, but stepped down inside the body. It's more focused on the alchemical coupling of sexual polarities, easier to manage and communicate with than the high-flying, myth-making Dragon Qi. Snake Year's job is to make sure that we personally execute and digest the changes from Dragon Year.

Jem's response on the first day of the year of the Snake was one of relief. After doing her qigong and ASKing, she confided: "This Snake feels more comfortable for me. More intimate, more internal, more feminine than the dragon. But just as powerful – if not more so."

Where Does this Female Water Snake Live?



When I ASKed for Ms. Snake to talk to me, it immediately raised the question: where does this Female Water Snake live? Where does she speak from? It's the same answer for all 12 Chinese Animals. They are totem masks for the 12 Earthly Branches, meaning the Snake is the aspect of the Earth's deep psyche that is leading the planetary team this year. She lives in Mother Earth's Energy Body, which has 12 aspects (mirrored by 12 tectonic plates), just as our human body has 12 organ and bowel spirits, each with their own meridian. Consider Snake as one of Mother Earth's 12 organs.

Western astrology looks at the sky, and the zodiac that changes signs monthly as the sun shifts position. Earth is not included as one of the influential planets - rather strange, since it's the planet we live on. Chinese astrology is the opposite: earth-centered, and dominated by year long cycles. It assigns different animals to the hour, day, and month, but all Humans will have to live with this watery Snake Lady for an entire year.

The Snake is 6th in the cycle of 12 Animals,



suggesting that like Virgo (6th sign in Western astrology), Snake is a gatekeeper for deep earth wisdom. We journey through all 12 signs to evolve our human soul. At the 6th sign the Jour-

ney goes underground, and we get initiated into Deep Earth Mysteries in both Chinese and Western astrology.

This 2013 Female Water Snake is the 30th year in the Chinese calendar's 60 year cycle, its exact midpoint. That suggests a powerful tipping point in the collective consciousness, possibly a larger "astrological mid-life" crisis. In the western view, Water Snake Year might signify a critical final shift from age of Pisces to Aquarius.

Snake Year: Excellent for Sexual - Spiritual Qi Cultivation

The Snake is an underground creature, but considered to be a fire creature. Where does it get its fire? The earth is filled with molten lava. So we have a fiery snake in a watery phase for an entire year, suggesting high volatility. In Taoist inner alchemy, the focus is on the coupling of primal water and primal fire.

This translates into the inner female and inner male halves of our soul. An alchemist will try to capture and stabilize the sexual volatility of this water & fire Snake year, and put it to spiritual work. In 2013, we have an opportunity to tap into this sexual tension to quicken our self-transformation.

A qigong form particularly well suited to cultivating Snake Energy is Swimming Dragon Qigong, originally from Mt. Hua (Flower Mtn.) where Jem and I got married last June on my China Dream Trip. It's called a dragon, but it's really a swimming serpent form - great for weight loss as well as circulating sexual Qi in deep channels.

Are You a True Human Yet?

In the Taoist view, most humans never cultivate themselves deeply enough to become a "True Human" (zheng ren). Most humans are soul sparks that never quite ignite to realize their potential. These soul sparks after death are absorbed back into the collective and their content is recycled - but they lose their free will after death. The spiritual payoff of doing this kind of sexual-spiritual energy work while we're still in a



sexed body is huge. Integration of male-female halves of our soul are essential to preserving creative free will.

The Dictionary of Creation Myths says that worldwide, Serpents are almost always linked to the Great Goddess. Paradoxically snakes are a female symbol, yet are also a phallic symbol of earth fertility. The phallus comes from the Snake's rising fire and sudden strike ability, both rather male traits. Snake bodies could be seen as an umbilical cords linked to the Great Mother, the smooth skin and writhing movement as part of her sensual nature. Only in paternalistic cultures that wor-

ship sky gods does the serpent become something dark to be feared and conquered, or demonized as evil.

Snake myths are consistently similar around the globe. In the oldest story ever written, the Epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh loses his power of immortality, stolen by a snake. The serpent was a widespread figure in the mythology of the Ancient Near East. Ouroboros is an ancient Greek symbol of a serpent eating its own tail that represents the perpetual cyclic renewal of life, the eternal return, and the cycle of life, death and rebirth, leading to immortality.

The Sumerian and Ouroboros serpent myths are akin to the Taoist view. Taoist Snake Tribes employ spiraling qigong which are considered amongst the most powerful of martial and spiritual arts. The most famous Taoist meditation - the Microcosmic Orbit - is the practical secret of the Ouroboros, the snake swallowing its tail to achieve immortality. It's a symbol of the fire and water channels in the body flowing continuously

into each other, in a kind of perpetual alchemical process.

The Wudang Orbit that I teach is from a Taoist Snake Tribe. It requires gathering fire (spine) and water (chest) Qi, spiraling them together into a pearl, then alchemically cooking this Elixir until it crystallizes in our body's neutral core channel. I explain how to invite a dragon in to supply the Qi, and have found that this year's Water Snake Lady will also do the trick. To learn this practice, see: <http://www.healingtaousa.com/ckf2.html>

Why Do We FEAR Snakes?



In China, the Snake is traditionally a kind of "baby dragon." The dragon is mythic, often depicted as the parts of other animals combined.

By contrast, the snake is real, it's physically accessible. There are over 2000 species of snakes on the planet.

Studies suggest that one-third of the global population has a deep fear of these snakes. Ophidiophobia is one of the most common phobias known to man, along with spiders and heights. This is true even in Asia. Modern Hong Kong merchants complain that they cannot easily "cutify" the Snake to sell stuffed animals and other Snake Year paraphernalia. There is too much latent fear of snakes. This 2013 Snake Year is also unpopular because it has no "eyes", meaning it starts after Feb. 4, 2013 and ends before Feb. 4, 2014. It's considered a "blind snake" that is not around for the first day of spring. Many are getting married before or after this year.

I believe snake fear is actually a sexual fear of



what the Snake embodies: a spiritual awakening in a sexed body. Snakes have a psycho-sexual, undulating kundalini force that can explode at any moment. Humans often repress a similar "rising serpent" force that is internally sexual in nature.

I accidentally triggered a powerful kundalini awakening in 1978. It felt like a whole body orgasm, my testicles pulsating 24 hours a day, with sexual energy undulating up my spine like a snake. While searching global literature for explanations for my (then) bizarre condition, I found only one useful book: *The Serpent Power*, by Gopi Krishna. He explained this force was coiled like a serpent in the base of the spine. That led me to study Tantra and teach kundalini yoga for some years, until I graduated to Taoist internal alchemy, which offered safer management of my kundalini.

Freud correctly opined (and as a Taoist alchemist I would agree) that sexual repression is the deepest potential force for change in Humanity's psyche. Sexual repression, alas, locks up the creative power of our psyche. Much of Freud's work came from investigating female patients with hysteria – the sudden release of sexual repression. Men channel repressed sexuality into war and violence. It's why gun control is tantamount to penis control in America - and thus unlikely to ever happen.

We fear our own repressed sexual energy as if it were a snake that wants to suddenly bite us. Our sexual energy wants to evolve us spiritually, but it needs a safe path. Taoist alchemy teaches us to manage our sexual energy BEFORE we start messing around with our psychic infrastructure

and releasing the kundalini serpent force.

This topic is too deep to cover in this article. Please read my FAQs on Tao & Sexual Practice: [http://www.healingtaousa.com/faq\\_taoist\\_sexual\\_practice.html](http://www.healingtaousa.com/faq_taoist_sexual_practice.html)



Michael Winn is the founder of Healing Tao University with 30 Tao summer retreats in Asheville, N.C. and is the past President of the National Qigong Association. Michael has over 30 years experience in Taoist arts and leads an annual China Dream Trip. He has co-authored 7 books with Mantak Chia, and is also the author of 10 Qigong and Inner Alchemy home study courses, as well as a free e-book, *Way of the Inner Smile*. All are available on [www.HealingTaoUSA.com](http://www.HealingTaoUSA.com) or call: 888-999-0555.



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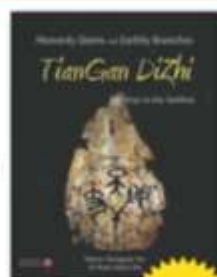
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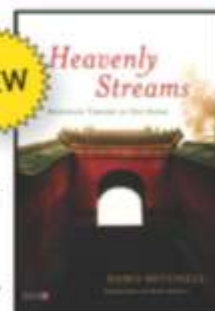
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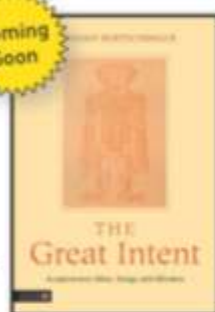
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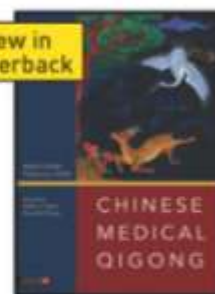
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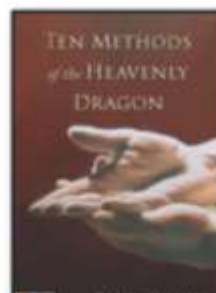
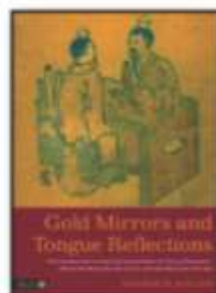
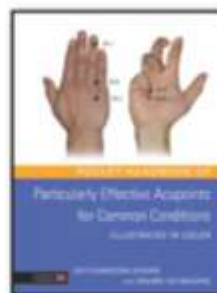
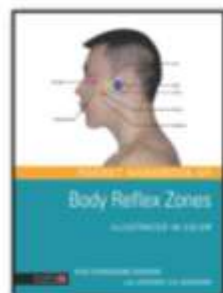
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# Chinese Wisdom For Yang Sheng

By Helen Hu, OMD

1. Keep silent in order for Nourishing Qi, closing eyes to restore blood, sleeping early to rejuvenate essence and keeping inner peace to raise spirit.
2. Fame seeking injures the lungs, unlimited sexual play exhausts kidney, obsessive pursuing wealth damages liver, rich food damps spleen, unlimited leisure weakens the heart
3. Those who have weakened lung should avoid being known; those with aged kidneys should turn away promiscuous activities, those with a stagnated livers should give away wealth (generosity), one should be on simple diet when stomach is weak, and with a weak heart, one should avoid staying in bed too long.
4. Eating less in adding healing, increasing sleep in saving energy, relaxing in nourishing body, slowing moving in preserving shen (mind).
5. Movement to strengthen Yang (energy) for guarding body, resting to aid Yang for healing body (during the sickness); movement can generate the Yang, yet can disperse it, resting can preserve the Yang, and yet can injure the Yang. It all depends upon finding the balance point.
6. One who is exhausted in searching for a cure for his healing should turn inside to ask his own heart when seeking the cause for a result. For knowing the cause, one can properly find the answer for healing. The wise one is the one who seeks the healing among the regrets. When the body is unable to heal, ask the heart for more strength. A true, honest heart can break the impossible as in the saying “where is the will, there is the way,” so is the healing process.

