

Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

Yang-Sheng

Nurturing Life

LONGEVITY

Advice from TCM Masters
12 longest Living Cultures
Taiji Increases Brain Size

- Plateaus in Learning Taiji
- Push Hands: A Means to Enhance Your Gong
- Foods Have Flavors & Flavors Have Directions
- Mind-Body Medicine Research Update
- Role of Nutrition & Exercise in Longevity
- LaoTzu Hidden Dragon
- Between Heaven & Earth
- Qi Healing...and more!

養生



Volume 2, No. 6
November-December, 2012
www.Yang-Sheng.com

Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

Yang-Sheng

(Nurturing Life)

養生

A network for health, happiness & harmony

www.Yang-Sheng.com



*The Yang-Sheng editorial team would like to
thank our readers and friends
for their support and help in the past two years!*

*Season's
Greetings*

*We wish everyone Happy Holidays
and a prosperous New Year 2013!*

《養生》杂志祝大家节日愉快！新年好！

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.



Volume 2, No. 6

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November-December, 2012

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From the Editor 编者的话



Winter is upon us once again and North Georgia looks like a post-card perfect image of the Autumn season. Yet even with all the radiant reds and vibrant orange colors I am really looking forward to the quiet of deep Winter. There is something special about looking at the stars on a cold night. The stillness in the air is almost palpable and it seems like the light shining down from the Heavens is soft and smooth like mercury.

December 21 marks the Winter Solstice and the beginning of the season of conservation. This is the time to retreat into quietness, contemplative reflection of that is. Ironically, it's usually the busiest time of year because of the Holidays. Many people are rushed to buy gifts, make meals, decorate the house and/or travel to be with family. If at all possible, try to pace yourself, enjoy the time spent with loved ones and get plenty of rest. It's OK to downsize your responsibilities right along with your budget!!

This issue is packed with great information on longevity. Our featured article has advice from several masters who have found their own formula for long life. Interestingly enough, they advocate a simple life-style, healthy foods and balance between work and play. These concise instructions are exactly what is prescribed for the Winter Season!

In addition, Five Element Theory advises us to enjoy warm soups that nourish the Kidneys; to conserve energy, to spend time reflecting on our internal environment. Take some time to explore the gentle side of your life, the energy of Yin. This would be the perfect time to experience a silent retreat.

We wish you a very happy Holiday season. May it be joyful in whichever manner you wish to express it, and may the quiet comfort of deep rest prevail so that you may also enjoy "Long Life"!

Qi-eers!



Christina J Barea-Young,
Editor-in-Chief



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Flute player at Qing Cheng Shan, China October 2012

© photo courtesy of Barea

The Flute Maker

By Solala Towler

The old flute maker left his hut each morning and went down to the river to play his flutes. He usually took along three or four flutes that he had just made but had never played at the river before. He truly believed in his head and heart that unless the river approved of his flutes he would not feel right selling them to anyone. He was not sure what it was that had given him this idea but it seemed true to his heart and that was good enough for him.

He would sit on a log by the water and play each flute, one at a time. The river would let him know if she liked each instrument, if

the sound was pure and good and if the playing was pleasant and pure. And if she did not like it he immediately broke the flute over his knees and flung the pieces into the river, even if he had spent many hours on the instrument. The river knew and she always let him know.

He usually got down to the river early in the morning, before anyone else had gotten there. The women washing clothes, the children screeching and jumping in the water, even the slow moving taiji people, were not there when the flute maker arrived and that's the way he liked it.

It seemed to him a sacred thing, this flute playing to the river. He thought of the river as a mother, really the mother to the entire village. It was easy to see the bright yang sun overhead as the father. But here, nestled in the morning mist, sitting on a log beside the slowly moving current, he felt embraced by a great sense of motherly love. Of course, being blind, he was more aware of the sounds of the river than many people. He could hear the song of the river playing along with the songs he played on his flutes. He could hear the wind in the trees, the callings of the birds, and the soft sighing of the hills surrounding him as well.

Even in the deep of winter, when everyone else was huddled round the fire, telling stories and drinking numberless cups of tea, the old flute maker still went down the river. It was in there in the misty river morning, deep in the soft heart of the winter, that he really felt the river playing along with him, coaxing songs from him that he did not even know he knew. But the river knew.

Then, upon finishing playing each instrument, he would pack up his flutes and walk up the many stairs back to the village. Sometimes he would meet someone on the path and he would stop and play a tune for them. It was his way of being a part of the village, a member of the greatly extended family that lived there. Often the person he played for would laugh in delight though once in a while, he would draw tears out of them as they listened to his heart song. With his sightless eyes he felt could see the emotions of the villagers as he played for them. He felt the world all around him in a different way than others yet he also felt close to them all – the villagers, the river, the birds, even the hills surrounding them. His flutes were his way of communicating and communing with all of them. His flutes were his way of touching them all. His flutes were his way of loving the world around him. His flutes were his eyes on the world.

Longevity Secrets From The Grand Masters of Chinese Medicine

国医大师的长寿秘方

Translated by Jake X. Zhao

The "Grand Master of Chinese Medicine" 国医大师 is an honorary title granted by the Chinese government, and selected by a panel of various experts. The first selection occurred in 2008-09 and 30 TCM experts were named Masters of Chinese Medicine in 2009. The selection will take place every 5 years. Here are some secrets of longevity from 10 of the 30 Grand Masters.

For more information about them, please visit : <http://baike.baidu.com/view/2411533.htm>



Tietao Deng

95 years old

Tenured professor of
Guangzhou University
of Chinese Medicine.

邓铁涛,

95岁, 广州中医药大学
终身教授

Master Deng advises: (1) Don't compete for fame, and let nature take its course; (2). Adjust diet and lead a regular life. (3) Do regular exercise, do Eight Pieces of Brocade every morning.

"I have a secret bath prescription. Alternate hot and cold bath and they are relatively cold and hot alternation, which will make the blood vessels contract and relax- just like massaging the vessels."



Liangchun Zhu

94 years old

A famous TCM doctor
in Jiangsu Province, he
is an expert of TCM for
cancer treatment.

朱良春,

江苏名中医,
擅用虫药治肿瘤

For a long time Dr. Zhu has eaten a special kind of "Yang Sheng congee," made with: green bean 50g, pearl barley 50g, lotus seed 50g, lentils 50g, dates 30g, lycium barbarum (goji berries) 10g, astragalus membranaceus 250g (30g for regular persons daily).

Wash the first 5 and put them into a boiling casserole and add the water from astragalus membranaceus. Cook on high flame until it boils then change to low flame for 40 min. Then add goji berries into it and continue for 10 more min.

Have 1/5 of the amount daily -dividing the dosage into taking half of it before breakfast and the other half after dinner.



Dexin Yan

91 years old

The leader of Chinese Medicine in Shanghai, the master of balancing Qi and blood.

颜德馨，91岁，
上海中医领袖，
气血“衡法”家

Longevity and aging are closely related to qi and blood balance. Smooth qi and Blood circulate the whole body and adjust the functions of internal organs to promote longevity. “The main supplements I have are some Chinese herbals for Spleen, adding qi and increasing Blood circulation including red flowers, walnuts and so on. I suggest taking these herbals with water and empty stomach only once every morning not twice per day.”



Youzhi Tang

85 years old

worked for Chairman Mao as a TCM doctor.

唐由之，85岁，
曾为毛泽东主席做金针
拨障术

According to Dr. Tang, the secrets of longevity are: “A nurturing life needs a nurturing mind; an open mind leads to happiness. Keep a hospitable and peaceful mind. He sees patients in clinic twice a week and is willing to accept new things. He enjoys thinking which keeps the brain working. In addition, he recommends making sure you have enough sleep, at least 7 hours a day, and take time for a lunch nap.



Guangxin Lu

84 years old

Professor at Chinese Academy of Chinese Medicine, expert in TCM theory.

陆广莘，84岁，
中国中医科学院教授，
中医理论大家

Dr. Lu advises chewing and swallowing slowly, it may take a while for him to eat just an egg. Dr. Lu always says “Eating should be with an enjoyable attitude.” He eats 2 eggs every day and he believes that eggs contain a lot of lecithin which helps fight against aging. Getting up early every day, he rubs his ears and belly to make meridian vessels and blood circulates well. In addition, a foot bath before going to bed will let you sleep better.



Qi Zhang

90 years old

Chief expert of Chinese medicine on kidney diseases.

张琪，90岁，
全国中医肾病首席专家

Dr. Zhang longevity secrets are keeping your spiritual aspect pleasurable and free from worry and anxiety. Ignore rumors and burdens that make you unhappy, instead just laugh at them. Eating and diets should follow the natural way, neither eating too much nor eating too light. He prefers a balanced diet and does not agree with avoiding foods with cholesterol. He says it is undesirable to eat only vegetables and be on diets to lose weight.



Zhenghua Li

87 years old

The former president of Henan College of Chinese Medicine.

李振华, 87岁,

河南中医学院原院长

Dr. Li practiced Chinese medicine for more than 60 years. He emphasizes nourishing the Stomach and Spleen, adjusting diet and never engaging in binge eating. He recommends paying attention to exercise and taking a walk after a meal. He walks in the living room for 15 min in the winter when he can't go outside. He writes in calligraphy (handwriting with special pen) to nurture life and taking care of the temperament.



Peiran Qiu

裘沛然 (1913-2010)

97 years old

A tenured professor of Shanghai University of Chinese Medicine. He is a famous educator and doctor of TCM.

One of Master Qiu's favorite students explains his secret of longevity as following: **Eat less.** It means on one hand eat a meal until you're about 80% full; on the other hand, don't wait until too hungry. **Act less.** Dr. Qiu believes that cultivating Shen (Spirit) is the most important practice for longevity. Control your desires and be indifferent to fame and wealth. **Do what you like.** Dr. Qiu enjoys reading, writing poetry and making friends. It's natural to find pleasure mentally and physically when indulging in the things that spark your interest. Similarly for Master Qiu, to see and help patients and treat difficult miscellaneous diseases can also bring him great pleasure.



Zhizheng Lu,

91 years old

A famous TCM doctor in Beijing.

路志正, 91岁,

“首都国医名师”

Dr. Lu eats ginger after getting up in the morning. He believes eating ginger with dates and brown sugar promotes health and wellbeing. However, he advises only to eat ginger in the morning but not at night. Dr. Lu is in the habit of massaging and rubbing his face in the morning and having a foot bath before going to bed. The foot bath will pull the blood down and it assists the brain in getting into sleep mode.



Zhongying Zhou

84 years old

Former president of Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine.

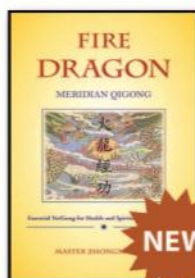
周仲瑛, 84岁,

南京中医药大学前任院长

Dr. Zhou sees patients for 5 half-days every week. It is his greatest pleasure to see and help patients. His lifestyle and routine is very regular, and he never stays up late at night. "Desire is the source of suffering; less desire leads to stronger mind." People should live with low-desire, and with a lot of calmness and tolerance.



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Chang Sen Feng

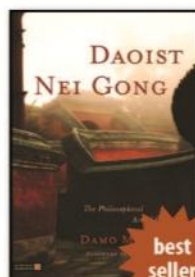
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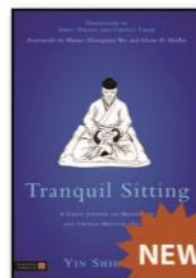
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Yin Shih Tzu

Forewords by
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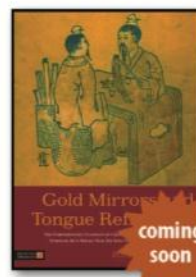
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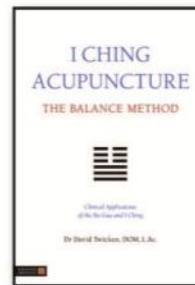
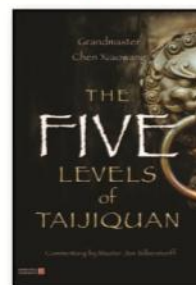
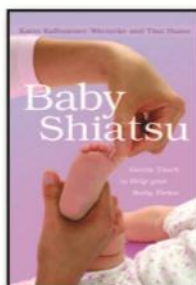
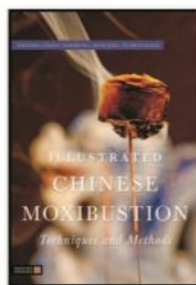
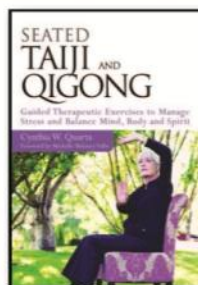
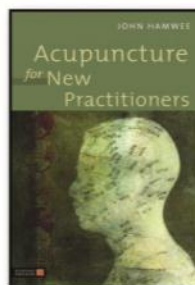
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Tai Chi: Increasing Brain Size and Delaying Alzheimer's Disease

By Violet Li

In a study recently published by *the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, it shows that in a clinical trial, **Tai Chi was proven that it actually helped seniors to grow their brain size. Improvements also were observed in several neuropsychological measures, which are indicative that the onset of the Alzheimer's disease may be delayed with Tai Chi practice.**



Supported by a grant from the Johnnie B. Byrd, Sr. Alzheimer's Center & Research Institute, Professor [James Mortimer](#) of University of South Florida (USF) and seven other scientists from the USF, Fudan University (Shanghai, China) and University of California-Davis completed this Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) *Changes in Brain Volume and Cognition in a Randomized Trial of Exercise and Social Interaction in a Community-Based Sample of Non-Demented Chinese Elders* and reached these exciting conclusions.

A representative sample of 120 non-demented, aged 60 – 79, selected from the same district in Shanghai was randomized to four groups (Tai Chi, Walking, Social Interaction and No Intervention) for 40 weeks. One of the exclusion criteria is that participants could not have

prior Tai Chi experience. Two MRIs were obtained for each participant, one before the intervention period, one after. A neuropsychological battery was administered at baseline, 20 weeks and 40 weeks. Each Tai Chi session included 20 min of warm-up exercises (lower back and hamstring stretching, gentle calisthenics, and balance training), 20 min of Tai Chi practice, and 10 min of cool-down exercises. Each Walking session consisted of 10 min of warm-up stretching, 30 min of brisk walking, and 10 min of cool-down exercises. The Social Interaction session included one-hour discussion on topics chosen by the participants. Each group met three times a week. The No Intervention group got phone calls four times during the 40 weeks from a study coordinator.