7. Confucius teaches: As the young body is still developing, it processes less Yin essence but abundant outer Yang energy, so avoid sexual activity in order to guard the precious essence. Youngsters should be guided for education; then, middle age will be wise and Yang Sheng for the following years leading to a graceful long life. It is said to follow the law of Yin and Yang of the Universe.

8. Observe the natural cycles to compare with the body for the proper guarding of health before becoming sick. When the Sky Qi (energy) is descending, then there will be rain. Rain drops form floods when there are no proper drains. It is the same process that applies to the body with forming edema (body energy declines first, then the body starts to retain water; if there is no proper care to discharge the water, there will be edema). It can be treated by warm and draining remedies. When Sky Qi is raising, clouds fly high with no path to return earth, and there will be drought; it is the same with the body when there is bloating and Qi stagnation (qi rising without a way out becomes stagnated and bloated, long term stagnation lead to heat that will consume water in the body to cause dry skin, dry hair and dry organs). Cooling and moisture remedies should be applied. Natural phenomena teaches us to understand how our body works, and know the cause of a event so we can directly stress the root.

9. Choose work that you love to do, or a hobby you enjoy.

10. Find a healthy life companion.

11. Have a healthy sex life!



Dr. Helen Hu - has studied Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) since the age of 12, a cardiologist and practitioner of integrated medicine for 9 years. She immigrated to the United States in 1991. In 1997 Dr. Hu passed the "United States Licensing Medical Exam" while simultaneously obtaining her Oriental Medical Degree (OMD). Dr. Hu is a specialist in Herbal medicine, nationally licensed in Acupuncture and has a Philosophy of life structured around Oriental traditions. She utilizes her expertise in these treatments along with a passion and wisdom for longevity to treat a variety of health conditions. To find more information about her, go to <http://www.omdweb.net/>



# Taiji As A Shared Bodily Experience

By Mauro Carboni

## Introduction.

What is it that different people have in common, though with different stories and different ways to walk the path of life, that leads them to meet and share a common project in a school of Taiji? Among the emerging variables some of them, as time goes by, tend to take a real meaningfulness in common discussions, as recognizable characteristics of a path of transformation and growth centered on the value of the person.

The first pair of keywords is *search* and *curiosity*. With the first pair we mean an attitude that leads to ceaselessly consider the learning experience as border or limit (from a personal, physical, mental, relational, contextual point of view), and at the same time to the discovery of an unlimited potential of development, since the study of internal work (Nei Gong) opens new horizons for learning.

These experiential approaches should be also understood both as teaching projects and educational interactions oriented towards a constructivist dimension. This introduces a new pair of keywords: *diversity* and *adaptability*. The first one is a resource, such as value added for everybody, an experience that we can understand only through the practice of Taiji, when we practice together. We cannot understand ourselves if we don't recognize how important is listening to the other. It is precisely from the meet with *alterity*, within the different qualities of our role

(antagonist or partner) that it is really possible to discover and enhance our internal diversity, the several properties of our approach to knowledge. (Wall, 2005).

As a result the second keyword (adaptability) is here understood as specific teaching mode, real strong point of Taiji, a guarantee of accessibility to experiences of learning, *instrument of acceptance and inclusion* into the study group. This defines a discipline and a learning context based on *empathy*, where being in contact with others and



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sharing internal energy property becomes a mediation.

### A Process of Continuous Transformation and Change.

The constituent dynamics of internal work calls into question another important couple of keywords: *symmetry* and *complementarity*. It is not by chance that the meaning of the word Taiji is Supreme Polarity, because the idea of Yin/Yang should not be understood as an opposite and irreducible categorization, and because the two terms is the reason of the other. It is an implicit and related existence, a bipolar symbolism which tells of life and of man as *a process of continuous transformation and change*. Practicing Taiji means being within the Tao, while looking for a path of understanding and peace.

"The Tao of Heaven:

Does not contend and yet excels in winning  
Does not speak and yet excels in responding  
Is not summoned and yet comes on its own  
**Is unhurried and yet excels in planning"**

(Tao Te Ching, LXXIII)

Who practices Taiji keeps the attention in a constant state of activation, respecting the internal variations focused on the Zhong Ding (inner central axis). This happens through a multiplicity of postural adjustments in terms of opposition up/down, left/right, front/back, through the improving of the skills related to lateralization, to the segmental control and the global balance. This *internal work* urges the integration of the two hemispheres and produces a significant cortical activation, particularly in the areas involved in creativity, in communicative skills, in interpersonal and social level (Masgutowa and Akhmatova, 2004).

In this perspective, one of the aspects that distinguish the educational and training courses of Taiji and Nei Gong is precisely to bring every single person to "*find a State of inner silence*." Suspending any logical rational attitude is like a prelude

that prepares to develop a proactive dimension (Sun, 2004: 31-32). Creating those conditions of silence offers us the possibility to listen in an ori-



ented and widespread mode. A dynamic state of sensory and emotional reception, conceptual oxymoron and paradox of experience. It's something that, with the progress of the practice, comes to resemble what the Taoist philosophy of the martial internal arts defines as a condition or State of "Wu Ji".

### Listening, Awareness and Intentionality.

We are talking about perceiving ourselves as indistinct units within a holistic dimension. A state of consciousness that emerges as a creative intentional act, as processes activated by meditation practices lead the person to assume a particular attitude towards life and in different situations.

Among these we list some peculiar attitudes: to act consciously as active part and sentient observer in the perception or participation to an event or experience; to avoid impulsive responses through the control of emotional reactivity; in such a way as not to prevent the attainment and maintenance of a state of inner balance. Assuming a non-judgmental attitude also means not to be prisoners of needs or expectations. It means to be able to wait without assessing or judging effects before causes; to be able to describe the inner world in words by activating mental processes involving a bilateral integration of two hemispheres; to live what is happening as

an observer, getting to know oneself through an unconventional approach (Baer et al., 2006).

The promotion and dissemination of these *positive changes* take place through processes of internal attunement and generates a stream of energy (flexible, adaptive and coherent) and a flow of information throughout the brain capable of catalyzing the fundamental processes of integration of mind, energy and body in a system frame. This coherent stream *promotes an emerging sense of self*, vital and resilient, and by means of this condition of awareness, the sense of Oneself expands and dissolves the modular repetition or rather the "prison" of causal thinking (action/response) (Siegel, 2009: 146-150).

The Wu Ji, therefore, is not only a primeval state of the origin from which everything started, but even a multidimensional state (Posadzki et al. 2010: 74-75) to go to and come back from, enriched and changed, every time identical and processed. A dimension of the "feel" in which the introspective attention and the proprioception are always connected with the kinesthetic perceptions, just like the recognition of the inner condition is a potential state of our being and acts in a continuous and circular relation with the external perception.

In a sense, we could say that maybe it is really this primary distinction between internal and external listening that leads us towards a change into a fundamental state, the Tao. In other words, we can improve the sensorial and phenomenological perception of the real world through a gradual awareness of our ability to discriminate.

Generativity and Transformation inside the Form.

It's possible to consider the flow of Qi in terms of connectivity (neural, biological, physiological, emotional, cognitive, relational). From here you can derive a multiplicity of meanings, equally valid and not exhaustive: holistic communication,

global (and/or segmental) energy connection, information network, continuous mediation channel between doing and being, interactive access between subject and environment. The keystone of this training and "cognitive" approach resides in the *Nei Gong*, as "inner work" that takes on the properties of a sensitization in the teaching. Everything takes place in a general frame of a method in which narrative and descriptive aspects converge in a single direction with the



analysis of functional aspects, combining metaphors and symbols together on explanations concerning the biomechanics and physiology of movement.

This means to enable processes and procedures, highlighting the link between cognitive and reflexive dimension with sensory perceptual skills, and motor skills. Finally it means to be able to define a map of learning in ways that can be widely shared and personally assimilated.

Still today the practice and teaching of Taiji and internal martial arts takes place through oral transmission of knowledge, for this reason the formative supervision of a grandmaster is essential. During the practice of Taiji, we're dealing not



just with a sequence of imitations or mirror images concerning individual gestures, movements or positions, but frames or patterns of visuospatial processing and of visual and motor processing come into play. In these representations everybody discovers his/her own movement, but only some of these movements have to do with cognitive memories, as emotional and affective connotations, as well as some aspects of imagination and of evocative capability in its symbolic components are rather involved.

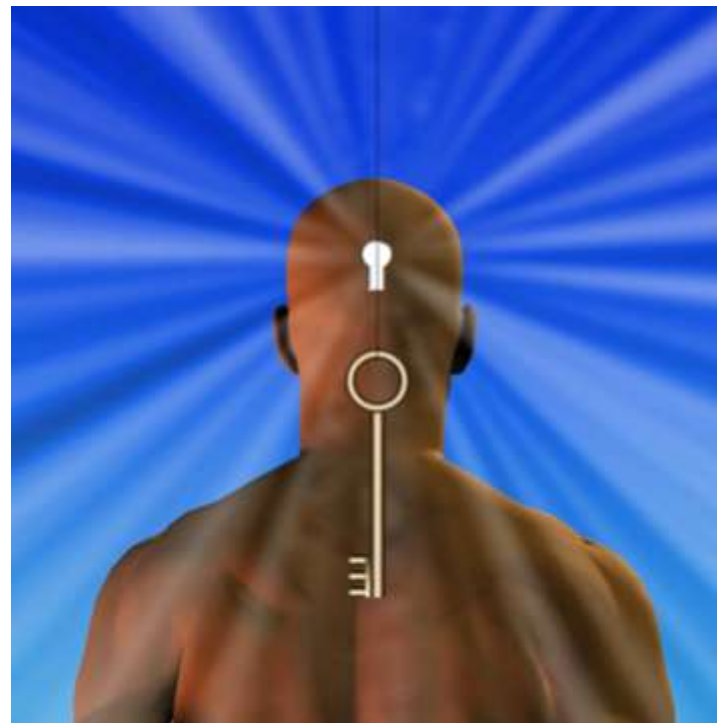
In this sense the disclosure of technical contents and of theoretical and philosophical aspects should be the consequence of a direct communication mode. A particular form of interaction where the exemplification of a gesture, the reflection about the quality of a single movement or in relation to the quality of the potential of application, can find its own development without necessity of any further intermediary between master and students.

This does not diminish the importance of common practice, collective and shared, according to a consolidated form of peer tutoring, where more experienced students are undoubtedly a point of reference in the group for training, but where, at the same time, the fact of living an amount of interdependence is clearly the occasion to offer to everybody the chance to be the core of discovery and reflection.

### Imagery, Visualization and Intention.

The role of the teacher in this environment of cooperative learning is crucial, both in terms of corrections and individual aid, and in terms of synthesis and of revision of the collective martial practices that constitute the focus of the experience.

The Master in this case makes the difference and stands out for his/her ability to preserve the intention, the shape, the intensity, the kind of energy, the attention to the dynamics of interaction,



with a detached and non-judgmental vision concerning the qualities and the difficulties of each student.

In this way, the use of metaphorical and narrative ideas represents an effective mediator of didactics within Taiji in order to activate the internal resources through the imagination of the person and thus to facilitate and personalize the learning. The adoption of multi-sensory evocation processes and of synaesthesia allows to understand the quality of movements and the energy of certain postures and gestures in a range of shared meanings.

In the practice of Taiji, the connection between imagery, visualization and intention, is especially intense since the gestural and martial experience assumes an interface among different cognitive domains, as well as it allows to establish a close relationship among the aspects related to sensorimotor perceptions, with the control of emerging emotional dynamics and with the sensations **of transformation that everyone can live in one's own corporeality** (Wayne & Kaptchuk, 2008).

In this respect, in various areas of research, a plu-

reality of converging experimental outcomes emerge, where a direct influence between imagery and personal expectations is made explicit, with corresponding changes in physiological levels (Kaptchuk, 2002, Mulder et al., 2004; Gentili et al., 2006). Surveys in the field of neuroscience have been long verifying the experimental consistency of the relationship between imagery, simulated movements and the activation of the corresponding brain areas (Decety et al., 1993; Rizzolatti, Fogassi, Gallese, 2001; Jeannerod, 2001; Gallese, 2001, Calvo-Merino et al., 2006; Gallese & Sinigaglia, 2010).

All this seems to confirm once more the lesson that comes from the experience of the ancient traditions of Taiji, that is the mind, meant as intention, mediates and steers the energy, the Qi. It is this network of internal energy that with effectiveness and wisdom rides, the body, the movements and the same person in his actions.

The *flexibility* and *reversibility* are inseparable aspects of the mind and body. The *movement is a metaphor of life* and what the practice of Taiji produces on us in terms of physical and gestural awareness and in terms of energy, produces similar consequences in other areas of our experience, knowledge and relationship (Strauch, 1986).



## Contact and Rhythmicity.

The forms of motor activation, as well gestural and bodily activation in general, in fact constitute an essential element of different educational approaches that involve a configuration in terms of help relationship. These are recognizable in the attention towards the rhythmic dynamics of the spatial-temporal setting, as well as for a particular sensitivity in considering the proxemics and motor qualities in relation to the manifestations of postural and gestural tonicity.

Moreover, such forms of motor activation are distinguished by an educational management of the qualitative selection of sensory stimuli and of materials used, and correspond fully to the characteristics of Taiji. These aspects draw attention to the possibility of creating a relational, cognitive and perceptual climate, traceable to the concept of “*fusional dimension*,” which evokes deep feelings and memories related to the prenatal life, related to the initial sensations that the fetus develops during the growth of neurological apparatus.

Among the elements that give these sensations to living in the real practice of Taiji we find the various forms of contact and proxemics interaction, the caloric sensations and the perceptions of breath. There are also the biological rhythms of the body that are mutually tuned to each other, creating a fusional condition, i.e. a profound and almost perfect harmony of psycho-tonic tensions between the two bodies (Lapierre, 2002). In analogy with this concept, several researches have focused their interest on the interaction between physiological effects of internal work and the modes and techniques of breathing (Qi Gong).

The experimental tests show changes and significant outcomes on both neurophysiological level (EEG, EMG) that is in the corresponding interactions between temperature, heart rate, respiratory, and, in the broad sense, on the meta-



ronment characterized by dialogue and dialectic that moves towards the construction of knowledge, especially in terms of exchange and reciprocity (another couple of determinants keywords), that are essential qualities in a motor act intending to have educational and even more transformative values. So, if 'exploration,' 'exchange,' 'discovery,' are semantic connections that allow you to better understand the reality of **the integration processes, it's the same dynamics** of communicative acts to require the diversity as essential resource, as a "nurturing" semantics and symbolism.

Ultimately it is the same plurality of competences to unavoidably send back to a multiplicity of experiential perspectives and conceptual paradigms, and to have certain paths of bodily mediation in Taiji develop as forms of search in progress. This implies an opening towards other martial disciplines, cultures and philosophies of corporeality, meant as a path of knowledge and transformation, starting with the most similar ones to continue on towards those that seem more different.

Not by chance, today, the relationship between person and environment, between subject and context, is a focal point of research and of reflection in the field of neuroscience, where you move from an idea of a modular mind to a concept of emerging mind, as result of a simultaneous activation of cognitive subsets that are in resonance. In fact, according to the opinion of Varela and colleagues, **the "cognition depends upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities (...). By using the term action we mean to emphasize once again that sensory and motor processes, perception and action, are fundamentally inseparable in lived cognition"** (Varela, Thompson, Rosch, 1991: 173).

## Conclusions.

We have presented the practice of Taiji as a mediator in the help relationship, where the listening is a fundamental dimension of every educa-

bolic activity and the endocrine system (Lee et al. 2005; Xu, 1994). Similarly, the tests highlight a rhythmic modulation of brain at level of theta waves as an indicator of a particular state of concentration and of meditation (Pan et al., 1994). In particular, the practice of Taiji produces a release of endorphins during the state of wakefulness, to which a mental activity of evocative type can correspond, together with a decrease in the level of anxiety, moderating the perceived pain.

## The Construction of a Lived Knowledge.

The practice of Taiji and Neigong cannot limit itself inside a rigorous training program, in which we can find executive and technical requirements or applications, having only the purpose of a mastery of martial arts.

In fact, we are describing the creation of an envi-



tive act, in which is essential the attention to the communication as plurality of codes, as meaningful network of mutuality. Starting from here it is possible to arrange educational contexts and situations in which the internal martial art becomes the formative space that facilitates the emergence of an autonomous and creative bodily expression.

Inside the Taiji practice we can find common gestures that involve natural movements. Actions such as: to grasp, let go, raise, keep, walk, push, throw, move, rotate, slide, rotate, jump, avoid. A widespread and diversified action that integrates with the various forms of occupation of space and time, of the environment and of relations.

A fortiori the construction of knowledge and competences, in the context of Taiji, cannot be limited to consider movement solely in terms of bodily functions, since, as educative project and in terms of responsibility and reflexivity, has a broader effect on the quality of life of people.

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# Taiji And Meditation

*By Eric Borreson*

Taiji is often discussed as a meditative practice. Meditation does not mean the same thing as relaxation. It does not mean achieving a state of blissful calmness. Meditation is all about intention and focus. With practice, we can develop a calming focus to our movements. However, that calm focus does not come easily. Our mind resists it all the way.

There are two aspects of our mind that are involved in our practice. The first aspect of our mind is the heart mind (Xīn, 心脏), or “monkey mind.” This is the active, emotional part of our mind. It is the part responsible for the random thoughts that distract us during our practice. This part of the mind is very strong in beginners and is the cause of considerable emotional stress.

The second aspect is called the one-pointed mind (Yi, 意), or intention. This is the part of the mind that pays attention to the fine details of the movement. It notices the opening and closing of the kuas, the slow shifting of our weight, and all the other fine points of our movement. This part of the mind may be very weak in beginners. It can be strengthened through practice.

One of the goals during practice is to use our intention to calm down the “monkey mind” and to focus on the movement. This is a form of meditation. Meditation is much more difficult than it would appear. A lack of focus is something that all taiji practitioners must deal with at some point. In fact, it can be quite frustrating to deal with a wandering mind during forms practice.

One way to deal with “monkey mind” during

forms practice happens during repetition in the form. We should not simply be moving through the forms. We should be focusing on our movement. The sets are sometimes designed with extra repetition of some of the forms. The individual forms in a sequence may be repeated, but the sequence of the following forms may be different.

It is easy to reach a point where our minds forget where we are in the sequence. It takes focus and intention to keep track of where you are in the sequence and what comes next. With practice, the practitioner can focus on all the forms during a set.

For example, the Sun 73 set that I usually practice includes 7 Single Whip movements. Each repetition is followed by a different form. Each repetition is an opportunity to lose focus and fall out of sequence. This serves as a reminder that focus is necessary. The forms sequence can only be completed correctly when the intention is **there and the “monkey mind” is under control.**

The regular repetition of the Open Hands and Close Hands provides some extra help. Each time we pause for these forms, we have an opportunity to pause, recenter, and refocus. As we develop in our practice, we learn to tame the “monkey mind.” **This makes our practice a form of Meditation in Motion.**



Eric Borreson – a student and teacher, finds teaching taiji, qigong, and meditation to be a path to a more meaningful life. Eric is the founder and director of Meditation in Motion, specializing in teaching about living

healthier and happier lives. He teaches taiji, qigong, and meditation at the prestigious Heartland Spa, a top 10 destination spa, located in Gilman, IL. In addition, he teaches taiji (Yang 24, Sun-style taiji, and Dr. Lam’s Taiji for Arthritis and Taiji for Diabetes) at other venues. He conducts workshops and teaches private lessons on request. He writes a weekly wellness column at <http://eric-taichi.blogspot.com>.



# The Traditional Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Curriculum

By Rene Navarro

*"The Tai Chi Chuan curriculum consists of hand forms first (i.e., empty hand), such as Tai Chi Chuan and Tai Chi Long Boxing. Next comes One Hand Push Hands, Fixed Position Push Hands, Push Hands with Active Steps, Ta Lu, and Free Sparring. Last comes weapons, such as Tai Chi Double-Edged Sword, Tai Chi Broadsword, Tai Chi Spear (Thirteen Spear). And so forth."* --Yang Cheng-Fu

— Douglas Wile, Tai Chi Touchstones: Yang Family Transmissions, p. 7

Nowadays, many teachers propagate the contemporary Wu-Shu style of Yang Tai Chi Chuan, **the most popular of which I think is the "24 Steps."** Originally called 24 Simplify Tai Chi Chuan, it was choreographed in 1956 under the sponsorship of the Chinese government. It is derived from the Yang Family

108-movement solo form. I have seen this short form in different parts of the world – in China, Philippines, England, Thailand, Italy, and United States. It is the form that people usually associate with Tai Chi Chuan.