MRI data collected in Shanghai were transmitted to Dr. DeCarli's laboratory at UC-Davis for analysis. As expected, the No Intervention group's brain size shrank as an average person in his 60's

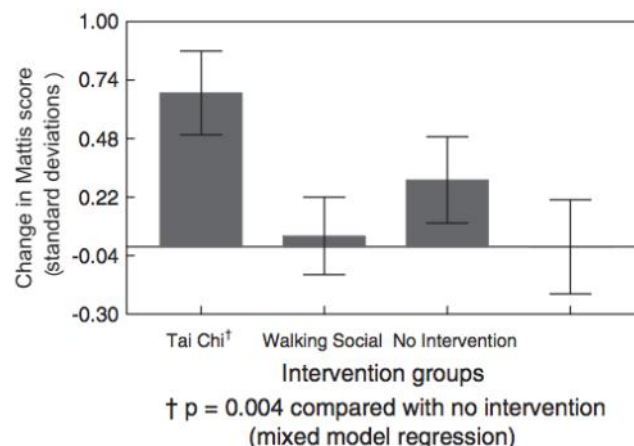


Fig. 3. Change in Mattis Dementia Rating Scale score (mean, SEM) in four intervention groups from baseline to 40 weeks.

or 70's. The Walking group's brain shrank as well, except not as severe. The Social Interaction group's brain size grew, but not as significantly as the Tai Chi group's growth.

The Mattis Dementia Rating Scale is designed to measure and track mental status in adults with cognitive health. While the No Intervention and the Walking groups had no change in this scale and Social Interaction had some improvement, Tai Chi group enjoyed a significant improvement.

The Trail-making tests are neuropsychological tests of visual attention and task switching. It can provide information about the speeds of visual search, scanning and processing, mental flexibility, as well as executive functioning. It is used to detect several cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. After 40 weeks, the No Intervention group took more time to complete the task, both Social Interaction and Walking had no change in time and Tai Chi group became "sharper" and used less time.

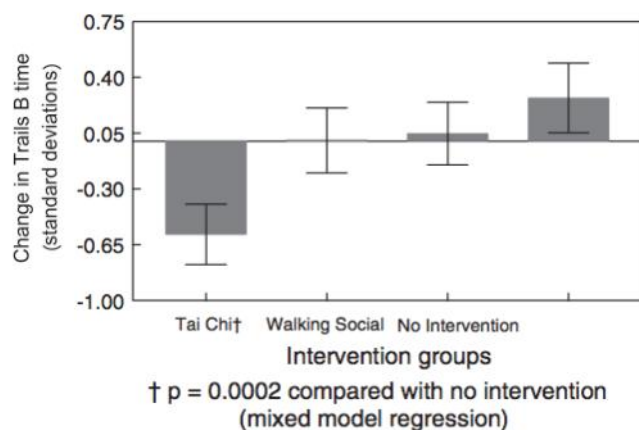
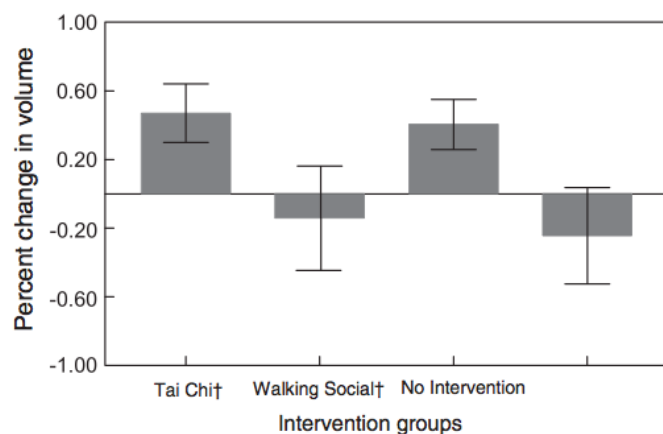


Fig. 4. Change in Trailmaking Test - Form B time (mean, SEM) in four intervention groups from baseline to 40 weeks.

The Tai Chi group registered improvements in other evaluations, including the Auditory Verbal Learning Test, the Verbal fluency Test, the Initiation score, Attention score and Memory score.

Dr. Mortimer said that Tai Chi, which has been described as a type of moving meditation, requires continuous and sustained attention to



maintain posture. The higher level of intellectual involvement in this activity in comparison to walking around a circular course may have been a factor in leading to the disparity of the two groups' result. This result is consistent with early research conducted by Stanford University, which shows that regular aerobic exercise does not provide the same benefits as Tai Chi to combat memory loss.

The Journal of Alzheimer's Disease is an international multidisciplinary journal to facilitate progress in understanding the etiology, pathogenesis, epidemiology, genetics, behavior, treatment and psychology of Alzheimer's Disease. It is the authority on the disease and ranked the 24th on the Top 100 medical journal list.



Violet Li is an award winning journalist, certified Tai Chi instructor, certified Heart Zone Trainer, an Indoor Disciple of Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei and a 12th Generation of Chen Style Tai Chi Inheritor. She has taught Tai Chi, Qigong, and other fitness programs to various groups. NBC of St. Louis featured one of her classes in "100 Year Old Tai Chi Artist". Her passion for Tai Chi, Qigong and fitness motivates her to write articles on the related

events, people, theories, techniques, practices, and health benefits. Ms. Li writes regularly for the St. Louis Tai Chi Examiner and the National Tai Chi Examiner, and has readership from over 45 different countries. Please contact her at violet.li@tadi.com.

Master YiShi Yang and His Famous Calligraphy on Immortal Living-Massage Method

By Kevin W Chen, Ph.D.

神仙起居法

行住坐臥處，手摩脅與肚。
心腹通快時，兩手腸下踞。
踞之徹膀腰，背拳摩腎部。
才覺力倦來，即使家人助。
行之不厭頻，晝夜無窮數。
歲久積功成，漸入神仙路。

Master Yi-Shi Yang (杨凝式) (873--954), also known as Yang Shaoshi (杨少师), was a famous calligrapher in the Wu-Dai period. He was especially known for his drafting-style calligraphy, which is attributed with changing Chinese history. Unfortunately, there are not many pieces of calligraphy left in the collection that was discovered. It is said that master Yang burned most of his calligraphies when he was 70 years old as he felt the calligraphy could not bring people a real sense of peace and health. Instead, he decided to pay special attention to self-care and Yang Sheng (nurturing life) techniques.

Master Yang wrote a famous drafting calligraphy on the subject of “Immortal Living-Massage Method” (神仙起居法) at the age of 76, in an attempt to promote a self massage method from traditional Chinese medicine. The original piece of this calligraphy is preserved in the Changzhou Museum of Jiangshou Province.

I heard about Master Yang and learned his story and Yang Sheng method from qigong master Yan Wang, when she was 75 years old, living in Amsterdam, Netherland. What’s even more interesting, is that she learned this self-massage method from her master when he was 95 years

old! Surely, this Yang Sheng method must play an important role in their health and longevity, so I decided to share it here as part of our exploration of the secrets in longevity.

The famous drafting calligraphy by master Yang, the “Immortal Living-Massage Method”, is a five-word regular poem (五言律诗).

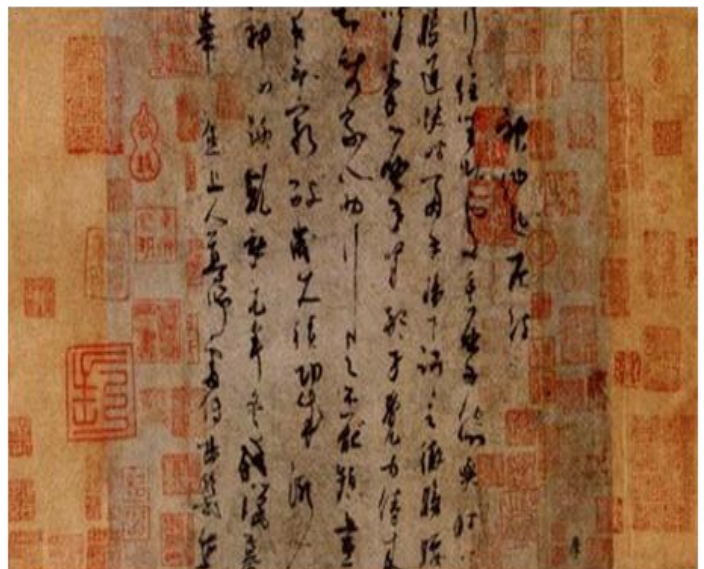
Here is a translation of the poem:

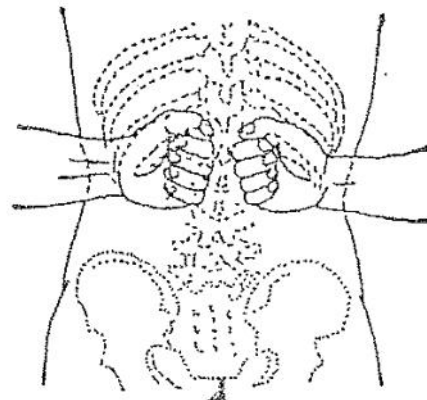
The first sentence: “You can do this exercise at any time and under any circumstance, just have the inside edges of both palms massage your rib and stomach.”

The second sentence: “You will feel happy and experience comfort after repeating this movement. Then use both hands to massage your stomach area with spiral motion.”

The third sentence says: “Move yours hands to the sides of your waist, apply fists to massage the two Shen-yu points (kidney area).”

The fourth sentence: “Repeat these many





times, you may ask your family to help if you feel tired.”

The fifth sentence: “Massage the three parts of body multiple times, the more-the better, do not feel tired of it.”

The sixth sentence: “The more you practice, the more you benefit; practice after practice, you will walk toward the path of immortality.”

To help reader actually perform this simple exercise, Master Yan Wang (maybe it was her master), has summarized the immortal living-massage into the following three movements. You can do this exercise by standing or sitting down. All movements come as massage. The more you massage the better.

Palms face up, and put the edge of your palms on each side underneath the liver and spleen. Push fairly hard into the body, and rub back and forth.

Make the right hand into a fist (women), left had into a fist (men) – thumb on top of the index finger. Put the first onto the navel, and the other hand on top. Massage in circles around the abdomen; first clockwise – minimum 72 times, (This is effective against constipation).

Then, massage counterclockwise, minimum 54 times, (This is effective against diarrhea).

If you are constipated, massage only clockwise. If you have diarrhea, do only counterclockwise. If neither, massage both directions, accompanying with deep breathing, and make the digestive system smooth and strong.

Massage the kidneys with the back of the

fists. As many times as possible.

Try this exercise daily for a month; you will feel the difference in your daily life.

Kevin W Chen, Ph.D. – is an associate professor at the Center for Integrative Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine (USA). Dr. Chen was educated in the universities of both China and the U.S., 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>).



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Twelve Longest Living Cultures In The World

By Niraj Naik

The USA currently has an average life expectancy of 77 years of age. However this does not equate to a high quality of life for American senior citizens. It is in fact one of the poorest in the world.

There are many reasons for this weird anomaly considering all of the resources and technological advances we have in the west.

There are many other cultures that actually live a lot longer but also have far better quality of lives and today I am going to discuss all the positive things we can take from these cultures.

The cultures with the longest life expectancies enjoying a high quality of life are:

Some accounts state 90+ years of age for these 4 super longevity cultures:

- **Andorra**—the mountainous region between France and Spain
- **Vilcamba Valley**—the Andes mountains in Ecuador
- **Himalayas**—the Hunzas in Pakistan.
- **Abkhasians and Georgians** who live in a



The Lama Temple In The Himalayas

mountainous region near the Black Sea in Russia
Here are several others enjoying long and happy lives:

- Macau in Southern China 82.1
- Japan 82.7 – a region called Okinawa is famous for having the longest life expectancy in the world
- Singapore 81.6
- San Marino, a nation state in Italy – 83.2
- Hong Kong 81
- Australia – 81.5
- Switzerland – 82.2
- Sweden 81.4

These cultures do have some things in common regarding their diet and lifestyles:

VARIETY OF FOODS

Long living cultures tend to eat a wide range of foods everyday. Japan recommends eating 30 different varieties of food daily. Macau and Singapore have some of the world's largest ports providing a richly diverse range of cuisine from around the world.

There are over 80,000 different edible species of plant foods identified worldwide. Out of this only 3000 have been used commonly throughout our human history. Interestingly only 3 out of this 3000 are cultivated on a mass scale – corn, soy and wheat and they account for over 60% of the world's food supply.

These foods are also mass produced, cross bred for durability, processed and refined making food allergies a major problem worldwide.

Gluten intolerance is one example of this happening. Wheat has been cross bred so many times that the gluten has become almost indigestible by everyone. IBS, IBD, celiac disease and many other digestive problems have risen dramatically over the years.

Humans were never supposed to eat such a small range of foods and doing so has affected not just our own health but also the environment due to mass farming of a small range of crops.

PLANT BASED FOODS

In the West we consume a lot of plant based foods but unfortunately due to over farming the soil quality can be low and so the nutrient content can be low too. Also mass farming requires more pesticides and chemicals, and even worse there is a big emergence of genetically modified crops where the long term safety of consumption is questionable. Long-living people eat natural, organic foods that are free from pesticides and herbicides and definitely not modified by scientists in a lab!

WHOLE GRAINS

In the West we tend to consume processed and refined grain products that are high in calories and low in nutrition. In Japan, noodles tend to be made from nutritious buckwheat and cultures like the Hunza's have nutrient rich grasses in their diet. Pulses, sprouted and fermented grains that provide high nutrition and are easy to digest are part of these long living cultures diets.

FISH

Long living cultures have fish as a common staple part of their diets. They would also eat mainly wild caught fish, not farmed like we do in the West.

ANIMAL PROTEIN & FATS

There is a wide misconception that living long means avoiding non vegetarian foods. The longest living cultures in the world, in fact, eat a large quantity of plant based foods but also animal products such as meats, cheeses, yogurts and dairy are staple parts of their diets. The animals on the other hand are grass fed, live freely not in battery farms and are well respected and cared for.

In the West we have another misconception that animal fat is bad. This is actually very wrong. The Japanese actually ordered their citizens to consume more animal fat, after they realized that a low fat diet led to more strokes and heart disease!

The bad fats that causes problems are actually the manufactured fats from margarine, processed butter, and heavily processed foods that are deep fried in low quality highly processed vegetable oils.

DAIRY

Fermented dairy products such as Kefir that is rich in probiotics are a staple part of the northern Caucasus cultures. Dairy products consumed by the long living cultures are also not pasteurized or processed in any way like we do in the West.



PROBIOTICS

The longevity masters all have fermented products rich in probiotics in common. Pulsed

grains, fermented drinks, fish sauces, yogurt, pickled vegetables or cured meat provide a regular source of probiotics. In the West however we consume many things that kill our natural flora of good bacteria such as antibiotics, sweets, fizzy drinks and processed foods. The new emergence of probiotic containing foods in the West is also misleading because many of these heavily marketed products are high in additives and sugar that cause more harm than good!

TEA

Tea is also another universal part of traditional diets. Herbal tonics using fresh organic ingredients can be rich in health protecting antioxidants. In the West however we tend to consume high caffeine drinks with generous helpings of refined sugar instead!

MEDITATION & REGULAR EXERCISE



Meditative practices such as prayer and rituals are common amongst all the longest living cultures. They also enjoy an active lifestyle right through to old age where regular exercise is a natural daily habit for them. They also have very close family bonds and strong social interactions. In the West it is not uncommon for kids to sit in front of their play stations all day, and their parents to be divorced and never utter a single word to their neighbors!

ACTION STEPS WE CAN LEARN FROM THESE CULTURES

1. Try to source locally grown crops and foods from your local farmers that is organic and free from pesticides.
2. Try to grow your own food in your gardens if this is possible.
3. Eat a rainbow diet that contains foods and vegetables that make up all the colors of the rainbow. Longevity expert Bo Rinaldi is famous for his rainbow salad recipe that provides a large variety of antioxidants essential for great long term health.
4. Remove refined grains from your diet, especially wheat where possible. Quinoa and buckwheat are good alternatives.
5. Try to consume more probiotic rich foods and drink such as Kefir. If this is not possible, a high potency probiotic supplement will do.
6. Switch from daily coffee to green tea, or a variety of herbal teas that is without added sugar of course!
7. Try to do regular exercise daily, such as walking, dancing or even swimming. Even just 15 minutes a day will make a big difference.
8. Spend more time having fun! Playing with your grandkids, children or just simply talking or planning fun things with your loved ones, friends or neighbors more of the time.
9. Try to make meditation a regular part of your lifestyle. Just simply letting your thoughts go and letting your mind clear the clutter does wonders for your health and wellbeing!

The [Alpha Mind System](#) is a powerful system that will help you to learn how to meditate deeply and also is packed with many simple lifestyle improvements you can make that may help extend your life and make it richer and more interesting too.



Niraj Naik is a pharmacist, and a health/wellness consultant based in the UK. Having a background in music, Dr. Naik also produces music and sounds with consultant psychiatrist Dr Mrigank Mishra, under the alias amAya, some of which is infused with their novel Trypnaural Brainwave Entrainment Technology designed to increase the natural production of tryptamines, DMT, serotonin and melatonin that can lead to deeper sleep, relaxation and better health. To find out more about his work and to download a free sample please visit <http://www.TrypnauralMeditation.com>

Plateaus In Learning Taiji

By **Eric Borreson**

When people begin learning something new, they often learn quickly. Their minds become engaged in the learning. However, when learning taiji, learning quickly is not necessarily better than learning slowly and deeply. Taiji has many subtle details that take time to learn. It takes time for it to get into your body and your mind. With each lesson, it is important to practice regularly until that lesson becomes part of you.

Learning is not a steady path toward perfection. Even with deliberate practice with slow and steady learning, learners often reach a time where it seems that improvement is not happening. This is called a plateau. A learner can seem to stay on a plateau for a long time.

However, at some point there is a sudden change and something new becomes obvious. This causes a sudden, steep rise in growth and learning. This sudden change may cause a temporary period where the student has to rethink the details of the movement in light of this new understanding. Then the learner works at this new level until there is another steep rise in growth and learning.

The presence of this sudden change does not mean that nothing was happening during the plateau. Plateaus and steep rises are yin and yang. The plateaus are yin where energy is stored. The steep rises are yang where the energy is delivered in a burst of new understanding. There is no yang without the yin.

A plateau is a necessary part of learning taiji. The daily practice during the plateaus helps the movement become automatic. It needs to soak into the marrow of the bones. It may seem like little learning is happening, but a plateau happens while the lessons are trained "into the body".

Some dedicated learners may want to work hard to get through the plateau phase. Others may get frustrated with the plateau. This causes some students to drop out and miss out on the benefits of long-term taiji practice. Sometimes learners really do get stuck on a plateau and need help to make progress. It is the teacher's responsibility to discuss this with students so that they know what to expect. There are several strategies to help get past a plateau.



Someone learning taiji moves through plateaus followed by steep rises.

Photo courtesy of sina.com

Encourage The Learner To Move Outside Their Comfort Zone

It is sometimes necessary to put emphasis on things that have been too difficult. The learner may need to risk looking foolish in order to make progress.

Learners Need Honest Feedback.

We all want to encourage our students by giving them positive feedback. It is sometimes necessary to deliver constructive criticism. The learner may need

Learners need to use directed practice



to survive a bruised ego in order to make progress.

Each practice session needs a short-term goal. The teacher may need to identify areas where the student needs to focus more attention. It is sometimes necessary to get back to the basics and relearn something. The learner may need to learn humility and go back to the beginning in order to make progress.

Enjoy your practice during the plateaus. Know that eventually the yin plateaus become the yang rises that bring new depth and enjoyment to your practice.



Eric Borreson, - a student and teacher, finds teaching tai chi, 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 tai chi, qigong, and meditation at the prestigious Heart-land Spa, a top 10 destination spa, located in Gilman, IL. In addition, he teaches tai chi (Yang 24, Sun-style tai chi, and Dr. Lam's Tai Chi for Arthritis and Tai Chi for Diabetes) at other venues. He conducts workshops and teaches private lessons on request. (eborresongen@hotmail.com, (760) 716-4421)

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Xing Shen Zhuang Fa (形神庄法) A Daoyin To Liberate The Spine

By Jessica Sommar, MSc. 夏洁希

Introduction

This paper gives a brief overview of xing shen zhuang fa 形神庄法, a rare Daoyin form seldom presented in public that seeks to open the body and the mind by stretching and releasing muscles, nerves and fascia along the spine (1). It is the only Daoyin form that focuses *exclusively* on the spine and the entire spinal column.

Xing shen zhuang fa opens and releases the spine through a series of slow, gentle movements that begin at the cervicals and finish with the tailbone. Regular practice of these standing postures has been known to strengthen internal organs, heal disease and clear subtle and physical obstructions in the spine and elsewhere (2).



The series of simple exercises also awakens sensitivity and promotes health, strength, flexibility, lightness and suppleness originating from the spine and extending to the limbs. The movements, like many Daoyin forms, are not strenuous and can be done by most anyone regardless of athletic ability.

The ultimate achievement from the xing shen zhuang practice however is song 松, that elusive state of total awareness and relaxation that is the key to Daoist longevity and ascension practices.

History

A goal of Daoism (3) is self-perfection through purification practices and energy containment. The body is seen as connected to and a replica of the Dao 道. Good health and longevity and an alignment of the individual's energies with the Dao are therefore fundamental to open paths to higher self-realization and spiritual unfolding (4).

Healing exercises, called Daoyin 導引, are one means of achieving good health, longevity and an alignment with the Dao. Daoyin practice is also sometimes referred to as *yang sheng* 養生 or, nourishing life. Many forms of Daoyin and other longevity techniques have been developed and documented by Daoists from China's earliest history (5). The earliest forms of Daoyin exercises were developed during the Early Han dynasty (206 BCE-8 CE) (6).

Daoyin exercises or massage as they were ini-



tially known were most often understood as foundational and/or preliminary practices to achieve higher attainments (7). These exercises have expanded over the centuries and are popular in their current forms qigong and taiji quan (8).

Most contemporary Daoyin sets are either of fairly recent provenance and/or reconstructions of earlier practices (9).

Xing Shen Zhuang Fa

Xing shen zhuang is one of the rarer Daoyin forms. The exercises are found in a variety of Daoist lineages, both orthodox and otherwise. The specific sequence that gives the name to the form was codified in the tenth century on Emei Shan, in western China. Since then it has been transmitted in several different lines of teachings. Various versions of the form are now practiced by a number of Daoist sects as well as Buddhist and martial sects (10).

Xing shen zhuang has been translated as: "The mastery of the metaphysical entity (vehicle) that allows the formless spirit to manifest in a definite shape." (11) It is a method which makes it possible for the formless spirit to be manifested in the specific body- a coming home of the spirit into the body. It

has always been considered a method for "building the foundation." It was and is still practiced by the high-ranking initiates (12).

How this may work is that the practice of xing shen zhuang helps stabilize the shen or spirit from its chaotic dispersion and return it home to the body so that, along with other neigong practices, higher levels of attainment in Daoism can begin to be achieved (13). Moreover, the focus on the whole spine is believed to activate the 8 Extraordinary Vessels, energy meridians in the body that go beyond the maintenance of the human system, but actually work on broader and deeper levels such as destiny, genetics and transformation (14).

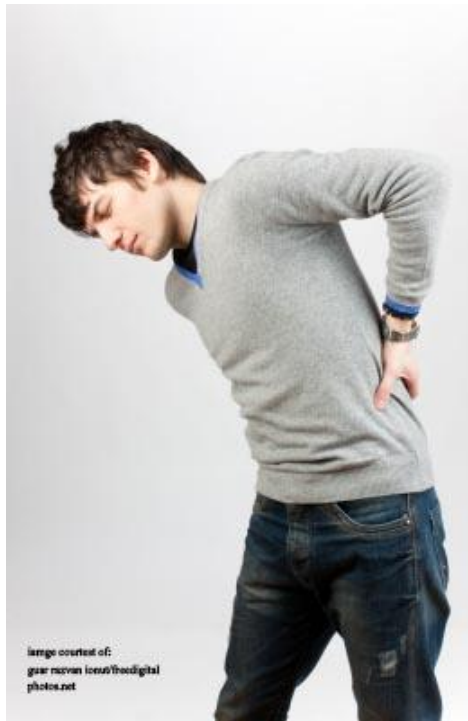
Yet xing shen zhuang is only being taught by a handful of teachers outside of Daoist enclaves today.

Masters

While there are many teachers training students in Daoyin forms, current xing shen zhuang forms have similarities and are taught in a similar manner, but only by a handful of teachers publicly (15).

Wang Ting Jun is a Wu Taiji master who teaches

xing shen zhuang fa as a foundational practice (16). Prof. Wang leeft in de noord Chinese stad Changchun, waar hij hoogleraar traditionele Chinese wijsbegeerte is. Wang lives in the northern Chinese city of Changchun, where he is professor of traditional Chinese philosophy. Al vanaf 1989 komt hij elk jaar naar Europa, voornamelijk naar Italië waar hij druk bezochte Qi Gong workshops geeft. He teaches xing shen zhuang mostly in Europe and claims he is his first patient to recover health as a result of xing shen zhuang practice. Wang Ting Jun has said he considers xing shen zhuang fa to be an integral training and basis for taiji quan (17).



is quoted as saying his xing shen zhuang fa is “half physical and half awareness training” (23).

Daoyin were also often prescribed as a medical qigong, to heal certain ailments and afflictions or to prevent them. Although the spine is involved and activated during most Daoyin exercises (24), xing shen zhuang appears to be the only Daoyin focused *exclusively* on the entire spine.

The form of Verdesi and Vladimirova moves down the spine in a series of exercises. These exercises, unlike movement for movements’ sake, are coupled with self-

Another form called variously xing shen zhuang and chi-lel (level 2) is taught through Pang Ming’s Zhineng Qigong Society. Zhineng Qigong was created in the 1980s by Pang Ming, a qigong teacher with training in Chinese and Western medicine (18). Prof. Pang resides at the Huaxia Zhineng Qigong Center, in Qinhuangdao, China. His hospital located outside Beijing has been a source of research on healing and qigong (19).

Chi-lel (level 2) has striking similarities to the form of David Verdesi and Anna Vladimirova, two “inside” students of Master Wang Liping, the 18th transmitter of Dragon Gate (Longmen) Daoism branch. Verdesi and Vladimirova also trained with Wang Ting Jun (20). The form of Verdesi and Vladimirova is the basis for this paper and demonstration (21).

Practices

Daoyin exercises, such as xing shen zhuang, not only heal and purify the body, but are also an important foundational technique for the meditative practitioner for the transformation of consciousness and reaching of internal silence in neigong practices such as sheng zheng gong 生正功. Wang Ting Jun

awareness and sensation of one’s own experience of the movement in the body. This focused intention (yi) is believed to draw qi deeply into the spine for healing and balancing. Daoist masters teach that qi follows imagination and blood follows qi.

It is believed that the opening of the spine, through intention and movement, brings an expansion in the body and subsequently in consciousness. Practitioners feel refreshed and comfortable in their own skin, as well as calm and centered, alert and relaxed.

Why is opening the spine so integral? The backbone is the core of the body. The spine protects the spinal cord and serves as the root of our nervous system. It also supports our upper body and enables us to stand up, bend, and twist.

The spinal cord is the main pathway of communication between the brain and the rest of the body. A study of dermatomes, an area of skin whose sensory nerves all come from a single spinal nerve root, reveals how each nerve in the spine connects to a part of the anatomy (25). Therefore a blockage in the spine will affect a nerve which corresponds to a part of the body. Freeing the spine of blockages then, can free the whole body.



image courtesy of: rajcreationsz/freedigitalphotos.net

But liberating the spine is not just a gateway for a healthy body, but a healthy and expanded consciousness as well. Daoists knew this and developed exercises to both keep a healthy body and prepare the mind for practices meant to raise the consciousness of the student through meditation and breath and other techniques (26).

“I believe that the spine is special and not just physical, but also linked to our consciousness. It is an extension of our senses and the brain- our consciousness. When working inside a vertebrae we also affect the brain and our perception.” Master Wang Ting Jun, quoted in an April 2005 interview (27).

Lineage and Form

Xing shen zhuang forms have developed from different lineages of Daoism. Each lineage may have different movements in their xing shen zhuang, but similar goals- a healthy body and to prepare the body, mind and spirit for higher practices.

While many Daoyin forms also include specific breathing instructions, sounds and/or guiding of qi through areas of the body (28), xing shen zhuang is mainly attentive to physical and energetic sensations through awareness facilitated by slow movements, focus and gentle breathing.

Most of the xing shen zhuang forms have a set number of movements (29). Some are comprised of 10, some number 13 movements or more. Daoists admire certain numbers over others, so it may be that movements were condensed within a certain set of numbers to keep the significance of an important number of movements. This can be confusing however, as there is often more than one movement to each exercise. It may be helpful to think of the numbers as sets of movements rather than there being a single movement per number.