When I was studying Tai Chi Chuan Yang Family Style in Manila's Chinatown in the late 1960's I saw only three forms - Solo Form (108 movements) which we later called the Long Form to distinguish it from the short version of Master Cheng Man-Ching; Sword Form; Push Hands (if we can call it a form). The master who taught Tai Chi Chuan at the school where I studied, Hua Eng Athletic Club in Manila, was Han Ching-Tang, the famous teacher from Taiwan, who was featured

in books by Robert Smith. Master Han wasn't around when I started studying, but Chan Bun Te, an impeccable stylist who studied the form with him, was and he was there to correct my movements when I needed it.

Master Han apparently taught only these three Tai Chi Chuan forms -- the Solo Form and Push Hands (both of which I studied) and the Sword Form (which I did not). There were students who were practicing the Sword Form when I was at Hua-Eng. I learned a few movements but the man, whose name I can't remember now and was probably called Mr. Sy, who was teaching it left and nobody took his place. My Shaolin master Johnny Chiuten gave me a video of this talented man performing several forms - Solo Tai chi chuan form, Sword Form (Han's also), a type of Chen style Solo form, and Pa-Kua Chang - apparently most of them, if not all, learned from Han Ching-Tang.

I understand that Master Han studied the Yang Family Solo form in the Central Guoshu Institute or Central Martial Art Academy in Nanjing in the early 30s. But Han had revised it in many ways. The opening, for instance, looked like the beginning of 5 Element Fist of Hsing-I. In other places, he had changed the movements too, but fortunately not the names.

I learned another version of the Yang Family 108 Solo Form from Grandmaster Lieu/Lao Yun Hsiao (also from Taiwan) later on, when the master was visiting the Philippines in 1970. He did not teach us any other Tai Chi Chuan form.

When I moved to the United States in August

1970, I saw a few Tai Chi Chuan teachers. Their curriculum covered the Solo Form, often the 108, plus Push Hands. Sometimes they taught a Sword form; often not. I observed Tai Chi Chuan masters on both East and West Coast.

From what I had seen at his school in New York City in early 1970s, the legendary Cheng Man-Ching taught his abbreviated 37-movement Solo form, Push hands/Sensing hands, and Sword. I haven't found any other evidence that he taught any other forms. It is possible that he also taught Ta-Lu (translated at the Gin Soon Tai Chi Club as "great pulling"), which is really part of 2-Person Sparring/Sansou, to a few students. I did not know at the time where he studied these forms, but I read somewhere that he studied with Yang Cheng-Fu. **Cheng's short form is not a part of the Yang Family curriculum.**

In 1986, I was taken by Gunter Weil and Rylin Malone, two friends from the Healing Tao, to the Gin Soon Tai Chi Club in Boston's Chinatown district.

For the first time, I saw a more varied curriculum that included not only Push Hands, Solo form, 2-Person Sparring form and Sword but also Staff-Spear and Chang-Chuan. It was quite a pleasant surprise not only to see a genuine master in Gin Soon Chu, the second disciple of Yang Sau-Chung, the son and heir of Yang Cheng-Fu, but also to come upon forms I had not seen before, and he was teaching them openly.

There are two possible reasons why only one or two Tai Chi Chuan forms of the Yang Family became widely disseminated. One reason might be that the Yang family did not teach the other forms - or taught them to only a few people, mostly their close disciples or children. Another reason is that a majority of students are inclined - for lack of time or motivation or opportunity - to study only one or two forms.

When Yang Cheng-Fu was alive, it appeared that only two or three forms were taught in public -- the Solo form (108); Push Hands; and the first Sword form.

The other forms - like the Tai chi chuan Chang-chuan (Long Fist or Boxing), 2-man sparring set

(Sansou), staff-spear set, first, second and third Knife/Broadsword, second Sword and perhaps others - were usually not taught.

In the Yang Family tradition, except for the times when Grandmaster Yang Cheng-fu taught in public, usually he taught only one, perhaps two students at a time. As a result, a student may not know what other students were studying unless s/he talked to them.

With Grandmaster Yang Sau-Chung (1909-1985), many of the lessons were taught in a small apartment in Hongkong. There was really no room for a big class. Each student took private lessons. As far as I know, there were no public announcements of workshops or classes, just private lessons.

What Yang Cheng-Fu was talking about in the epigraph above is that there is indeed an extended curriculum of fist and weapons forms. It is not just one or two forms, there are several;





Sword published in the 30s. A translation of this book into English by Barbara Davis omits the list.

Chang Chuan is a beautiful and rare form characterized by alternately slow and sudden, dynamic and explosive movements. The movements are actually similar in name to the Solo Form but there are variation in the sequence and in the technique and execution.

There is also a complete form called 2-Man Sparring Set (Sansou). It is a form that enables the practitioner to learn the

deeper application of the different movements in the Solo and Chang Chuan forms. The student has to study both sides (A and B) to learn the form.

Push Hands in the Yang Family tradition as transmitted by Yang Sau-Chung to his second disciple Gin Soon Chu is a complicated discipline. There are at least 7 different facets of it, some involving stationary postures with hand movements and positions that are intended to develop internal structure, sensitivity, receiving and explosive energy, softness and dynamism; others involving manipulations of the chi; still others involving movement of the hands and feet (like Ta-Lu). Basically, it was a training that incorporated the 34 or so techniques of fa-jing.

From the curriculum offered by Master Gin Soon Chu, I learned there are indeed these fist and weapons forms handed down in the Yang Family. There are even three versions of the Knife/Broadsword form (one of them, a vigorous and fast version known as Yang Sau-Chung's favorite, another with a flying inside crescent kick like Shaolin) and two versions of the Sword form (one of them called Yang Cheng-Fu's form).

Yang Cheng-Fu's "And so forth" in the quotation above leaves much to the imagination. He was obviously referring to other forms, but he did not elaborate.

apparently, some of them were secret forms taught only to a few disciples.

In the list, Yang Cheng-Fu mentioned the Tai Chi Chuan form. This probably refers to the Solo (108 movements) form, which was the revised form - a large-frame form - that was popularized in China in an attempt to help the people improve their health. I said "probably" because there are really different versions of it - among them, the Medium frame, Tiger style and the Small frame, forms that are taught in the Gin Soon Tai Chi Club in Boston's Chinatown.

Master Yang also referred to Tai Chi Long Boxing. Was he being redundant here, since Tai Chi Chuan also refers to Long Boxing, or was he referring to another entirely different form? I conjecture that he was referring to another form, specifically the Chang Chuan form, which is often considered the Long form in the Yang Family. Chang Chuan is also sometimes referred to, rightly or wrongly, as the Fast Tai Chi Chuan form (because of its fast movements) or the Fa-jing form (because of its explosive techniques).

I have not seen the Tai Chi Chuan Chang Chuan form mentioned in the literature. But, according to Vincent F. Chu, he heard that there are books in China about it written by students of Chen Wei-Ming. Chen Weiming himself listed the moves of Chang-Chuan in his book on the Tai Chi



The essay was first published in Rapid Journal, an internal arts magazine published in the Philippines.



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chi chuan Chang Chuan/Tai chi fajing form, and Push hands under Masters Gin Soon Chu and Vincent Chu, lineage masters of the system. He graduated from the New England School of Acupuncture where he pioneered a course in chi-kung/qigong including Tai chi, meditation, and Buddha Palm. His poetry and essays have been published in journals and anthologies. Rene holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science (MLQ University in Manila), a Bachelor of Law (University of the Philippines), a diploma in acupuncture and a certificate in classical Chinese herbs. In an earlier incarnation, he worked as a lawyer for indigent clients. He has taught on four continents. For more information, go to: [www.renenavarro.org](http://www.renenavarro.org)

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# Meditation: The Priority of Yang Xin Mood, Food and Move - Three Secrets Part II

By Shiuan Gee

As we know, happiness is important thing in Yang Xin (mind). But if we are excessively happy is that all right? Over-happiness means the person is too excited. In that moment, his or her blood pressure easily rises too high. From ancient times until today, there are many examples of people who were over - happy had a stroke or died.

**“Fan Jin zhong Ju”** is one of those old Chinese stories. A village man who was over forty years old studied very hard for twenty years. He took the government examination and received the highest grade. He was so excited because he thought on that day he would become a government official, and be the most important man in the village.

Unfortunately his dream never came true because he was out of his mind being excessively happy.

A real American story just happened a few weeks ago. A prisoner who had been in jail for many years was released early for some reason. He was so happy he became too excited, and had to go to the emergency room soon after he went home.

These stories tell us that when we encounter a special event in our life, we should take control of our emotions. Not too angry, not too happy. Sometimes we need to be calm. How can I calm in the exciting moment? We should learn. We should meditate.

Meditation will teach us how to be calm; meditation will cultivate us to become wise men; meditation will bring peace of mind; meditation can raise good Qi in your body, and push bad Qi down

and out. Meditation also can regulate our endocrine system and allow normal blood circulation. For all of the above, meditation is the priority of Yang Xin.

But only a small number people practice meditation.

Most people chose chemical medications, even for very slight tiny problems. For example aspirin, pain

killer etc. We already know that many people, inclu

- ding some celebrities have died by taking certain pain killers. But many people are still dependent on

those medicines. They do not do meditation. Why?

**They think it's easy to take medicine.** Another main reason they do not do meditation is because they say

they do not have time.

Sure, we all are busy.



Our modern society has a “big-bang” of information, information overload, and people are very busy every day, even every minute. We are busy working for money; busy studying for the future; busy dating; busy playing. Especially, we are busy on the internet, on video games, on iPhones. Information, information, it still is information. The thousands of millions of bits of information falling down from the sky every moment surround us and submerge us. They steal our time, and steal our health. If we cannot control ourselves, we will die in the boundless sea of information.



Image courtesy of ponsuwan FreeDigitalPhotos.net

For this main reason - we do not want an early death - we should get away from those things for a little while each day and make time and space for ourselves by meditating.

How can I do this? Yes, you always can find the time and place if you think that meditation is the most important thing in your health life. You can choose time during your lunch break, or late in the evening. The best time is before you sleep; allow 30 minutes for meditation. First sit comfortably, and breathe deeply. Then put away any distractions: stocks, insurances, car and house, lover and enemy, any sad and happy feelings. Empty your mind and feel the natural world.

If you can't do this every day, three times a week is also good. You will feel different: bright, clear and happy, because you cleanse your mind and body through meditation.

For people to become completely healthy, only doing meditation is not enough. It will be beneficial to do exercise at least three times a week. Because meditation and activities combine stillness and movement, they are interdependent and complement each other.

Life means movement. If someone sits all day long and seldom moves, he or she will become old and feeble faster, with the possible result that they will die earlier. We must avoid letting that happen and use any free time to do exercises, join any healthy activities. We will get a great deal of benefit from the movements.

I will talk about “move” in another article.