The Chi-lei form of Prof. Pang is similar in many ways to the Verdesi/Vladimirova form (30). Verdesi and Vladimirova acknowledge their form is derived from the Longmen pai tradition, but have added and subtracted movements from other xing shen zhuang forms and from teachings of other masters. They have been working and perfecting their form for over eight years.

The form developed by Verdesi/Vladimirova has codified 10 movements. Each movement is done very slowly, very deliberately and with very little strain. All movements are quiet, gentle and usually feel very pleasant. Nothing is meant to be forced. Movements are often circular in form, similar to the forms of taiji quan. Some dizziness may result at first as the postures bring blood and qi 氣 (31) to the muscles and fascia which are loosened, freeing nerves and old blockages.

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Descriptions of Movements

Here are the movements in short:

Crane Neck
Turtle Neck
Dragon Neck
Crane Spreads its Wings
Dragon Sweeping The Clouds
Snake Coil
Dragon Waist
Tiger Squat
Heavenly Pillar
Crane Stand

Opening: The form begins with closing the eyes and centering. Feeling the heaven above and earth below connected via the top of the head and the sacrum or the bai hui and the hui yin to use the acupuncture points.

Thereafter the hands are brought from the sides and the wrists are lifted. The hands and arms are moved forward to about navel level and backward to behind the rear. As you move the hands forward, press the hands downward, as you move the hands back pull with the hands. This movement of pushing and pulling is more conscious than active.

Crane Neck starts with palms over the navel. It is a movement of the head and neck out forward, down and up in a square. The focus is on the cervical spine, from C1 to C7, loosening and opening them in a gentle stretch. Especially this movement expands and compressing the yu zhen, the Jade Pillow an important acupuncture point for Daoists



seeking longevity (32). The shoulders are relaxed and only the neck and head moves. This may be done 3 times, or more.

This is followed by **Turtle Neck**, which is the same movement, but reversed, beginning with the chin from the bottom of the square and working up. This may be done 3 times or more.

Dragons' Neck movement follows. This movement focuses on C7 particularly, da zhui, translated in many acupuncture texts as "Big Hammer" because it is the largest of the cervical vertebrae. The opening and releasing of the da zhui is especially important because it is the meeting place of meridians, nerves and veins, and in its



full exercise works all the cervicals as well. It entails dropping the head down in front, looking left and swinging the head to the right. Turning the face to the right, then dropping the head down in front and swing the head to the left. This may be done 9 times. Then there is a side to side movement, with the head upright turning the face to the left and then to the right. Turning the head back and forth three times or more. Finally, the head is lowered and begins a swinging motion side to side from wide to smaller arcs raising the head one cervical vertebra at a time until the head is in the upright position again.

Crane Spreads its Wings moves the participant into working the thoracic spine-important for its

being a direct conduit via nerves and acupuncture points to the body's organs. It begins with a thrust upward with the fingers, with the palms turned toward the face just slightly higher than the forehead. The forearm is vertical and the elbows are at a 90 degree angle. The elbows are then pulled back to the side, the head is raised up and the arms pull the body back in an arch, lifting up through the sternum and pushing the scapulae back. The palms are then turned outwards. Thereafter, arms are stretched out to the sides and palms face down. The hands are then lowered, the head is tilted back. This is done 3 times. After the arms are extended to the side, the fingers are lifted as if pushing two mountains apart. The palms are then dropped and gathered to form a crane's beak, then are slowly lifted up back into palms-pushing mountains pose.

Dragon Sweeping the Clouds massages the whole spine, but especially works the lumbar spine and sacrum- the seat literally of many ailments and pains in the body. Beginning with the feet together, swing the hands in a sweeping motion in front of the body as you turn to the right side or the left side repeatedly. Then bend lower at the waist and do the same motion. Next, clasp the hands with the palms turn palms outward. Look down and turn to the left or right, bend at the waist, raise the right arm and lower the left and look down at the floor. This stretches the waist and ribs. Then turn to the right and level the arms in front of you. Slowly raise the left arm and lower the right. Lean to the right, look down at the floor, and stretch the left ribs. Reverse and repeat a few times. Finally, begin to move only the shoulders and arms in a sweeping motion, bending from the waist, making smaller and smaller arcs and raising the body one vertebra at a time until standing.

Snake Coil works the whole spine and especially the lower spine and *ming men* or L2 - L3 area of the spine. Feet are together raise hands over-

head, slowly drop neck, thoracic, and lumbar one vertebra at a time lowering entire body until hands are touching floor or reaching for the floor, depending on flexibility. Reverse and raise



the body one vertebra at a time starting with the lumbar and going up the thoracic and then the cervicals. When standing, bring hands overhead, bend backwards, allow arms to fall back and sweep arms forward and back as if embracing someone, undulating the spine in waves from top to bottom. When standing again, place the palms together, stretch them out in front of you and move them from side to side. When turning to the left, the left palm is over the right. When turning to the right, right palm is over the left. This will begin to look like a figure 8.

Dragon Waist again works the lumbar spine and sacrum by holding the upper body still and rotating the lower body in small circles from the lumbar spine only. May be done 9 times clockwise and counterclockwise.

Tiger Squat begins to lower the focus from the spine to the hips and legs. Feet are spread wide, toes pointing outwards, hands in prayer position at chest. Lower knees into a squat, hold and raise up focusing on sacrum as a piston pushing upwards. The hip moves in a clockwise or counterclockwise circle.

Heavenly Pillar works the whole spine and is more like standing postures reminiscent of traditional qigong. Standing with hands in prayer po-



sition toes pointing toward each other bend at the waist forward and stretch with a flat back pulling sacrum and hands away from one another. Reach down to the floor and raise one vertebra at a time. Second movement, bring knees in a knock-kneed posture, stand straight with hands over head lower knees as far as possible, keeping body aligned. Lower hands to belly, close feet and knees and soften knees as if kneeling, raise up from top of head or bai hui.

Crane Stand works hips and legs down to ankles. In a standing posture, hands on waist, lift one leg making the knee and thigh perpendicular to the floor. Allow foot to hang naturally and turn the ankle in circles 3 to 6 times, left and right. Extend leg and turn entire leg and foot in small circles from inside the hip where the femur meets 3 to 6 times. Then do the other leg. Finish in a standing posture, bring hands in front of body, several inches apart as if holding an invisible ball, bend knees, hold ball and swing arms right, overhead and lower down the left and back in front of knees. Rotate 3 to 6 times left and right.

Closing: With hands over head, a few inches apart, lower hands in front of face and body as if stroking a pillar of light, put hands back on navel, again feel the connection of the body in-between heaven and earth, the top of the head and the feet.

Conclusion

Despite the lack of evidence to date regarding the exact origins of xing shen zhuang, this rare Daoyin form is compelling in that it focuses exclusively on the spine and is intended as a foundational practice for higher levels of attainment in Daoist internal arts. Moreover, additional health benefits such as the relief of scoliosis and other spinal deformities currently being studied by Vladimirova at her center in Moscow may persuade scholars and the medical community to explore more thoroughly the simple and gentle practice of xing shen zhuang (33).



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2. Anna Vladimirova is compiling research on xing shen zhuang and the healing of some scoliosis of the spine in students attending her teaching center in Moscow. See her web site: www.wmdao.ru.
3. A discussion of Daoism and the Dao is beyond the scope of this paper. Please see leading western Daoist scholars such as Kristopher Schipper, Eva Wong, Livia Kohn and Thomas Cleary.
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9. The Center for Daoist Studies. See their web site: <http://www.daoistcenter.org/daoyin.html>
10. Much of the information in this section is taken from David Verdesi's web site: www.traditionaltao.com and Anna Vladimirova's web site: www.wmdao.ru. Both are my teachers of the form and have studied with various masters, including Master Wang Liping, Daoist lineage holder of the Quanzhen Longmen pai.
11. Ibid., David Verdesi's web site.
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26. Ibid., Livia Kohn, pg. 8, pg. 92.
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28. Ibid., Livia Kohn, pg. 4, pg. 75, pg. 78.
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30. For a complete reference to the chi-lel form, with pictures, please see <http://www.zhinengqigong.org/Methods/level2.htm>. The basis of the chi-lel form, or what tradition or lineage it is from, is not revealed on the web site. But its movements and patterns have similarities to Verdesi/Vladimirova's. There is no record online of Wang Ting Jun's form.
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Author Acknowledgements: special thanks to Rene J. Navarro, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), Manny Maramara and Myles Dunlop for their help in providing editing, translations, medical understanding and material references.



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Evolution of Body, Mind & Soul

Push-Hands: A Means For Enhancing Your Gong

By Yang Yang, Ph.D.

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Push-hands is a measure of a person's gong. In the meantime, push-hands can also be a safe and efficient means to enhance the gong. Below are a few suggestions to reach this goal.

- **Clarify the role of giver and receiver of energy.**

For the giver, think about applying your whole body's energy rather than a single source (like your arm) to your partner. For the receiver, use your whole body to neutralize the incoming energy from your partner.

- **Stay engaged throughout the circle--both partners.** Consistent engagement provides functional strength training needed to execute and neutralize a partner's push throughout the circle. It is easy to engage when your arms are close to the center of your body. It is not

easy when your arms are away from your body. Challenge yourself by working through a wide range of motion. (See #5.) You need to learn to stay engaged at any distance.

- **Engage and disappear.** After a significant

amount of engaged push-hands practice to improve gong, you can try alternating between engaging and disappearing: an excellent example of the interplay of yin and yang practice. One partner may extend force



Dr. Yang and Bob Schlagal in single-hand push-hands

while the other practices disappearing. Or each partner can experiment with alternating between engaging and disappearing. Bring your partner close to your body. The closer you bring your partner in, the more challenge you generate for yourself, and the more you can improve your core strength, relaxed energy and central equilibrium. I often see people

keep too far away from each other. Although this might serve to improve agility, it might delay the development of real gong. Of course, you need to do this training with a trusted partner to avoid awkward, chaotic or overly aggressive pushing from an unfamiliar partner.

- **Cultivate mental alertness and relaxation simultaneously.** Stay focused listening to your partner's energy. In the meantime, relax your mind. Mental and physical relaxation and tension are correlated. If you are relaxed mentally, it will lead to your physical relaxation. Similarly mental tension fosters physical tension.
- **Start with a big range of motion.** Avoid physical discomfort, pain, and bad structures

while the range of motion is as big as possible. We do not use most of our range of motion in our daily activities. If we don't use it, we will lose it. Push-hands gives us a chance to maintain range of motion or even restore range of motion lost in the past.

- **Exert less than 80% of your maximum force production during your push-hands training.** If you go over this intensity, you are more likely to tense up your body and lose agility.

Learn to control your force production. Most of the time, there is a disparity of strength between partners. The stronger one should learn to gauge and adjust his energy level. The ability to control the intensity of force production is an important skill, too.



Yang Yang, Ph.D. is one of the few individuals who are recognized within the traditional Taiji and Qigong community as a master practitioner and instructor, as well as an academic researcher who's using western science to explore evidence-based Eastern philosophy and healing arts. He is author of the

highly acclaimed book "*Taijiquan: The Art of Nurturing, The Science of Power*", and in 2006 was honored as the "Qigong Master of the Year" at the 9th World Congress on Qigong and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Yang trained in China under several of the 18th generation grandmasters of the Chen style – Chen Zhaokui, Gu Liuxin, and Feng Zhiqiang. He was a three-time Taiji champion at the Shanghai collegiate tournament and former instructor at the Shanghai Chen Style Taiji research association. To understand the power and mechanics of Taiji and Qigong beyond traditional explanatory frameworks, Master Yang completed a doctorate degree in kinesiology at the University of Illinois, where he remains as an adjunct faculty. Dr. Yang is currently the Director of the Center for Taiji and Qigong Studies (www.centerfortaiji.com) in New York City.

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CRANKY OLD MAN

originally by Phyllis McCormack; adapted by Dave Griffith

When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a nursing home in an Australian country town, it was believed that he had nothing left of any value.

Later, when the nurses were going through his meager possessions, They found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.

One nurse took her copy to Melbourne. The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas editions of magazines around the country and appearing in magazines for Mental Health. A slide presentation has also been made based on his simple, but eloquent, poem.

And this old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this 'anonymous' poem winging across the Internet.

What do you see nurses? What do you see?
What are you thinking . . . when you're looking at me?
A cranky old man, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?
Who dribbles his food and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice . 'I do wish you'd try!'
Who seems not to notice . . the things that you do.
And forever is losing A sock or shoe?
Who, resisting or not lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding The long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking?. Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse .you're not looking at me.
I'll tell you who I am As I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of Ten . .with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another
A young boy of Sixteen with wings on his feet
Dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at Twentymy heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vowsthat I promised to keep.
At Twenty-Five, nowI have young of my own.
Who need me to guide And a secure happy home.
A man of Thirty My young now grown fast,
Bound to each other With ties that should last.
At Forty, my young sons . . .have grown and are gone,
But my woman is beside me . . to see I don't mourn.
At Fifty, once more, . . .Babies play 'round my knee,

30 Yang-Sheng (Nurturing Life)

Again, we know children My loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me My wife is now dead.
I look at the future I shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing . . . young of their own.
And I think of the years . . . And the love that I've known.
I'm now an old man and nature is cruel.
It's jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body, it crumbles grace and vigour, depart.
There is now a stone . . . where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcass . A young man still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells
I remember the joys I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living life over again.
I think of the years, all too few . . . gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact . . . that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, people open and see.
Not a cranky old man .
Look closer see ME!!



Remember this poem when you next meet an older person who you might brush aside without looking at the young soul within. We will all, one day, be there, too! The best and most beautiful things of this world can't be seen or touched. They must be felt by the heart!

Scott Sonnon

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The Extraordinary Fu Organs (Qi Heng Zhe Fu)

Part 2 of 2

By Marty Eisen, Ph.D

[...continued from September/October 2012 issue]

3. Bones (Gu)

The Bones are related to the Kidneys because they store Marrow, produced from Kidney Essence. If Kidney Essence and Marrow are deficient, the Bones will lack nourishment and will be unable to support the body.

The relation between the bones and the Kidneys is also shown from clinical experience in speeding up the healing of fractures by treating the Kidneys.

Western Concept of the Bones

Composition

Bone is composed of several layers of different materials. The **periosteum**, outermost layer, is a thin, tough membrane of fibrous tissue. It supports the tendons that secure the muscle to the bone and also serves as a protective sheath. This membrane encloses all bones completely except at the joints where there is a layer of cartilage. Dense, hard layers of bone tissue called **compact bone** lie beneath the periosteum. Its composition is fibrous rather than solid and it gives bone its resiliency. **Cancellous** or **spongy bone** is enclosed within these layers. It contains little hollows like those of a sponge and makes up most of the volume of bone. The innermost compartment of the bone is a hollow cavity containing marrow. In the newborn, bones are filled exclusively with red marrow, but as the child ages it is mostly replaced by yellow, or *fatty* marrow, as described in Section 1.

Blood vessels run through every layer of bone, carrying nutritive elements, oxygen, and other products. Bone tissue also contains a large number of nerves. The basic chemical in bone, which gives bone its hardness and strength, is calcium phosphate.

Development and Restructuring

The major part of bone in the very young consists of cartilage. This accounts for the great flexibility and resiliency of the infant skeleton. Calcium phosphate gradually is deposited in the cartilage, and it becomes harder and more fragile. Some of the cartilage containing cells break loose, so that channels develop in the bone shaft. Blood vessels enter the channels, bearing with them small cells of connective tissue, some of which become **osteoblasts**, cells



that form bone. The osteoblasts enter the hardened cartilage, forming layers of hard, firm bone. Other cells, called **osteoclasts**, work to tear down old or excess bone structure, allowing the osteoblasts to rebuild it with new bone. This process continues throughout life, although it slows down with age.

Cartilage formation and the subsequent replacement of cartilage by hard material is the mechanism by which bones grow in size. During the period of bone growth, cartilage grows over the hardened portion of bone. In time, this layer of cartilage hardens as calcium phosphate is added, and a fresh layer grows over it, and it too hardens. The process continues until the body reaches full growth. Long bones grow in length because of special cross-sectional layers of cartilage, **growth plates**, located near the flared ends of the bone.

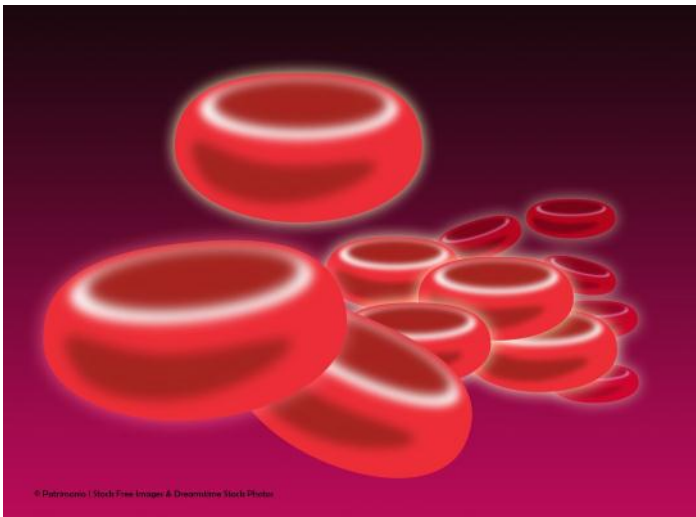
Functions

- (i) Protection: Bones protect internal organs.
- (ii) Structure: Bones support the body.
- (iii) Movement: Bones, skeletal muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints function together to generate and transfer forces so that individual body parts or the whole body can move.
- (iv) Sound transduction: Bones are important for this aspect, especially the ear ossicles in hearing.
- (v) Blood production: The marrow produces blood cells.
- (vi) Mineral storage: Bones act as reserves of minerals important for the body, especially calcium and phosphorus.
- (vii) Growth factor storage: The mineralized bone matrix stores important growth factors such as insulin-like growth factors, transforming growth factor, bone morphogenetic proteins and others.
- (viii) Fat storage: The yellow bone marrow acts as a storage reserve of fatty acids.
- (ix) Acid-base balance: Bone buffers the blood against excessive pH changes by absorbing or releasing alkaline salts.
- (x) Detoxification: Bone tissues store heavy metals and other foreign products. This removes them from the blood, thereby reducing their effects on other tissues. Later, these can be released gradually and excreted.
- (xi) Endocrine organ: Bone controls phosphate metabolism by releasing **fibroblast growth factor - 23 (FGF-23)**, which acts on kidneys to reduce phosphate reabsorption. Bone cells also release a hormone called **osteocalcin**, which contributes to the regulation of blood sugar (glucose) and fat deposition. Osteocalcin increases both the insulin secretion and sensitivity of cells. Moreover, it boosts the number of insulin-producing cells and reduces stores of fat.



4. Blood Vessels (Mai)

Blood Vessels contain Blood. Blood is produced from Marrow which is produced from Kidney Essence and also from the transformation of Food Qi with the help of the original Qi of the Kidney. Thus, the Blood Vessels are indirectly related to the Kidneys.



Western Concept of Blood Vessels

There are three major types of blood vessels: **arteries**, **capillaries**, and **veins**.

(a) Capillaries

Capillaries consist only of a layer of endothelium and occasional connective tissue. This structure allows the exchange of water, nutrients and chemicals between the blood and the tissues.

(b) Arteries

Arteries carry oxygenated blood away from the heart. They are composed of three layers of tissue.

(i) **Tunica intima**, the thinnest layer, is a single layer of simple squamous endothelial cells. It is held together

by a polysaccharide intercellular matrix and surrounded by a thin layer of subendothelial connective tissue. Interspersed in this tissue are circularly arranged elastic bands, called the **internal elastic lamina**.

(ii) **Tunica media**, the thickest layer consists of circularly arranged elastic fiber, connective tissue and polysaccharide substances. In some arteries, this layer contains many vascular, smooth muscles, which control the caliber of the vessel. The second and third layers are separated by another thick elastic band called the **external elastic lamina**.

(iii) **Tunica adventitia or externa** is composed of connective tissue, which contains nerves. This layer, in larger arteries, also contains nutrient capillaries.

(c) Veins

Most veins carry deoxygenated blood from the tissues back to the heart with the exception of the pulmonary and umbilical veins, both of which carry oxygenated blood to the heart.

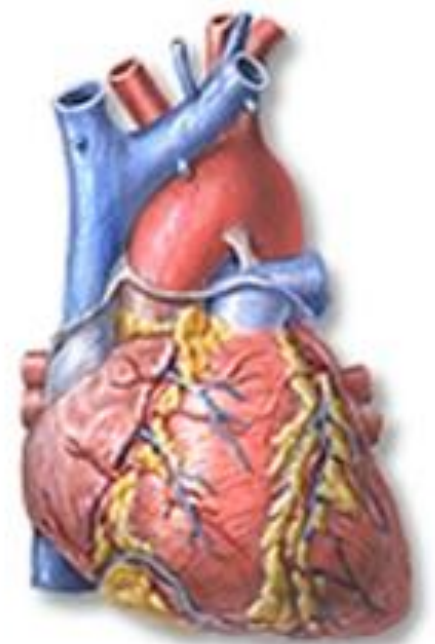
The thick outermost layer of a vein is the tunica adventia, composed of connective tissue. The tunica media contains bands of smooth muscle, which are generally thin as veins do not function primarily in a contractile manner. Veins will collapse when their lumens are not filled with blood. Their interior, the tunica intima, is lined with endothelial cells.

Most veins have one-way flaps, called **venous valves**, which are protrusions of the tunica intima. The valves prevent blood from flowing back and pooling in the lower extremities due to the effects of gravity. Venous return to the heart is dependent upon contraction of regional skeletal muscles.

The location of veins is much more variable from person to person than that of arteries. Many veins are located close to the skin, whereas arteries run deeper.

5. Uterus (Zigong)

The Uterus functions in controlling menstruation, conception and pregnancy. In Chinese medicine, the Uterus is connected to the Kidneys by the Directing or Conception Vessel (Ren Mai) and the Penetrating or Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai), originating in the Kidneys (2). The Conception Vessel provides Blood and the Thrusting Vessel



provides Qi to the Uterus. Abundant Kidney Essence ensures that these two Vessels will supply the Uterus with adequate Qi and Blood, so that menstruation and pregnancy will be normal. If there is inadequate Kidney Essence, then the Uterus will not receive sufficient Qi and Blood, which may result in irregular menstruation, amenorrhea, miscarriage or infertility.

The functions of the Uterus depend on an abundant supply of Blood. Thus, the Uterus is physiologically connected to the Heart, Liver and Spleen, which govern, store and control Blood, respectively. If the Spleen doesn't produce enough Blood and Heart Blood becomes deficient, the Uterus may be inadequately supplied with Blood, resulting in amenorrhea.

Menstrual irregularities often result from dysfunctions of the Liver because it stores and regulates the volume of Blood. Amenorrhea or scanty periods can also result from deficient Liver Blood. Liver Qi stagnation may cause Liver Blood stasis, leading to irregular or painful periods. If the stored Liver Blood is hot, then the Blood in the Uterus may flow out improperly producing metrorrhagia or menorrhagia.

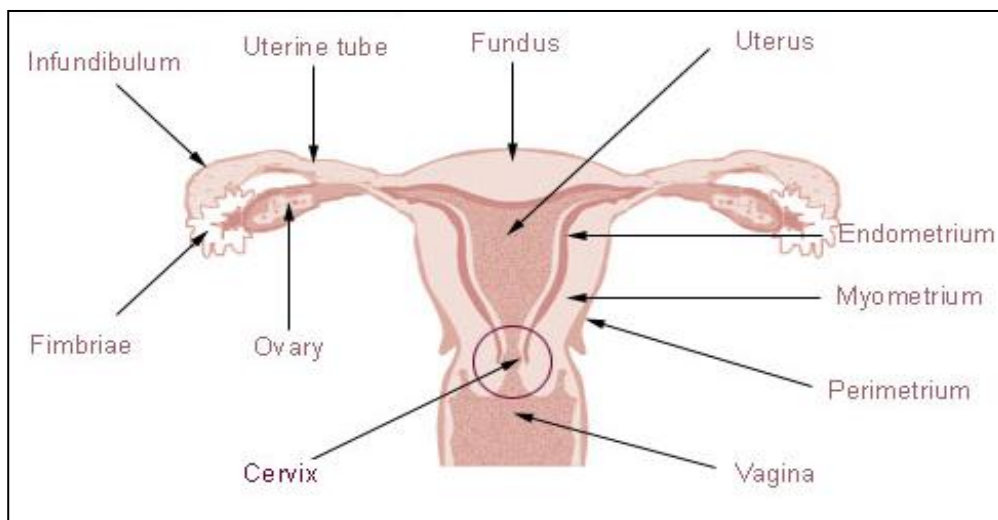
Reproductive disorders often result from a deficiency of Kidney Essence, since the Uterus will be undernourished. For example, a deficiency of Kidney Essence may result in miscarriages or infertility.

The Uterus is closely connected to the Stomach via the Thrusting Vessel which links these Organs. Nausea and vomiting, which sometime occur during menstruation, and morning sickness of pregnancy are often the result of stomach dysfunction caused by the changes in the Uterus.

In Chinese medicine, instead of Uterus, in males, the **Red Field (Dan Tian)** or **Room of Essence (Bao)**, plays the role of the Uterus. It stores and produces Sperm and is closely related to the Kidneys and Governing Vessel (Du Mai). Deficiencies in the Kidneys and Governing Vessel may affect the Red Field. This can lead to dysfunctions such as, premature ejaculation, clear and watery sperm, impotence, nocturnal emissions and spermatorrhea.

Western Concept of the Uterus

The **uterus** or **womb** is a major female hormone-responsive, reproductive organ. It has three major functions: to prepare an appropriate surface to embed a fertilized ovum and execute the menstrual cycle if fertilization doesn't occur, to nourish the developing embryo and to expel the newborn infant.



The womb is shaped like an inverted pear (see Fig. 6) and is in the pelvis. The uterus and its Fallopian tubes are held in place by ligaments and folds of the peritoneum. The **cervix** (derived from the Latin *cervix uteri*, meaning "neck of the womb") is the lower, narrow portion of the uterus and joins with the top end of the vagina. The cervix has an opening to allow sperm and menstrual fluid to move through.

The thickest layer of the uterus is the **myometrium**. It is composed of an inner layer of smooth muscle fibers, arranged in a circular

Figure 6 The uterus with connected structures

pattern, a middle layer of interlacing oblique fibers and an outer layer arranged in a longitudinal pattern. The **endometrium**, the inside, cellular lining of the myometrium, has a glandular (secretory) surface. The myometrium is responsible for contractions of the uterus, important during labor. The endometrium undergoes changes in every cycle to prepare for an embryo and its inner lining is shed during menstruation. Hence, before menopause, the womb is an extremely active organ, whose changes are controlled by secreted hormones.

6. Gallbladder (Dan)

The Gallbladder is considered an Extraordinary Organ because it stores bile, a pure substance, unlike the other Yang Organs. Its functions are just those of the Gallbladder, which were already discussed with the Yang Organs.

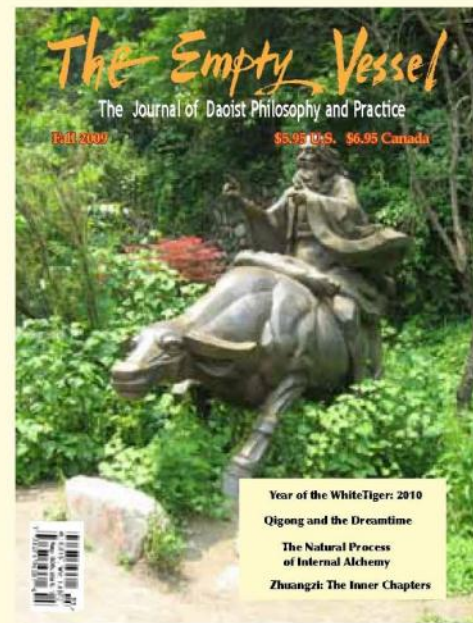
The Gallbladder is indirectly, psychologically related to the Kidneys. The Kidneys control will power, while the Gallbladder controls decisiveness and courage, which are interrelated.

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Winter: A Time to Prepare for Spring

By Ellasara Kling



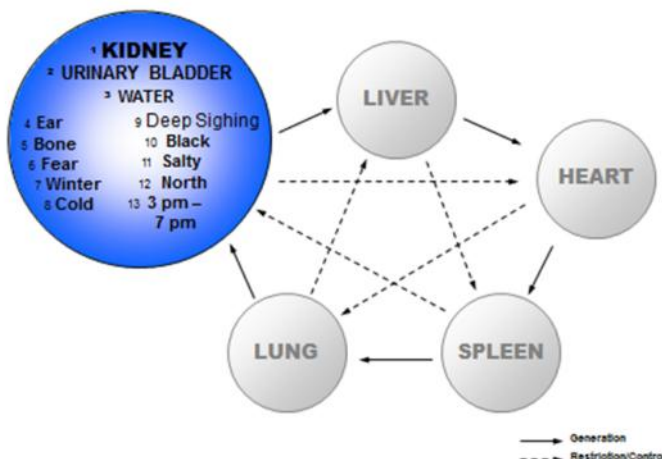
Five Element Theory provides a framework through which we can observe and understand the deeper connections between ourselves and Universal Flow/Natural Cycles throughout our lives. An understanding that has very practical applications at any given moment because we are able to utilize Five Element theory to deepen our understanding of the interrelationships of all things, and apply it to our lives. Truly, Five Element Theory is a way to understand the “10,000 things” which arise from the interaction of Yin/Yang. So, once again, we turn to Five Element theory to explore the current season, Winter and some of its relationships especially to food and general health. (The Five element chart below highlights Winter/Kidney Season.)