Shiuan Gee, Author, Former Journalist and Editor of “Health and Life” Chinese Newspaper. Book: Philosophy Prose Collection “Thoughts on Life”; Documentary literature: “The Night of New Orleans”. Nonfiction: The Report of the Mainland China Intellectuals’ Sex Life. Novel : “The little Sparrow Flew away”. Also as an Amateur Health food cooking chef and Gourmet, she is writing a Dietotherapy book: “Amazing Food—Health Diet 101”, Subtitle “How to get Benefits from Your Daily Diet?”



# Is Stress Making You Sick and Sad? Inflammation in the Body Linked to Depression

Ginger Garner MPT, ATC, PYT & Tianna Meriage-Reiter, PT, DPT, PYT

Emerging evidence demonstrates that there is a connection between inflammation and depression. When your body is in a state of constant, low-level inflammation, you may feel sad.

Recent research is encouraging, and shows that **feeling sad or depressed is not just “in your head.”** The stigma of depression has ruined many lives, and this stigma has created barriers to getting help. For example, a mother will not easily admit to feeling depressed for fear that social services will show up at her front door to take her children away. Military veterans risk damaging or losing their career or chance for upward mobility in rank if they admit to feeling less than stellar in the psycho-emotional department.

The recent news underscores that depression is not a weakness or something you did, but rather a complex state of events in the body that happened to you. Feeling depressed is nothing to be ashamed of, and certainly should not be hidden or “swept under the proverbial rug.” If you have inflammation in your body, which is easily identified with a blood test, you are at serious risk for developing chronic disease, not just depression.

Other disease processes are connected to inflammation levels in the body as well, including premature aging and cardiovascular disease, cardiopulmonary disease, metabolic disorder

like diabetes, neurological disease, some types of cancer, and even autoimmune diseases. Read more about the role of inflammation in accelerated aging

A review article presents the science of stress and depression (Littrell, 2012).

Stress decreases immune function, activating monocytes and macrophages that release inflammatory cytokines.

Studies have shown that those induced by stress show signs of depression, correlated with high levels of inflammatory cytokines.

Animal and human studies show that if you infuse the body with inflammatory cytokines, they present with signs of depression.

Depression reflects an inflammatory state in

Image courtesy of David Castillo Domínguez/FreeDigitalPhotos.net



the brain (brain-derived neurotrophic factor is likely involved). An inflammatory state in the brain can be induced by inflammatory cytokines in the periphery or by psychological stressors.

Psychosocial stress and depression contribute to a greater risk for infection, prolonged infectious episodes, and delayed wound healing, all processes that can fuel pro-inflammatory cytokine production. However, stress and depression can also directly provoke pro-inflammatory cytokine production in the absence of infection or injury (Kiecolt-Glaser, 2010).

### Are You Depressed?

If you are feeling any of the depressive symptoms, seek help. Take this [QUICK QUIZ](#) to see if you are feeling more than just sad or down. Persistent stress, trauma, adipose tissue/obesity, and/or pain can also be factors in creating chronic inflammation in the body.

### What Can You Do?

A [CRP test](#) can be a first step in identifying inflammation in the body, which puts you at risk for depression.

Other proactive measures you can take are diet, exercise, and movement with meditation therapies, like yoga. Stress management is an important benefit of practicing yoga, since it has been shown to affect the inflammatory process in the body.

Yoga and meditation have been studied to assess their role in decreasing systemic inflammation. There was a study done to compare markers of inflammation in novice and experienced yoga practitioners to assess the **potential of yoga's stress-reduction** benefits. Across a battery of inflammatory assays, 60% of novices produced higher levels of inflammatory markers compared to 24% of experts at baseline levels. And 40% of experts produced low levels of inflammatory



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products compared to 0% of novices.

We know the science behind diaphragmatic breathing **and its ability** to regulate the autonomic nervous system (ANS) by way of its proximity to the vagus nerve, as well as the sympathetic chain. And we are capable of teaching awareness or **“mindfulness” of the body’s physiological responses** (muscular tension, rapid breath, actions/reactions). The practice of controlled breath acts to down-regulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, reducing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and easing respiration (Sengupta 2012).

Diet is another way we can alter the inflammation in our bodies. Diets that promote inflammation are high in refined starches,



Image courtesy of iStockPhoto.com

sugar, saturated and trans-fats, and low in omega-3 fatty acids, natural antioxidants and fiber from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains (Kiecolt-Glaser 2010).

Higher fruit and vegetable intake are associated with lower oxidative stress and inflammatory pathways in the body. Refined sugars and starches can rapidly alter blood glucose levels. This postprandial hyperglycemia can increase production of free radicals as well as pro-inflammatory cytokines (Kiecolt-Glaser 2010).

Studies have shown that nutraceuticals can affect the inflammatory process in the body. Turmeric (or curcumin), ginger and cinnamon have been shown to alter the inflammatory pathways (Aggarwal 2010).

Other spice nutraceuticals may also have an affect on obesity and insulin resistance by way of their effect on inflammatory pathways. They suggest this because of the similar structural homology that exists between curcumin, capsaicin (red chili), piperine (black pepper), eugenol (cloves), cinnamaldehyde (cinnamon), and gingerol (ginger). These spice-derived nutraceuticals have been shown to inhibit oxidation of low-density lipoproteins (LDL), demonstrating anti-oxidant properties (Aggarwal 2010).

Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), particularly ratios of omega-3 (n-3) to omega-6 (n-6) fatty acids, have also been shown to have influ-

ence on the inflammatory processes in the body. Omega 3 PUFAs can be found in Flaxseed (oils, seeds), Fish (salmon), Chia seeds, Walnuts, Basil, Oregano, Cloves, or by supplements.

Read more about [avoiding premature aging and disease](#) through adopting an [Anti-Inflammatory Lifestyle](#).

## Resources

Ginger buys organic culinary herbs in bulk from Napa Valley based [Whole Spice Company](#), a [certified organic and kosher spice US-based company](#).

[Eating Ourselves to Death \(and Despair\)](#)

## CRP Test

[Depression Screen](#) - Quick Quiz

[The Role of Exercise and Nutrition in Longevity](#)

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Additional sources are linked directly in the article.



Ginger is the author and founder of Breathing In This Life and frequent contributor to Yang-Sheng magazine. See Ginger's full bio at [www.gingergarner.com](http://www.gingergarner.com)

When she isn't practicing integrative physical therapy or writing/teaching educational curriculum for using yoga in medicine (Professional Yoga Therapy Studies) in medical therapeutic yoga, she sings the blues away using music as medicine.



Dr. Tianna Meriage-Reiter, PT, DRPT, PYT began her practicing yoga in 2006. **It wasn't until she began studying with Professional Yoga Therapy Studies (PYTS), that she began to see that her practice might**

have been causing her harm – the physical positions were not safe for her body and the fast-pace was wreaking havoc on her nervous system. PYTS helped her to begin her own personal journey towards more mindful living and allowed her to pass this on to her patients. She now uses the science of physical therapy bridged to the mind-body connection of therapeutic yoga to provide her patients / clients with the tools to heal themselves. **The holds a bachelor's degree in Physiology & Neuroscience from UCSD and a Doctorate of Physical Therapy degree from UCSF/ SFSU. Presently, she works in an outpatient clinic, working with post-surgical rehabilitation, sports and work related injuries, spinal pain and other painful conditions. She also teaches therapeutic yoga classes in Alameda, California and is available for private physical therapy in-home or in-studio. Find out more at [www.mindbodymovement.org](http://www.mindbodymovement.org) or email her at [info@mindbodymovement.org](mailto:info@mindbodymovement.org).**

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# Horary Cycle's Qi Pathways from 3 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Part II)

.By Martin Eisen, Ph.D.

## The Horary Cycle with Exit and Entry Points

Recall that each Organ and its corresponding Meridian energy is at its peak during the two hour period indicated in the above diagram of the Horary Cycle and is at its minimal during the two hour period twelve hours later.

The Horary Cycle can be used to maintain maximum health by adjusting lifestyle in accordance to the body's natural biorhythms. For example, breakfast should be the most nutritious meal, since the Stomach is most active between 7 and 9 a.m., in accordance with the saying, "Breakfast like a king, supper like a pauper." The Gall Bladder will be weakest energetically from 11p.m. to 1 p.m. and so even healthy people should avoid heavy, fatty lunches which require large amounts of bile production.

The times of appearance of symptoms of disease can also be predicted. Heart attack resulting from excess Qi occurs frequently between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. In contrast symptoms of Heart deficiency, such as heart failure and breathlessness, tend to occur between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m.

Gallstone pain will be more severe between 11p.m. and 1 a.m., when the Gall Bladder has its maximal energy. Low back pain, which is a symptom of excess Kidney Qi, is likely to be more noticeable between 5 to 7 p.m., while if the Kidneys are deficient, then low vitality will be experienced from 5 to 7 a.m.

The Horary cycle is also used in some martial

arts for striking acupoints to incapacitate an attacker.

In order to eliminate jet lag, the body clock must be reset so that Horary Cycle functions in the same time as the local time of the destination. Stimulating specific Horary Points on the body allows the energy to transfer from one meridian to another, thus helping the biological clock update itself in mid-flight – see <http://yang-sheng.com/?p=8973>

The peak periods can be used therapeutically to work on specific Organs. For example, a good time to practice Heart Qigong is between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. The time to practice to cure ulcers or digestive problems is between 7 and 9 a.m.

## 5. The Lung (Hand-Taiyin) Meridian

See <http://www.acumedico.com/lung.htm>

The main channel originates internally from the Middle Burner and runs down to connect with the Large Intestine. From there, it ascends along the upper orifice of the Stomach, passes through the diaphragm and branches to enter both Lungs. Two branches from the Lungs merge and ascend to the pit of the throat, where this single channel separates again into two channels that traverse below the clavicle. These two main channels surface externally at L 1 (Zhongfu) and descend down both arms.