Winter Season is “ruled” by the Kidney function.

According to the principles of Chinese medicine, it is within the Kidney that our innate qi, which we received from our parents, resides. This basic energy supports us throughout our lives and its preservation and, if possible, cultivation, is of utmost importance for a long and healthy life. During the course of our days, we acquire additional qi that we can use for daily living from the air, water, food we eat and energy cultivation practice. This acquired qi with our “prenatal” qi are what we rely upon to nourish our bodies and to protect us from external pathogens and support us in times of stress. Since our acquired qi is our first available resource and it can be more easily renewed than our prenatal qi, we want to keep that reserve strong and abundant for daily use. In contrast, we want to utilize our Kidney qi as infrequently as possible since it is a finite gift whose abundance and quality is a determinate of our health and longevity.

Even from the brief thumbnail sketch of qi reserves above, we can see the incredibly important role that Kidney qi plays in our lives. Winter has long been used as a metaphor for aging, death, dying, endings, withdrawal, and desolation. I suggest that we think about Winter this year from a different point of view. That we view Winter as the source of our new beginning (Spring), because without a strong Winter, our Spring and Summer will likely be less than they could have been. It is not mere whimsy or poetic allusions

Five Element Theory



that caused the Sages of ancient times to pair Winter with Kidney. It was clearly from a deep understanding that without deep nourishment, restorative rest, storage and conservation of our energy, we would not be able to follow the depths of Winter with a bright, healthy and energetic Spring. By paying attention to the dictums of the Winter season and the needs of the Kidney system you will be creating better health for the year to come.

Here are some ideas of what to do this Winter to tonify and strengthen yourself. Get plenty of rest. Eat simple warming foods, especially soups, congees and warm cereals. Although Winter foods are denser (heavier) always keep to the guideline of only eating until 70% full. Refrain from eating greasy foods or overly processed foods. As much as possible, have meals that are made from fresh, unprocessed foods. Keep your feet warm. Gently tap your teeth together about 50 times a day. Choose foods that support you individually and are also seasonal. Spend time in meditation and/or inner reflection. Remember that the emotion for this season is fear so do things to keep your spirits up and bright – laugh and smile often.

Head/neck/ear massage: Starting at the center front of your **head**, place your “pinky fingers” next to each other along the hairline and let your other fingers fall naturally along the hairline and the thumb slightly behind the temples. With a firm but still gentle pressure, “rake” your fingers over your head and ending at the occipital ridge. Do this 9 times. Then with your open palms, and alternating hands, lay your hand across the back of your **neck** and so that the heel of your palm is on the large neck muscle and your fingers are resting lightly on the other side of your neck. Again, with a firm but gentle stroke, drag you hand across your neck. Keep your head held up as you do this 8 times with each hand. Finally, with your thumbs and forefingers on either side of your **ears**, rub the ear starting in the front and



continuing down to the lobe. End by giving the lobe a little light tug.

Some Foods That Are Particularly Good For The Winter Season:

Black Beans, Black Mushrooms, Blackberry, Black sesame seeds and oil, Black soybeans, Blueberry, Bone marrow, Cabbages, Celery, Chard, Chestnuts, Cranberry, Ginger, Job's tears, Kale, Kidney beans, Kohlrabi, Longan, Lotus seed, Miso, Mulberry, Mutton, Ocean Perch, Parsley, Pine nuts, Prunes, Raspberry, Rutabaga, Seaweed, Shrimp/Prawns, Soy Sauce, String beans, Turnips, Walnuts, Wood ear mushrooms.

Winter Energy Cereal

1/2 cup of rice
6 cups of water
½ cup toasted black sesame seeds
½ cup toasted crushed walnuts
3 TB honey
½ tsp salt

Directions

Cover the rice in 2 cups of water and soak for 2 hours.

Toast the walnuts and crush. A simple crushing method is to place the walnuts in a plastic bag and roll with a rolling pin.

Toast the black sesame seeds.
Drain the excess water off the rice.
Place all the ingredients in a saucepan and mix.
Add 4 cups of water and bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until the rice is thoroughly cooked and all the water has been absorbed. Stir the cereal frequently as it is cooking. The texture of the cereal at this stage is like a thick porridge or cornmeal mush. The rice is creamy and the sesame seeds are still slightly crunchy.

To make into a breakfast cereal: add ½ cup boiling water to ½ cup of cereal – optional: a touch of cinnamon; or adding red dates to the cereal
Yield: 4 cups
Serving size ½ cup



ENERGY SNACK VARIATION: Mix together equal amounts of crushed toasted walnuts and toasted black sesame seeds. Add some honey to make a thick paste. This delicious snack is excellent for an energy boost and can be especially helpful for an elderly person.

Broccoli Rabe with Mushrooms and Walnuts

3 TB sunflower oil or grapeseed oil or other light oil
10 oz mushrooms –your favorite is fine
8 cloves of garlic
1/2 tsp salt
¼ tsp Szechuan peppercorns or black pepper
¾ cup Xiao Xing wine (or dry sherry)

2 lbs. broccoli rabe
Lemon juice
Tamari or dark soy sauce
¼ cup toasted and chopped walnuts

Directions

[The Broccoli Rabe is prepared by removing the thick lower stems leaving the leaves, florets and more tender upper stems intact. Rinse them thoroughly in cold water – do not pat dry let some water cling to the broccoli rabe.]

Put the oil in a heated skillet/wok and heat on low until it shimmers.
Slice the mushrooms and add to the oil. Let them simmer on low until they are tender, but not fully cooked. Remove from the wok and set aside.
Leave the liquid from the mushrooms in the wok. Slice the garlic cloves thinly and lengthwise and put in the wok with the salt, pepper and wine and turn up the heat. As soon as it seems hot (not boiling), add the broccoli rabe.

Add them to the wok and cover. Let them simmer on medium heat for a minute or two. Turn the Broccoli Rabe like a pancake so that the greens on top now become the greens on the bottom. Cover the wok again for a minute or two.

The greens should be fairly well tender and wilted by now. Add the mushrooms back in. and toss through the greens.
Sprinkle about 1-2 TB of dark soy sauce or tamari and about 1 TB of lemon juice over the greens and mushrooms



Adzuki Bean & Lotus Seed Dessert Soup

8 cups of cold water
1 cup Adzuki Beans (small red beans)
¼ tsp salt
2TB finely minced dried tangerine peel*
½ cup whole lotus seeds
¾ cup rock sugar

Directions

Bring the 8 cups of water to boil and then add the beans,** lotus seeds, tangerine peel and salt in the boiling water and simmer for about 1-1/2 hours. Partially cover the pot while simmering. When the beans are “popped” and softened, they are done. As they are cooking, add more water if necessary if it is getting too thick. Add the sugar ¼ cup at a time and stir till it melts. Taste after each addition to get to the sweetness that is right for you. Remember, you can always add more sugar later, but you can’t take it out.

*Soak your tangerine peel for a few minutes to soften it prior to mincing – so much easier.

**Some people like to soak their beans overnight in cold water, discard the soaking liquid and then boil fresh water for making the soup. Either method is fine, choose what works best for you.

Note: Adzuki beans remove dampness; lotus seeds help conserve kidney energy and tangerine peel aids digestion.



Wood Ear Mushrooms with Tomato

¼ cup dried wood ear mushroom (soak in hot water for a few minutes and when re-hydrated, slice into ¼” ribbons)
1 tomato cut in 8 wedges
¼ cup oil
1/2 clove garlic- minced
3 green onions- whites only,
1” ginger,
4-5 dried small red hot peppers
salt to taste
1 TB sugar
1 tsp. black vinegar (balsamic vinegar may be used) (optional)

Directions

Heat a large heavy skillet or wok, add and heat the oil, then add the wood ear mushrooms. After a few minutes add the garlic, green onion, ginger, hot peppers, sugar, and salt individually tossing them in. Then add the tomatoes and cook until they have begun to sweat. Remove from the heat and serve. The vinegar may be sprinkled over the dish right before serving. It adds a little zing.

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



Ellasara Kling – Following the threads of her personal tapestry, Ms. Kling, a long-time student of Master Nan Lu, weaves her life around the exploration and sharing of self-healing through a variety of modalities, primarily focusing on nutrition, common herbal plants, Qigong Meridian Therapy, and Qigong for Women’s Health. Ms. Kling has written the column “Food as Medicine” in our Qi Dao journal for the past 4 years. For comments, questions, consultations, ellasara00@gmail.com

The Science of Qi Healing *A Survey of the Research and Benefits of* *Tai Chi and Qigong Practices*

(Part 1 of 2)

Ted Nawalinski, Sc. D.
(Edited by Shawn Cartwright)

The Science of Qi Healing, is a survey of more than 240 research papers on the science of Qigong, Taiji-quan and Qi healing, recently published by Traditional Chinese Culture Institute International, (<http://www.tccii.com>). In this paper Dr. Nawalinski summarizes the most relevant Chinese and English literature for readers. It is available as a [free PDF download](#) with reference citations. Here are a few excerpts and summary of this interesting research paper.

Introduction

The Qi healing arts originate in the Daoist cultivation and medical practices of ancient China. These arts are based, in part, on the use of Qi (vital energy), Yi (intention), and Shen (spirit). They include the arts of Qigong, Nei Gong, Tai Chi, Nei Dan, and External Qi Healing.

Many students of Qigong and Tai Chi begin studying these arts because they have a number of medical problems they hope to heal with them. In China, the healing aspects of these systems have been accepted since antiquity. Western students lack this cultural context and are apt to seek scientific validation of their practice.

We are often asked by our Western students, "Is there any scientific evidence for Qigong and Tai Chi health benefits?" This survey and summary of literature was designed to offer an overview on the science of Qi healing, with review of more than 240 English and Chinese studies. The purpose of this summary is to familiarize the reader with the volume

of material available and provide a starting point for further research. It is important to note that the information in this publication is for informational purposes only. Please read carefully the DISCLAIMER above and consult with your physician or health care practitioner before beginning any form of exercise or treatment.

If you do decide to begin practicing Qigong, Tai Chi or any of the many other Chinese healing modalities, we encourage you to find an art and teacher that resonates with you. These arts are rarely quick fixes.

It is often said that these arts are a journey, not a destination. In many cases they require diligent daily practice for an extended period of time before realizing any benefits. For example, in Nei Dan (Internal Alchemy), the highest level of Qigong training, the first stage is only reached after a minimum of 100 days of intense practice. To maintain this level, the student practices every day!

Beginnings of Qigong

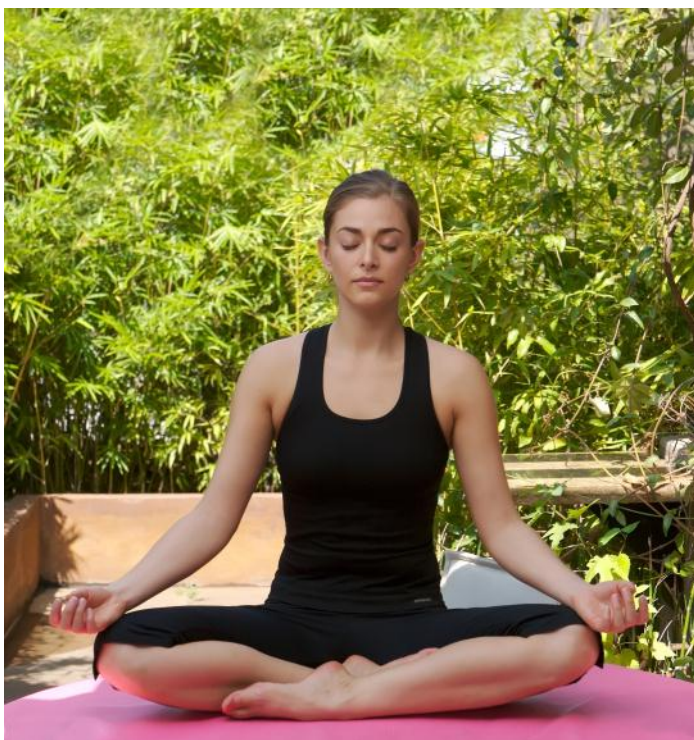
Traditional Chinese medicine attributes the origin of Qigong (氣功) to the legendary Yellow Emperor, Huangdi (黃帝) and his classic book of internal medicine, Huangdi Neijing (黃帝內經), about 4500 years ago. However, a Neolithic vessel nearly 7000 years old shows a shaman in meditative and gymnastic exercises associated with early Qigong. In spite of this ancient history it did not become popularly associated with health practices in China until the 1950s. It then unfortunately became a forbidden



practice during the Cultural Revolution and not until about 1978 did scientists and health practitioners reestablish Qigong as one of the effective methods to be used in health care for the general populace.

Qigong can be thought of as the process through which cultivation of Qi (氣 vital energy) and Yi (意 intent and consciousness) achieve an optimal state of both mind and body. This can be developed with great effectiveness through an individual's diligent self-practice, consisting of guided movement and static meditation leading to a state of empty mind, or stillness, wherein one senses an expansion of self, a connection with the rest of the universe.

But the truly committed student, through long and dedicated practice, may achieve an enhanced awareness of Qi and the ability to guide it toward sites in the body. Highly experienced Qigong healers can direct their Qi outward (external Qi, EQ, or external Qi therapy, EQT, 外氣治疗) to help unhealthy individuals balance the energy system in their bodies and begin their own process of recovery.



Qigong and Taiji

Taiji is clearly related to the postures of Qigong and flows from Qigong's own ancestral beginnings. It evolved as a 'soft' martial application of the development of Qi and is one of three extant internal martial arts (Tai Ji Quan 太极拳, Ba Gua Chang 八卦

掌, Xing Yi Quan 形意拳) subsumed under the Qigong umbrella as its martial progeny. Not often practiced nowadays as the potent martial art it is, the gentle postures of Taiji are, instead, done as a health-building exercise by students who may not even be aware of its martial origins. [1]

The legendary beginning of the martial art of Taiji Quan ("Quan" = "fist") is attributed to one Zhang San Feng (张三丰) around 1100 A.D., but the principles were known at least 500 years earlier. Obfuscating the foundation of this art are the facts that there may have been at least two persons of that name; Zhang is reported to have lived in the Sung (960-1279), the Yuan (1279-1368), and the Ming Dynasties (1368-1654); he is reported to have practiced on Dragon-Tiger Mountain (龙虎山 Jiangxi Province) and Wu Dang Mountain (武当山 Hubei Province), several hundred miles apart; and is said to have been taught by god through a dream. There is also a Zhang San Feng recorded in a book of the Ming History, but with no mention of martial arts or Taiji Chuan.

We do, however, have clear historical confirmation of a human founder of Taiji in one Chen Wang Ting (陈万廷) (1600-1680), a military general at the end of the Ming Dynasty. General Chen modified the standard military training of 32 Postures Long Fist of that period, combining it with Chinese Medicine and Taoist Nei Gong (内功 Internal Practice) into what became the beginnings of Chen Style Taiji Quan (陈太极拳), the original form of Taiji Quan.

Benefits of Taiji

We may think of the health version of Taiji as a linked set of Qigong postures constituting a form practiced for its promotion of serenity, balance, strength, and Qi enhancement. Both of these activities share the practice of deep, abdominal breathing commonly associated with meditation, and which is known to elicit the relaxation response, although different areas of the brain are triggered. Many of the same meditative benefits accrue, as shown by the improvement in cardiovascular parameters, skin temperature changes, and the psychological health of wheelchair-bound elderly who, presumably, were limited in their ability to fully execute the prescribed postures of their Qigong program.

Taiji is regularly recommended as an exercise alternative, especially for the elderly, in Sunday supplements, online medical E-zines, in lay magazines



geared to that age segment (such as AARP Magazine and Prevention), and even by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). Always touted are its meditative aspects and the improvement in balance to prevent dangerous falls, which account for some 15,000 deaths annually. Two well-known research papers found that only 4 months of Taiji training in a group of elderly subjects reduced the incidence of falls by over 47%, as well as lowering blood pressure and improving several psychosocial parameters.

An important review paper documented the benefits of both Qigong and Taiji from research published only in peer-reviewed English-language journals which were cited in the medical literature and which used a randomized controlled trial design. Seventy-seven articles with 6410 participants formed the database for this meta-analysis. From all 77 studies reviewed, physiological and psychological health benefits were identified. These were grouped into nine outcomes: bone density, cardiopulmonary effects, physical function, falls and balance, quality of life, self-efficacy, patient reported outcomes, psychological symptoms, and immune- and inflammation-related responses. The authors conclude that an impressive body of research exists showing that a wide range of health benefits accrue in response to both these meditative movement forms. Since several other papers among the other references listed below combined Qigong and Taiji in assessing health benefits, they were considered to be similar for this present compilation and no attempt was made to separate their combined data; some Taiji-only studies were also included.

Integrating with Western Medicine

However, the wise patient makes use of the best characteristics of *all* healing modalities, including sensible nutrition, adequate and varied exercise, daily quiet time for reflection and renewal, traditional Asian remedies of proven lineage, as well as Western medicine with its ability to rapidly muster biological and technological resources for diagnosis and treatment. The last of these remains the alternative of choice in most acute situations: serious trauma, fulminating infections, accidents, wounds, broken bones, and the like.

But the plagues of modern American health are the chronic illnesses cascading from too little attention to the preventive measures above: hypertension, obesity, diabetes, cancer, cardiac and renal insufficiency, musculo-skeletal weakness and pain, Alzheimer's disease, and the attendant psychological issues of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Chronic diseases are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems:

- Seven out of ten deaths among Americans each year are from chronic diseases;
- Heart disease, cancer, and stroke alone account for more than 50% of all deaths in the USA;
- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower leg amputations, and blindness among adults;
- One in three American adults and one in five youths is obese;

The Center for Disease Control estimates that chronic disease treatment accounts for over 75% of national health expenditures, or about \$8000 for every American with a chronic disease;

Unfortunately, the U.S. is not alone in this epidemic. Chronic diseases were responsible for 29 million deaths worldwide in 2002; China reports that these diseases account for 85% of the total deaths in that country; in Canada 25% of adults and 9% of children are obese.

If we would only structure our daily activities around the sensible practices known to the ancients and to our grandparents to build a healthy base to our lives, much of the armamentarium of Western medicine would lie rusting, and we would only resort to the backup of the surgeon and the antibiotic when the appendix inflames or a lump is discovered. Lives would be fuller, healthier, and happier; budgets would balance; infirm old age would be the exception; terminal illnesses would not linger; the years added to our lives would be anticipated with joy, not dread.

With this in mind, the reader must exercise all due diligence - and dare I say obsession - in crafting a healthy and sustainable lifestyle using the preventive measures outlined here as well as common sense and good judgment in what information and practice to adopt or discard.

The How of Qi Healing

From a Western medical perspective, it is not at all clear how Qigong facilitates the healing process. Some possible mechanisms include the improvement of immune functions,[2,3] increasing microcirculation and improving the elasticity of blood vessels,[4,5] raising the pain threshold, [6] or regulating the metabolic system through the cerebral cortex and the central nervous and cardiovascular systems. [7]

It has been suggested that nitric oxide (NO) acts as an effector molecule to mediate the metabolic functions along the Qi meridians of the body. NO is a gas, diffuses quickly, mediates many important metabolic pathways in the body, and has both healing and toxic properties. NO functions in two important ways: it is a messenger by which cells communicate with each other; and its toxic properties are used by the immune system to kill or slow the growth of invading organisms.[8] NO has been consistently found in higher concentrations in skin acupoints,[9] which themselves are associated with low electrical resistance and concentrations of ionic calcium and cholinesterase as they trace neurovascular bundles. [10]

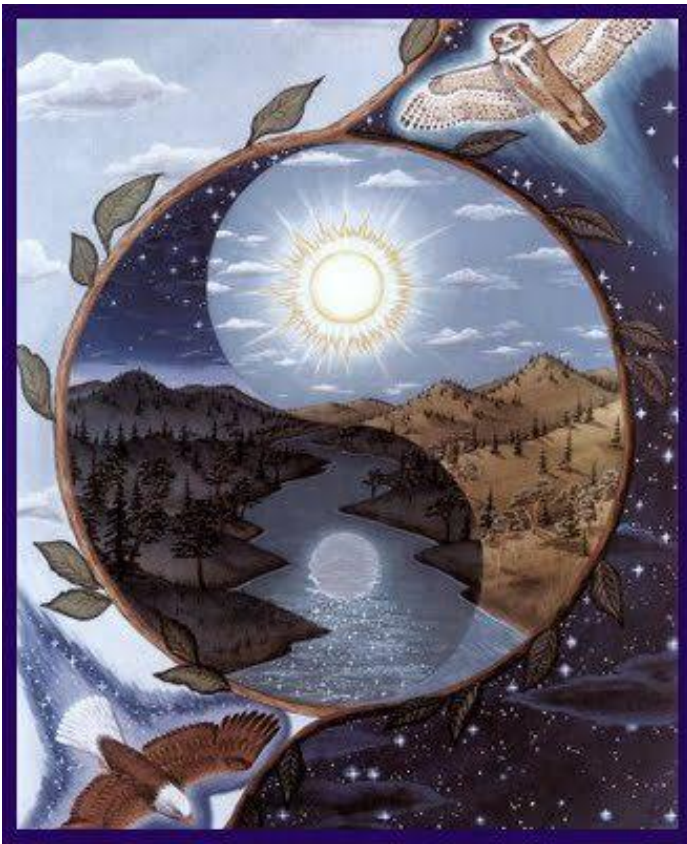
Warm needling of the leg acupoint Zu San Li (St 36) (足三里) in older people produced a significant increase in peripheral blood NO.[11] Microinjection of NO into the brains of rats during electroacupuncture of the St36 point facilitated the normal hypertensive and brady cardiac effects. The validation of NO as the chemical effector for acupuncture is not yet certain and its role in Qigong even less clear, but it is possible that similar mechanisms work for both since Qigong practice and a needled acupoint targeted to a given organ both produced myoelectricity at other sites along that organ's meridian.

The Effects of Qi Healing

The bulk of research on Qigong and its ability to heal has been done in China, largely within the past two or three decades. The extraordinary medical findings of the early work on this ancient practice has attracted the attention of health care workers, mainly in the United States and Japan, and has inspired more rigorous scientific studies with appropriate controls and statistical analyses to verify the healing capabilities of Qigong as both, a self-practice and as a healing modality in the hands of an external Qi practitioner.

This review of the studies on self-practice and external Qigong healing is based on a selection from well over 300 papers. Many were available only in Chinese so summaries by Kevin Chen and Kenneth Sancier were invaluable in making this information available to non-Chinese readers. Other summaries





and meta-analyses compiled small reports into meaningful statistics.

There are also a few popular reports, as may have appeared in health-care newsletters, online E-zines, and lay magazines. With many recent empirical studies, there is little doubt of the efficacy of Qigong in positively affecting a remarkable spectrum of human ailments. The inclusion of animal models, *in vitro* studies, and the statistically significant findings in many of these, support the argument that Qigong represents a healing modality that deserves serious consideration for daily use as the base for a sound health program as well as a supplementary aid in conjunction with conventional Western therapy when that becomes necessary.

Undoubtedly the reader will be most interested in those studies directly involving human beings and their diseases. The inclusion of work involving inanimate objects or cell cultures or laboratory animals may seem unimportant compared to those on sick people, but their inclusion in this review is vitally important to support what might rightly be considered the more relevant works. Cell cultures and mice are not subjected to a placebo effect as might be human patients so they may, in fact, be a more credible testament to the efficacy of the power of Qi than would a human subject susceptible to the influence of sugges-

tion or wishful thinking.

Application of Qigong to Ailments of the Elderly

Several papers in this review of the scientific literature specifically addressed the benefits of Qigong practice and EQT for both healthy and infirm elderly, but popular articles also appear almost weekly in newspapers and magazines. They universally encourage practicing Qigong and Taiji for their health-promoting activities in building lower body strength, improving balance, and reducing stress. And, in general, CAM users were significantly more likely to rate their health as 'excellent' and 'better than last year' than did respondents who did not use CAM.

The specific benefits commonly observed in those individuals who practice regularly included things such as a reduction in pain, anxiety, and depression; improved balance; improved muscle strength and physical functioning; enhanced immunity; reduced joint stiffness; lower blood pressure; improved cognitive functioning (a Taiji study); reversed symptoms of aging and longer lives - all of which directly or indirectly improve the quality of life these seniors enjoy.

In a study of hypertensive patients, Qigong exercise improved several blood chemistry parameters and increased mean levels of the anti-aging enzyme, superoxide dismutase; their prescription drug dosages could be decreased; and their blood pressure, immune response, cholesterol, and bone density all improved. This same review noted a study of 158 patients with cerebral arteriosclerosis who experienced improvements in memory, dizziness, insomnia, tinnitus, numbness of the limbs and vertigo headache after only one to six months of Qigong practice.

In a study of 100 patients, either presenile or with cerebral functions impaired by senility, six months of Qigong practice produced improvements of 80% or more in eight of the fourteen main clinical signs and symptoms; control groups that either walked, walked quickly, or ran slowly instead of practicing Qigong improved in none of the symptoms more than 45%. Rheoencephalography showed that blood flow to the brain was increased during Qigong exercise.

In one study of pain the analgesic effect persisted for six months after the trial ended. However, long-term chronic conditions may not resolve, as shown in a study of neck pain in elderly patients where there was no significant difference between Qigong and regular exercise groups. A similar study of neck pain which had persisted an average exceeding three years



found a benefit with Qigong practice over the no-treatment controls, but it was not statistically significant.

[To be continued]

[Download the entire unedited paper with all references in PDF format](#)

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Ted Nawalinski, Sc.D., has more than 36 years experience in Chinese Internal Kung Fu, Tai Chi, Qigong and meditation. For the last 15 years he has devoted most of his attention to Taiji, Qigong, and the healing properties of foods and meditation. His classes with elderly people in the western suburbs of Philadelphia offer a holistic approach to wellness, with nutrition and exercise advice to complement the movement and breathing of Taiji. Ted is a lifelong biologist and brings a global perspective to his interest in fitness and health.



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BEING BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

By Debi Dunn

Just the other day, a 95 year old qigong student of mine, Maria, approached me after class apologizing for having arrived late. “You see,” she said, “2pm is my naptime. I have difficulty staying awake and getting to class during that time on Mondays. But I always feel better when I do my qigong and tai chi walking. So I just have to be here; I wouldn’t miss it for the world.” Now Maria is very inspirational to me, having lived a healthy long life with five daughters, many grandchildren, great grandchildren, and even “great greats” as she calls them. She is very intelligent, tall at about 5’10”, and most assuredly the “grand dame” of the class of 80-95 year olds who are still vital and move so gracefully doing their weekly tai chi qigong class with me.

I also have the privilege of being a Stress Management professor at a local university. My Tuesday and Thursday classes are filled with junior and senior level college students with the average age of 20. What a difference in ages I experience in the first two days of each week. The students think at 50-something I am old as many of their parents are my age. My seniors like Maria think I am still “so young” as I am the age of many of their children. I guess you would say I am part of that sandwich generation also referred to as the Baby Boomers. We boomers are somewhere between that oh so young millennial generation and facing our inevitable journey into our golden years. Sometimes I feel very conflicted about where I have been and where I am going? But these two groups have truly enlightened me.



This teaching experience has led me to contemplate many times about the concept of longevity and how our American culture views it. The Chinese culture, as well as many other cultures of the world, greatly value living a long, happy, and prosperous life. In fact there are many symbols in Chinese art representing long life such as bamboo, the crane and even pine trees. Sau, the Chinese god of longevity, is often depicted riding a deer (another symbol of longevity) and holding a gourd attached to the end of his staff which is said to hold the elixir of life or immortality. Qigong was and is still performed as an essential form of restorative energy exer-

cise for longevity and wellness. It is an important part of the Chinese medical system including acupuncture, acupressure, herbs and meditation. The whole design of the system is to preserve health, prevent illness and disease so a person would be able to journey gracefully into healthy old age. I was once told by a very famous Chinese qigong teacher that if you practice qigong and t'ai chi daily for a long time you can actually turn back your biological clock 10 years. Hmm, maybe that's why strangers think my age is more like 40-something? Slowing down the aging process is a wonderful thing!