Descending along the bicep to the outside of

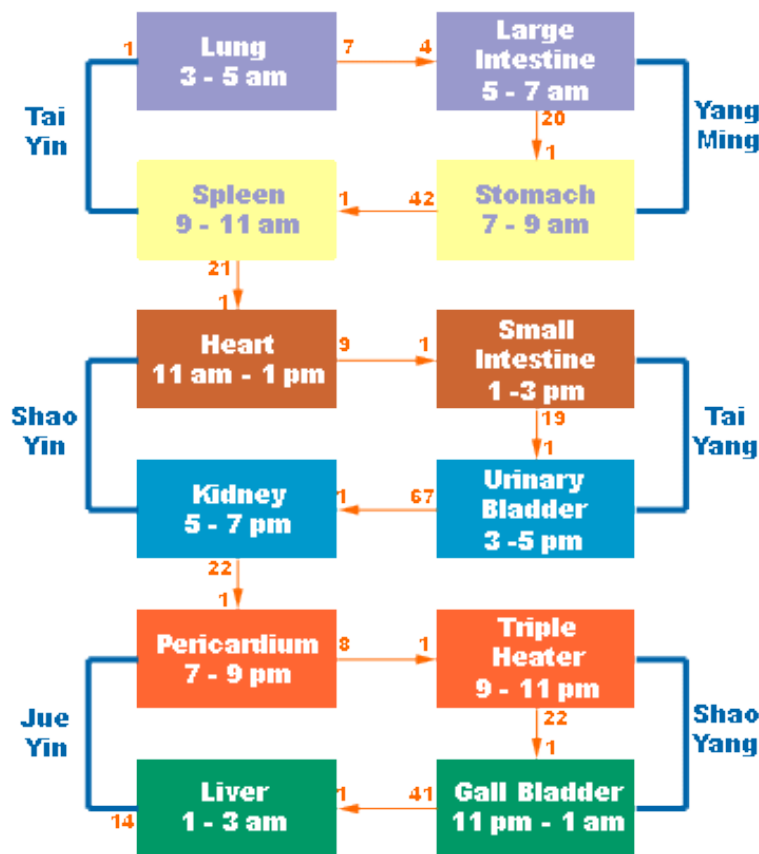
the Pericardium and Heart Meridians the Lung Meridian reaches the cubital fossa at L 5 (Chize). Then, it runs down along the radial side in the front of the forearm and enters Cunkou (the radial artery of the wrist for pulse palpitation). Passing along the radial border of the thenar eminence, it courses along the radial side of the thumb and ends near (.1 cun) the posterior corner of the nail at L 11 (Shaoshang).

A branch emerges from L 7 (Lieque) and runs directly to the radial side of the index finger, where it links with the Large Intestine Meridian at LI 1 (Shangyang), near (.1 cun) the posterior corner of the nail.

## 6. The Large Intestine (Hand-Yangming) Meridian

See <http://www.acumedico.com/colon.htm>

The Large Intestine Meridian starts near the posterior corner of the nail at LI 1 (Shangyang) and ascends along the radial side of the index finger. It passes through the interspace of the first and second metacarpal bones LI 4 (Hegu) and the depression between the extensor pollicis longus and brevis tendons. Then, it runs up the lateral side of the forearm to the elbow at LI 12 (Zhouliao). From there, it ascends along the lat-



eral anterior of the upper arm to its highest point on the shoulder LI 15 (Jiangu); then, along the anterior border of the acromion to go up to the 7<sup>th</sup> cervical vertebra to Du 14 (Dazhui), an acupoint on the Governing (Du) Meridian, which is the confluence of the three Yang Meridians of the hand and foot. It descends to the supraclavicular fossa, where it forms two

branches. One branch descends to connect with the Lung Organ and passes through the diaphragm to enter the Large Intestine Organ.

The other branch runs upward to the neck, passes through the cheek and also forms two branches. One branch enters the gums of the lower teeth. The other curves around the upper lip, crosses the philtrum and ends in the nasolabial groove, at the level of the lateral border of ala nasi (LI 20, Yingxiang). Note that the Meridian from the right hand and left hand terminate on the left and right sides of the nose, respectively. LI 20 is the linking point to the Stomach Meridian.

## 7. The Stomach (Foot-Yangming) Meridian

See <http://www.acumedico.com/stomach.htm>

The Stomach Meridian starts at the lateral side of ala nasi from LI 20. It ascends to the bridge



of the nose, where it meets the Bladder Meridian at B 3 (Jingming) near the inner corner of the upper eyelid. Turning down it reaches S 1 or St-1 (Chengqi) and enters the upper gum. Reemerging, it turns around the lips and descends to meet the Extraordinary Ren Meridian at Ren 24 in the mentolabial groove. Then it runs postero-laterally across the lower cheek at S 5 (Daying) to S 6, ascends in front of the ear and crosses G 3 (Shanggun) on the Gallbladder Meridian. Next, it follows the anterior hairline and reaches the forehead.

Another branch emerges in front of S 5, descends to S 9 (Renying) and continues down the throat to enter the supraclavicular fossa. Descending internally, it passes through the diaphragm to its pertaining Organ, the Stomach, and connects with the Spleen.

The external branch from S 9, descends and passes through the nipple, runs by the umbilicus to S 30 in the lower abdomen. An internal branch from the lower orifice of the Stomach descends inside the abdomen to join this external branch at S 30.

The external branch runs down to the thigh traversing S 31 (Biguan) and S 32 (Femur-Futu) and reaches the knee. Continuing downward along the anterior border of the lateral tibia, it passes through the dorsum of the foot to reach the lateral side of the tip of the second toe at S45 (Lidui).

The tibial branch from S 36, 3 cun below the knee, enters the lateral side of the middle toe.

Another branch, from the dorsal foot, emerges from S 42 (Chongyang) to link with the Spleen Meridian near the medial side of the posterior border of the nail of the big toe at Sp 1 (Yinbai).

## 8. The Spleen (Foot-Taiyin) Meridian

See <http://www.acumedico.com/spleen.htm>

The Spleen Meridian begins near the medial side of the posterior border of the nail of the big toe at Sp 1 (Yinbai). It runs along the medial aspect of the foot along the border of the red-and-white skin and ascends in front of the medial malleolus to Sp 5. Then, it runs up the medial aspect of the leg along the posterior border of the tibia to Sp 9, on the lower border of the medial condyle of the tibia and reaches Sp 10. Continuing up the anterior medial aspect of the thigh it reaches the lower abdomen at Sp 12. Passing through Sp 13, it connects Ren 3 and Ren 4 and then flows through Sp 14 and Sp 15 to Ren 12.

The external branch, from Ren 12, continues up the chest to Sp 20 and then descends along the lateral aspect of the chest to terminate on the mid-axillary line in the seventh intercostal space at Sp 21.

The internal branch from Ren 12 enters its pertaining Organ, the Spleen, and also connects with the Stomach. The branch from the Stomach goes up through the diaphragm and a branch flows into the Heart to link with the Heart Meridian. The other branch runs up along the esophagus and reaches the root of the tongue, where it



Image courtesy of smokeshulman / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

spreads out over its lower surface.

## 9. The Heart (Hand-Shaoyin) Meridian

See <http://www.acumedico.com/heart.htm>

Three energy rivers originate from the Heart. One descends to permeate the Pericardium; then, descends further to connect with the Small Intestine. Another ascends along the esophagus to meet with the tissues connecting the eyes to the brain. The third goes upward to the Lungs; then, turns downward to emerge in the center of the axilla at H1 (Jiquan). Then, it descends along the posterior border of the medial aspect of the arm to terminate at H 9 (Shaochong), on the radial side of the little finger, about .1 cun posterior to the corner of the nail. Here it links with the Small Intestine Meridian at SI 1 (Shaoze), on the ulnar side of the little finger, about .1 cun posterior to the corner of the nail.

## 10. The Small Intestine (Hand-Taiyang) Meridian

See <http://www.acumedico.com/si.htm>

The Small Intestine Meridian begins at SI 1, follows the ulnar side of the dorsum of the hand, runs through the bony cleft of the radial styloid process at SI 6 (Yanglao), passes between the ulnar olecranon and the medial epicondyle of the humerus at SI 8 (Xiaohai) and runs along the posterior border of the lateral aspect of the upper arm to the shoulder at SI 10 (Naoshu), in the depression inferior to the scapular spine. Zigzagging in the scapular region it meets it meets Du 14 (Dazhui) and turns downward to the supraclavicular fossa, where it branches.

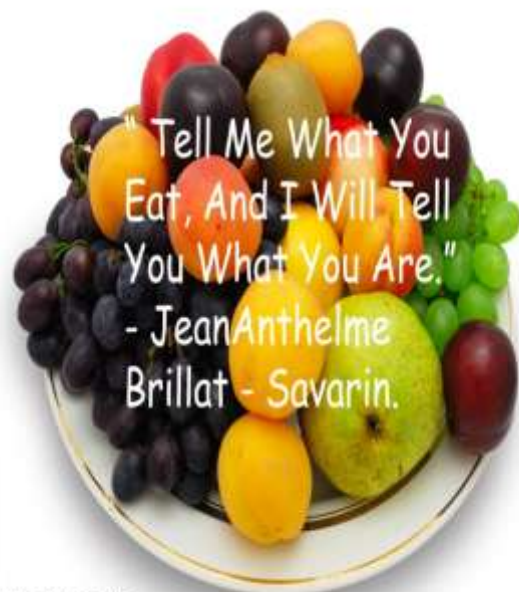
The internal branch connects with the heart, descends along the esophagus and passes through the diaphragm to enter the Small Intestine, its pertaining Organ.

The external branch ascends the neck to SI 17 (Tianrong) in the depression posterior to the mandibular angle and anterior to the sternocleidomastoid muscle. At SI 17 it branches and one branch runs across the cheek to the outer canthus and then to SI 19 (Tinggong), where it enters the ear.

The second branch ascends to the infraorbital region passing through SI 18 (Quanliao) and further to the lateral side of the nose reaching the inner canthus to link with the Bladder Meridian at B 1 (Jingming).



Marty Eisen, PhD - a retired scientist, who constructed mathematical models in medicine. He has studied and taught Yoga, Judo, Shotokan Karate, Aikido, Qigong, Praying Mantis Kung Fu, and Tai Chi. Dr. Eisen studied Chinese Medicine through apprenticeships and correspondence courses. His latest project is to help arrange free courses for veterans in Chow Qigong for health or as a vocation - see <http://eastwestqi.com/>. For more information about Dr. Eisen please visit <http://home.comcast.net/~carolezak>



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# Remembrance: Give Us This Day Our Daily Med

Nadia Linda Hole, MD



Photo by Tom Kualii, [www.extremeexposure.com](http://www.extremeexposure.com)

Here in Hawaii, we're blessed to have from our backyard, views of Auntie Pele, pouring into the ocean.

**Pele destroys whatever's in her path, and at the same time gives birth to the newest land on earth.**

In the wake of the bombs of the Boston Marathon, to the wake of the bombs of child soldiers in Africa, to the "bombs" each and every one of us, are being called to wake up to – especially for our children, Mother Earth, families, & more - what is it time to offer to Pele, to be burned away? What is it time to give birth to? What is the real medicine?

As citizens of humanity, how do we each some-

how find the sweet fire within ourselves, to make "pono" whatever's before us, no matter what? Pono in Hawaiian, means to make "right" or "straight."

As a physician and mom, when I meditatively ground, center, and anchor myself within, to that "still" "zero," "in the zone," "flow" state of simply Being, doing my best to

breathe each breath into the present moment of NOW, my kids, my patients, my staff, and even my EKG machine, wordlessly shift as well.

In medical school, rather than studying meditation, I chose to *experience* it. My 1<sup>st</sup> meditation teacher was a Yale PhD. biochemist, Dr Spector, who taught us to breathe consciously into our hearts. (Heart Qi, Mar/April 2012) Dr Wilson, a Duke University Christian psychiatrist, taught us to give thanks constantly, no matter what, and simply trust the blessings in disguise. For both Dr Spector and Dr Wilson, the real medicine, is of course, Unconditional Love.

Teachers I've since mentored with have in-



cluded “masters” in vipassana, mindfulness, body awareness, authentic movement, visualization, guided imagery, BPI, sounding, chanting, dance, tantra, Daoism, Buddhism, Oneness, Ho’oponopono, centering prayer, of course QiGong, and more.

While studies abound on the unarguable benefits of meditation, the meditative process is not always easy, or pleasant. For much of my first 10-day silent meditation retreat, I wanted to crawl out of my skin. On the 1st day of my 21-day silent retreat, I passed out, violently ill. Purging the unconscious can be overwhelming.

Holy Shift! How are we to handle the effects of Earth and solar changes, gamma rays, etc on our psyche? (Yin Yang of Solar Flares, May June 2012) How to find stillness amidst chaos? How to transform pain into awakening? How to bring peace to ALL our relationships, especially our relationship with ourselves? (Joyeux Noel, Jan 2012) How to awaken our own inner knowing, innate wisdom, sleeping dragons, and the healer within? How to reconnect to Source, and remember who we truly are? Our Purpose? Passion? Loves & bliss? How to tap into the collective consciousness, and effect real Change?

Clinically, as a physician, one of the most powerful meditation tools I’ve experienced is a practice called the Remembrance. For a series of 350 consecutive patients who presented with complains of pain, we shared the Remembrance. Without touch or any other intervention besides the Remembrance, 349 reported, after only one session, significant relief of their pain.

What is the Remembrance? Experimentally, make each breath Sacred. Intentionally breathe each breath into your heart, some name or

quality for the Divine, via a Qigong belly breath. Without judgment, give yourself permission to authentically feel whatever’s so. Breathe in “good” Qi. Breathe out “bad” and “stuck” Qi. Focus on receiving. Allow the Qi to naturally cleanse and free you. With each , start remembering the Love, & the Light that you truly are. (Holy Shift Dec 2011)

Beware, by the way, of any meditative practice which insidiously has you deny your feelings with instructions e.g. to “focus only on joy.” Beware of dissociating from your authentic feelings no matter what. Remember - gotta feel to heal. Trust the Qi

Besides relief of physical pain, people who practice Remembrance, usually report life questions and challenges answered as well, often with transformative life changes.

Children, family, and intimate friends, especially significant others, are of course our greatest teachers. Remember to give thanks for all they mirror back to you, no matter how uncomfortable you may feel. As a world class “surfing Qi” friend Nigel Butler puts it, simply “make every breath a coming home, whole body, heart, breath.” Breathe into whatever feelings you may have, trusting that all’s somehow in Divine order, perfect as is. Let go, let God, let Love.

Speaking of family and friends, one of our favorite past times is to hike over the lava, out to Pele, with those we care for, in a meditative walk, to see

before our own eyes Pele pouring her live lava into the ocean, birthing the newest land on earth.

Each step to Pele is a prayer to let go of anything and everything that no longer serves you.

Each step from Pele, is a prayer for this



Photo Credit: Harry Uthane Jari



step to be the first step of the rest of your life, best of your life, & allow new life to be born through you.

Each step to or from Pele demands, still-mind, full-body attention, as one miss-step on lava, in a heartbeat, can easily draw blood.

By the way, for Pele, there are no obstacles. **Faced with a seeming “obstacle,” Pele doesn’t stop.** She simply goes higher, or wider. On the flip side, out of rock hard black lava, grow vibrant greenery and sapling coconuts.

For the unprecedented challenges facing us nowadays, what is the real medicine? Besides the **healing power of love**, “Give us this day our daily med...” “From Aramaic, another possible translation of this line of the Lord’s prayer is “Grow through us, each moment, *this moment’s light, insight, & wisdom.*” (Prayers of the Cosmos, Neil Douglas-Klotz).

In Remembrance, as the sun rises over the **ocean of Pele’s glow, another day begins.** Happy Qi! Love, & Blessed Be. (Sept-Oct 2012)

As a man thinks, so he is  
**Blessed are the cracked, for they let in the light ...**

**A merry heart doeth good medicine make...**  
The way that can be spoken is not the way  
**As light gets lighter, dark gets darker...**  
**The children will lead the way...**



Dr Nadia Linda Hole MD is a pioneer in bridging Qigong, Oriental, Western, & Energy Medicine. Recognized as a **“master” by other masters**, with degrees from *Princeton, Duke, U of Spiritual Healing & Sufism, & Oneness Universities*, she has served on numerous faculties, including the *American Holistic Medical Association, & American Academy of Pain Management*. She is a contributing author for complementary medicine text-books; consulting editor for *Chinese Medical Qigong*, & co-founder of the *Free Distance Healing Qi Project*. She is also a certified sexual energy facilitator, & as the physician for an international fast for nuclear disarmament. Besides dancing, dolphins, prayer, healing in the way of Love, & the practical science of **“miracles,” Dr Hole’s passion is bringing a more heart centered, Qi approach, to medicine.**

# It's Summer!

By Ellasara Kling

We have now entered into Early Summer whose emotion is Joy! We are all happy to have left the cold of winter and the windy storms of spring behind, to shed our overcoats and feel the sun shining on us. The setting of Early Summer, with flowers and foods coming forth in an array of color, blue skies, sunshine, green leaves, and more all add to an uplifted feeling. Even anticipation of summer is invigorating! However, the healthy Joy of summer is an internal joy that is not explosive but rather flows from a harmonious heart.

In order to have harmony in our lives, the elements that create harmony must be present as harmony is the result of an overall effect of the interrelationship of smaller parts.

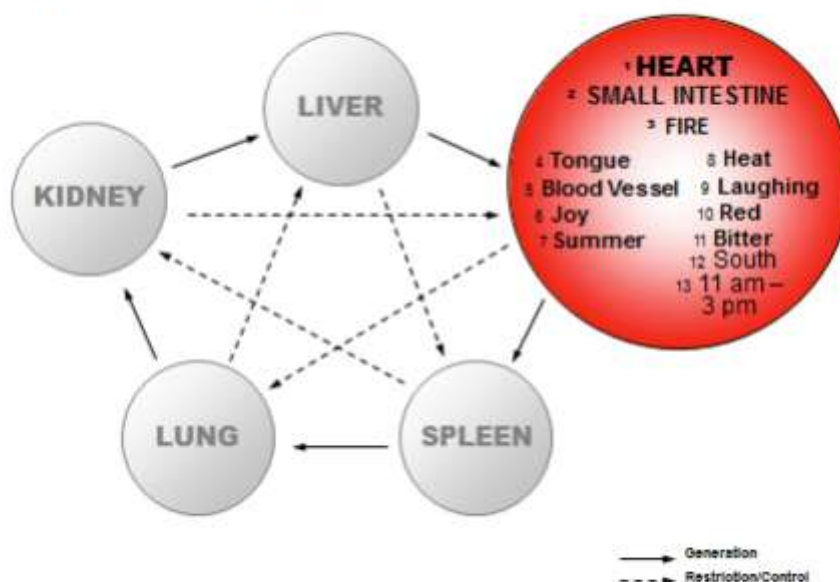
The harmony that is present at any moment is the reflection of how the pieces come together in a combination that says, in part, there is balance here, there is peacefulness here, there is purposefulness, there is unity here, there is centeredness here, there is Life here. We recognize Harmony through the presence of a pleasant appeal to who we are. The achievement of Harmony in our lives or an endeavor, such as the preparation of a meal, becomes a tacit invitation to all to partake of something uplifting and encouraging to be ever more integrated.

The Fire element of this season is seen in such things as people's passion, strength, and courage when in balance, while an over excitable expression or its seemingly oppo-

site, depression when not in balance. When the heart's energy is balanced, the result is the ability to think clearly, remember well, and sleep well.

The tongue, which is the outer organ of the Heart/Small Intestine system, is used in Chinese medicine as an important diagnostic tool. By examining the tongue, one's state of health can be quickly assessed. The tip of the tongue reflects the state of health, both physical and emotional as it relates to the heart and fire element. (For more information on tongue diagnostics: [http://www.shen-nong.com/eng/exam/exam\\_diagnostic\\_inspection.html](http://www.shen-nong.com/eng/exam/exam_diagnostic_inspection.html)).

## Five Element Theory



Among the various “dangers” of this season, is Summer Heat, which is one of the six external pathogenic forces (cold/wind/damp/dryness/



fire/summer heat). This particular heat only exists in the summer season. It has to do with an overabundance of Yang Heat and some of its symptoms include high fever, red face, abundant sweating (not from physical exertion), intense listlessness, nausea. It is important in summer to eat cooling foods, drink fluids that are not ice cold, dress appropriately. In hot weather it is advisable to eat lightly, drinking teas such as Chrysanthemum tea and eat foods such as mung beans both of which help wick away heat.

**I've been told that the direction of South for the heart came about because the Heart is considered the King/Monarch of the organ systems, and that the Emperor always faced south at important events.**

#### Some General Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Eat foods that are natural to the season in the area where you live.

**As much as possible eat "local" foods.**

Try to have each of the five tastes throughout your day, if not at each meal.

Avoid late meals for better digestion.

Avoid heavily processed and/or greasy foods.

Avoid cold liquids and foods – the stomach likes warm foods.

Eat primarily cooked foods – overeating raw foods can impair digestion and create dampness.

Choose a pleasant place to eat.

Eat slowly – chew your food carefully.

**Don't eat and work at the same time.**

A simple meal eaten in a calm environment is better than an "exotic" meal eaten in distraction.

Eat until 70% full.

Eat a quality breakfast, a large lunch, and a light dinner.

Avoid nomadic eating – sit down rather than eating while walking/driving/standing.

*Listen to your body – learn to follow your intuition.*

#### Some Foods That Are Harmonious With Early

Summer Include: apricot, beet, bitter melon, black coffee, broccoli, celery, coffee, cucumber, dark unsweetened chocolate, escarole, ginger,

job's tears, lettuces such as Boston, chicory, endive & romaine, lemon balm, loquat, lotus root, lotus seed, mulberries, mung bean, okra, peach, peppermint, persimmons, pumpkin, radishes, red lentils, red peppers, red plums, rhubarb, soy beans, spinach, strawberry, summer squashes, tamarind, teas, tomato, water chestnuts, watermelon, Chinese yam, zucchini, and others.

#### RECIPES

##### Watermelon/ginger juice



Ingredients:

½ cup water

4 cups of watermelon (include some of the rind)

2 TB fresh ginger root

tiny pinch of salt

Directions:

Place all of the ingredients in a blender and juice. You can add more water if you like to make it more "liquid," but do not add ice. The addition of a tiny pinch of salt will enhance the sweetness of the watermelon. *This is so refreshing and delightful on hot days. Watermelon can also aid in balancing weight.*

## Escarole and White Bean Soup

### Ingredients

2 large bunches of escarole  
3 Tb walnut or grapeseed oil  
2 cloves of garlic – sliced lengthwise  
2 thin slices of ginger  
5 thin scallion whites sliced finely  
Salt & pepper  
3 cups water  
1 15 oz. can of small white beans (cannellini,



navy, small white) or your own cooked beans  
½ lemon

### Directions

Carefully wash the escarole in cold water and drain.

Cut the escarole in horizontal ribbons about 1-1/2" wide.

Heat your wok/heavy skillet and add the oil and heat it.

Add the garlic, ginger, scallions and sauté for a couple of minutes until begin to sweat.

Add Salt and Pepper.

Add the escarole and toss with the garlic/ginger/scallions.

Add the water and cover and let simmer on medium heat for about 5 minutes.

Add the beans, toss through the escarole, adjust liquid.

Heat through and add the juice of the lemon right before serving.

*The slightly bitter taste of the escarole acts as an*

*anti-inflammatory, and can help to reduce dampness. The bland flavor of the beans and the tart lemon juice balance the bitter of the flavor.*

## Baked Eggs and Greens

### Ingredients

1 cup dill leaves  
1 cup flat parsley leaves or cilantro leaves  
1 cup celery leaves (using the outer and the inner leaves)  
½ cup finely chopped scallion whites with just a bit of the light green  
¼ cup mint leaves  
1 cup lightly toasted walnuts  
6 large eggs  
2-3 Tb cold water  
1 Tb turmeric  
½ Tb salt (or less)  
½ Tb fresh ground pepper (or less)  
1-1/2 Tb baking powder (aluminum free – preferably)  
9" pie dish or 9 x 12 baking dish  
Parchment paper to line  
Oil to lightly coat parchment paper (if no parchment paper, coat well the bottom of pan w/oil)  
Lemon wedges

### Directions

#### Heat oven to 400 degrees

Carefully pick the LEAVES ONLY off the dill, parsley and celery and mint NO STALKS!

Chop roughly set aside in a bowl.

Put the walnuts in a plastic bag and crush them



with a rolling pin or heavy jar (honey jar, e.g.). The walnuts should be very small pieces and some very fine, a mixture of textures. Add to the leaves.

Lightly beat together the eggs, salt/pepper, turmeric and cold water.

Prepare the baking dish: line with parchment paper.

Stir the baking powder into the eggs and immediately add the leaves and nut mixture to the egg white and mix together.

Pour into the baking dish\* and put in the oven.

Bake at 400 for about 30-45 minutes.

Serve with lemon wedges.

*Whole eggs are said to bring harmony to the organ functions, calm the mind, clear away excessive heat, and can aid in alleviating long term dry coughs among many other things.*

### Beet Soup

#### Ingredients

Two cups grated or julienne beets – easiest to cut this way after cooked

1 quart water

1 bay leaf

A pinch sea salt

cucumber slices (cool) optional



*A few sprigs of dill (disperses qi) optional*

#### Directions

Cook the beets in the water with the bay leaf and salt until the beets are tender.

Decorate with cucumber slices and a little dill.

*Beets relieve Liver stagnation; promote circulation, support Heart function. This soup is also very re-*



*freshing on a hot day.*

### Mung Beans and Chinese Chives With Yellow Flowers

#### Ingredients:

4 cups uncooked mung bean sprouts

2 cups yellow flowered Chinese Chives

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1/4 teaspoon salt

¼ cup oil for stir-frying

1-1/2 Tb minced fresh ginger

2 teaspoons soy sauce

1/2 teaspoon sugar

#### Directions:

Wash and drain the mung bean sprouts and chives.

**Cut the chives into 4" pieces.**

In a small bowl, lightly beat the eggs with the salt.

Heat a wok or heavy skillet and coat bottom with 1-1/2 TB oil.

Add the eggs and so that they cover the bottom of



the pan like a pancake.

Turn them over gently and the cut into thin strips and set aside on a platter.

Add 2 Tb oil and add the minced ginger when the oil is hot.

Add the mung bean sprouts and stir-fry for about 1 minute then add the rest of the ingredients. Stir-fry for about another 1 - 2 minutes, until the chives just begin to be limp

Transfer to a platter and top with the strips of egg.

*Chives are an aid to digestion, blood circulation and have antiseptic properties. Mung beans sprouts are cooling, can clear toxins, and improve circulation in the 12 major meridians.*

Wishing you good health! Remember to smile from the heart at all things.

The information in this article is based on the theories and principles of Chinese Medicine.



Ellasara Kling – The information in this article is based on the theories and principles of Chinese Medicine. Ellasara has been studying with Master and Dr. Nan Lu for many years and

has participated in special classes through TCM World Foundation and the Tao of Healing in New York City. For comments, questions, consultations, [ellasara00@gmail.com](mailto:ellasara00@gmail.com).



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## Qigong For Veterans!!!

Dr. Effie Chow is trying to start free nationwide wellness programs for veterans, and also teach interested veterans a new vocation. This program requires no special clothing, equipment or space and so is easily implemented at no cost. Studies show that wellness programs increase productivity and decrease absenteeism. The advantage is that it can be done right at the facility and the cost to implement such a program is miniscule.

The enthusiastic reception of the first program in the Columbia Veterans Hospital is described in the article <http://www.examiner.com/article/qigong-for-veterans>

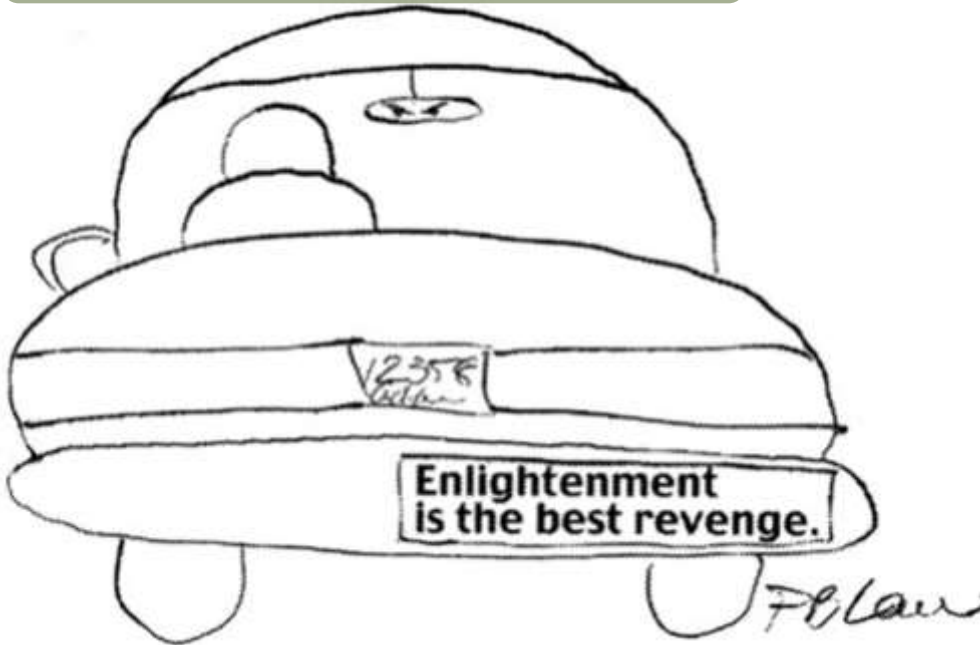
You would do your veteran friends a great service by informing them of this free program and also improving their health, since Dr. Chow is an extraordinary healer. Please contact her at <http://eastwestqi.com>

Dr. Chow has taught wellness classes worldwide. Such classes are valuable for police and firemen to relieve stress and promote health.



Effie P.Y. Chow, PhD, RN, LAc (CA), – founder and President of East West Academy of Healing Arts, Dr. Chow is a recognized expert in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), a world-renowned qigong energy healer, acupuncturist, author, international speaker, Humanitarian, and Visionary. She wielded the female influence in the world at a time when it was only talked about. As a practitioner, Dr. Chow specializes in successfully working with critical clients and stress-related conditions for whom all else has failed. In 2000, she was appointed by President Clinton to the White House Commission on CAM Policy. Dr. Chow is the only Qigong Grandmaster-Nurse-Acupuncturist in North America who has been active in the development of national health policies within (DHHS) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You may visit her institutional web site at [www.eastwestqi.com](http://www.eastwestqi.com).

## A COMEDY MOMENT



A student approached a famous Zen master in the city asking: "What happens after we die? This is something I've been thinking about for a long time and need to know. What happens after we die?" he repeated.

The Zen master said: "I don't know!"

"You don't know?" the student shouted in shock. "But you are a venerable zen master!"

"That may be true but I'm not a dead one," the Zen master said.

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"Vipassana? Go check the no-self help section."

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Q: How many Zen buddhists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Three – one to change it, one to not-change it and one to both change-and not-change it.

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Q: How do you describe a schizophrenic Zen Buddhist?

A: A man who is at two with the universe

Q: How much "ego" do you need?

A: Just enough so that you don't step in front of a bus.

--Shunryu Suzuki

A student once asked Zen teacher Steve Allen, "If you were given a wish-fulfilling jewel, what would you wish for?" "To stop wishing," replied Allen

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# Yang Sheng

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Yang-Sheng (養生 Nurturing Life) is a FREE e-magazine and a network for health care professionals - Complementary medical practitioners, Qigong, Tai Chi, Yoga, Reiki and other mind-body and spirit cultivators. It promotes methods of self-healing, positive mindfulness and health preservation. Yang-Sheng merges traditional knowledge with modern scientific research and clinical evidence and combines ancient wisdom with modern experience to support health and well-being.

Your participation, contribution, sharing and feedback are truly appreciated.

**We welcome new columnists to join our editorial team to work toward the same goals!**

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- To build up a virtual community for all qigong, taiji, yoga, reiki, meditation practitioners, and other spiritual cultivators. To share experience and knowledge, to support each other's practice, and to illuminate higher spirituality.
- To create a network and platform for those who are seeking health, happiness, longevity and harmony in life through their own effort, sharing and exploration.
- To promote self-healing, self-empowerment and positive mind power through feasible daily practice and effective clinical applications.