Now my young college "kids", as I affectionately refer to them at times, are very focused on the pleasures of our earthly existence. I sometimes think they believe they will live forever no matter what happens. So the concept of living a long virtuous life isn't really something they contemplate. One young man arrived in class with his IPOD ear buds inserted into his ears, carrying his IPAD while texting on his IPHONE...all at the same time. I was so amazed that he didn't trip. They are all very annoyed when I tell them to "unplug" all electronics during class; or I will be collecting them for the duration of the class. As part of the Stress Management syllabus, I ask each student to prepare a 5-page autobiography of their lives so far and who has inspired or affected their lives the most. Then I have them do a series of assessments to evaluate where they feel they are currently in terms of personality type, life concerns, college life, family influences and even spirituality. Part of the final project is to design a large poster-sized Vision Board made up of all types of visual images representing what they wish, or intend, for their futures. This is the highlight of my semester to see each student present to the class how they would like to see their lives unfold. What fabulous dreams these young people have! No one can quite see past the age of 60 or so however.

One major observation I have made with this population in America is their lack of understanding of what spirituality is and that they often confuse it with religion. Their main goal seems to be to proceed through life happily and healthfully with lots of money to enjoy now and when they retire. I ask the question of them to think forward to the age of 80 and tell me, and the class, what they would like to have contributed to others, what would they like their legacy to be? Now granted, these students have a tough time writing an autobiography of 5 typed pages, double-spaced" as their life experience has consisted of being born (traumatic for some), grade school, middle school, high school and college. So they have great difficulty understanding what longevity means to them. They struggle with the concept of cultivating one's spirit most importantly and to



learn to release negative emotions which are at the core of their stress. They are all about being in their own body/mind and often exhibit poor body image. They are caught up in many energetic emotional blockages that create depression, anxiety, inner rage and self esteem issues.

One young woman however, gave me a glimmer of hope that maybe a few of them were really reaching to understand the concept of what longevity meant to them. She was presenting her vision board when she pointed to a photo of her 4 best friends. She explained that her friends had been out partying and were hit by a drunk driver two weeks earlier, and all were killed instantly. There was a hush in the classroom. She



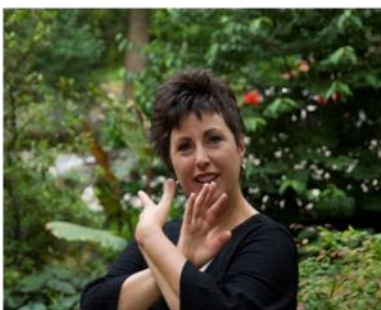
tearfully made the public statement that from now on she would never drink, smoke, or hurt anyone. She made the proclamation that she owed it to her friends to live a long, healthy, and prosperous life. She would work on her own emotional issues and really reach to find her spiritual self. She was also going to practice meditation, qigong and yoga, and eat healthier. I was speechless. She touched many lives, including mine that day.

Now my senior group on the other hand is quite the opposite. They are facing what each one conceives of what the afterlife, or heaven, might be like. And for some, death is the end of the body's

existence. But for others their concept mirrors the importance of spirit as that energetic essence that exists forever beyond our earthly life. One Monday afternoon, Carol, about 80 years old or so, was sitting in class looking very sad. Her husband had died a couple months earlier; and she was grieving. I always do an ending meditation, or relaxation time for the class. This day, I said, in ending, "just let your soul sing and your spirit soar up into the heavens, find a cloud and just lay back relaxing and enjoying the pure bliss and energy of being part of all there is." I heard some light weeping coming from Carol, just perceptible to me. I approached her after class, hugged her, and asked her what was wrong. She said, "My husband and I always talked about sitting up there on a cloud in the heavens holding hands and being as one. Now he is gone, and my spirit needs to be with his and God's forever. We are immortal you know. We live forever." Four months later she found her way to that cloud.

So for me, I am here in my Standing Qigong position balancing between heaven and earth contemplating my own place in it all. I know that my life-long purpose is to "let my light /spirit shine, be a source of strength and courage, share my wisdom, and radiate love."

Maria "qi walked" right past me yesterday with her walker, shaking her hips from side to side in a kind of proud swagger, and said, "I am getting really good at this. Maybe I'll live to be 100. But that'll be just long enough!"



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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.theheartofhealing.com

Lao Zi - The Hidden Dragon

By Master Zhongxian Wu

1. Introduction

The first time I picked up LaoZi's *DaoDeJing* 道德經, I could not truly understand one single sentence. I found this interesting, as I already had a solid foundation in classical Chinese literature. The very first sentence, 道可道非常道 *DaoKeDaoFeiChangDao*, which literally translates as "The Dao that can be the Dao is not the constant Dao" initially felt like a maze to me. I used my knowledge of classical Chinese to interpret the meaning as "The Dao that can be spoken is not the eternal Dao." Still, I felt slightly puzzled.

After some years of a dedicated inner cultivation practice, I picked up the book again and I found that could understand it a little bit more than before. When reading the first sentence again, I decoded a different interpretation: "The Dao, discussed in any language, loses its original meaning." In other words, we cannot truly understand the Dao simply through words alone. The way to access the Dao is through direct bodily experience. In order to gain experiential knowledge, you must be seriously committed to your inner cultivation practice.

I have had a concentrated focus on Qigong, Neigong, marital arts and other internal cultivation practices since the 1970s. I continue to come back to the *DaoDeJing* again and again. Each time, I gain insights based on the layers of meaning that reveal themselves to me. Now, the very same opening sentence tells me that the entire book is not a text that passes philosophical truths to us. Behind the words is a powerful teaching encouraging us to use our cultivation practice to

connect with the Dao and Xian 仙 - immortality.

Over the last twenty years, I have been preparing to write a commentary on *DaoDeJing* from a Qigong/internal cultivation perspective. In this article, I will share a small piece of my project with you.

2. ZhiQiDongLai 紫氣東來

ZhiQiDongLai is a popular Chinese phrase often used as a prayer or charm. It is very common for Chinese families to post this above the entryway of their home as a blessing. *ZhiQiDongLai* literally translates as "purple colored Qi comes from the East". The phrase originates from the birth story of the *DaoDeJing*:

In the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (circa 770-256 BCE), there was a famous astronomer named YinXi 尹喜. One evening while he was reading the sky, he noted a mass of purple colored Qi accumulating in the East. He was astonished by this natural phenomenon, and recognized it as an omen indicating that a great sage or truly enlightened master was traveling from the eastern direction. He made a predication about the master's travel route - passing through HanGuGuan 函谷關 and arriving in LouGuan 樓關. YinXi subsequently traveled to LouGuan and built himself a hut to wait for the master's arrival. After several days, an old man with long gray eyebrows and beard rode towards his hut. He was riding on a green colored ox. YinXi immediately understood that this was the person he had been waiting for. He invited the old man to be his guest in his hut, hoping that he could study with the old master. The old master, LaoZi, saw that YinXi was seriously

committed to his own inner cultivation and agreed to spend some time teaching him.

After three months had passed, LaoZi decided he was ready to keep traveling onwards. YinXi humbly requested that LaoZi write down some teachings for him before he left, so that YinXi would be able to continue his studies even if they would not have a chance to see each other again. LaoZi consented, extending his stay to write what we now know as the *DaoDeJing* for his student, YinXin. YinXi continued to live a hermit's life in LouGuan, continuing his cultivation practice with the guidance of LaoZi's *DaoDeJing*. Years later, after YinXi achieved true enlightenment, he wrote the renowned Daoist classic *WenShiJing* 文始經.

From this creation story, we see that the original purpose of the *DaoDeJing* is to provide guidance for our spiritual cultivation. It is a great blessing to create opportunities that allow you to focus on our spiritual selves. Through our Qigong practice we can continuously refine our study and understanding of the *DaoDeJing*.

3. The Wordless Teaching

In general, the first chapter of each of the Chinese classics reveals the purpose of the rest of the book. Consequently, it is always worth spending extra time on the first chapter so that you can get a real sense of the spirit of the book.

Please allow me to make a set of GongFu 功夫 tea so that we can savor the first chapter of the *DaDeJing* together slowly (please read my book, *Vital Breath of the Dao*, if you are interested in learning more about the GongFu tea ceremony). Let us sip our tea and discuss the first line of *DaoDeJing* together.

The Dao that can be spoken is not the eternal Dao.

Tea Commentary: The original meaning of Chinese character 道 (Dao) is simply a trail, road, or path on which to walk. Later on, the meaning expanded to include rule, law, way, method, and the spoken word. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the Dao also refers to the way of nature or

Dao	道
Ke	可
Dao	道
Fei	非
Chang	常
Dao	道

the universal law. In the first sentence of the *DaoDeJing* there are three Dao characters. The first and the third instances use Dao to mean the way or the method, while the second occurrence is used to mean speak or express.

The hidden meaning of this line is as follows:

The ways that are expressed in our daily lives, such as those pertaining to politics, business, and knowledge do not provide the pathway to the Eternal Dao – immortality or true enlightenment.

The way to attain the Eternal Dao is wordless. The path to the Eternal Dao involves gaining a deep understanding of your physical body, your Qi body, and your spiritual body. That is because the path to the Eternal Dao is not mental or verbal. Rather, it is experiential.

We reach the Eternal Dao through the same method as we enjoy our tea. We savor the tea, experiencing it directly through our senses – by tasting, smelling and seeing it, and by being in touch its affects on our bodies - that we accurately understand the rich and subtle complexities of the tea. If I tried to describe the flavor, fragrance, and color of the tea to you and never offered you the opportunity to savor the tea yourself, you would gain some superficial knowledge about the tea but you would never grow to truly understand it.

We learn about the Eternal Dao not only through the Dao of tea, but also through the Dao of Qi. Traditional Qigong forms serve as another



pathway to the Eternal Dao. By cultivating our Qi, we learn to experience the Eternal Dao through our bodies, our breath, and our spirits.

4. Conclusion

Guan觀, which means observe or observation, is one of the traditional names for Qigong. Guan is also the name used to refer to all traditional Daoist temples in China. For thousands of years, Daoist temples have been much more than regional sites for ceremony or religion. Traditional Daoist temples have been and continue to be havens where Daoist masters, following LaoZi's teaching, diligently practice various methods of Guan, or inner observation. Guan is both the secret and not-so-secret method of LaoZi's own Qigong and inner cultivation practice.

The lineage of LaoZi's teachings is known as the Hidden Immortal Lineage or Dragon Like Lineage. This name came about through Confucius. One day, Confucius returned from studying with LaoZi. His students, curious about the mysterious master, asked Confucius what he thought about LaoZi. Confucius replied: "LaoZi is just like a dragon."

In China, the dragon is the most common icon, replicated on businesses and temples, in homes, on paintings, ceramics, clothes, etc. However ubiquitous in Chinese culture, the dragon itself is still a mystery – both seen and unseen, ever present but little understood.

Similarly, although the *DaoDeJing* is arguably China's famous book, most people don't realize that the *DaoDeJing* is actually LaoZi's cultivation handbook. The secret to understanding the *DaoDeJing* is not a secret at all. Through a committed inner cultivation practice and guidance of an illumined master, you can decode the enigmas within these five thousand words and find the path to the Eternal Dao.

Acknowledgment: I'd like to express my gratitude and appreciation for my wife, Dr. Karin Taylor Wu, for her helpful suggestions and her editorial assistance.



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Breath of the Dao, Seeking the Spirit of the Book of Change, The 12 Chinese Animals, Chinese Shamanic Cosmic Orbit Qigong and of Fire Dragon Meridian Qigong. He synthesizes wisdom and experience for beginning and advanced practitioners, as well as for patients seeking healing, in his unique and professionally designed courses and workshops. For detailed information, please visit www.masterwu.net.



The Role of Nutrition and Exercise in Longevity

By Ginger Garner MPT, ATC, PYT

No one wants to hear the phrase “you are aging prematurely.” However, that is exactly what is happening when you suffer from chronic disease.

The phrase “anti-inflammatory diet” is a huge buzzword now in medicine, fitness, and nutrition circles. But does it have any scientific support? Can we actually improve longevity through our nutritional and exercise habits?

The short answer is yes. Harvard trained physician and integrative medicine pioneer, Dr. Andrew Weil states, *“It is becoming increasingly clear that chronic inflammation is the root cause of many serious illnesses – including heart disease, many cancers, and Alzheimer’s disease.”*

There is mounting evidence that foods and exercise can either cause or create inflammation in the body. Researchers and health care professionals alike report that most all modern diseases can be attributed to inflammation in the body.

But how can we sort through the gimmick diets and mountains of supplements recommended to us by pop culture science? First, let’s take a look at the science of in-

flammation in the body to understand why inflammation, even low grade levels of inflammation, can wreck your health.

The Science of Food-Induced Inflammation Saturated Fat & Trans-Fatty Acids

“All foods fit into three categories: pro-inflammatory, neutral, or anti-inflammatory,” says dermatologist and best-selling author, Nicholas Perricone, MD. Perricone says an anti-aging diet slows cellular aging, which depends on choosing foods that are anti-inflammatory and rich in antioxidants.

Dr. Alcock and colleagues, in a landmark study (Alcock et al 2012) on the role of dietary fats in inflammation, show through a comprehensive literature review of over 207 peer-reviewed medical studies, reported that “the body preferentially up-regulates inflammation in response to saturated fatty acids, which promotes harmful microbes.”

In short, the study found that saturated fat consumption immediately increases activity and presence of harmful and damaging gut bacteria, which are correlated with increased inflammatory response and expression of inflammatory genes.

Saturated fats in general, induce inflammation by “activating nuclear transcription factors” (Schwartz et al 2010). The take home message is that a plant based diet, high in anti-oxidants, flavonoids, prebiotic, and probiotic function, can reduce our risk and even help us immediately manage inflammatory



states in the body. But that is not all. Saturated fats are not the only lurking inflammatory culprit of chronic disease.

Sugar & Starches

In addition to saturated fats and trans fatty acids, other foods which are inflammatory agents include:

Sugar

High sugar diets lead to abnormal modulation of the gut microbiome. This essentially contributes to insulin sensitivity, inflammation, macrophage infiltration, and other dysregulation in blood chemical levels (Cani et al 2009)

Starches

High starch/carbohydrate diets (potatoes) causes insulin levels to surge and trigger an inflammatory response and accelerate the aging process," (Perricone).

In a Nurse's Health Study (Mozaffarian et al 2011) that followed over 128,000 Americans over a 20 year period, the following specific foods were found to cause the most weight gain and in this order:

1. Potatoes in all forms
2. Sugar sweetened beverages
3. Red meats
4. Processed meats (deli meats)
5. Trans fat
6. Sweets/desserts
7. Refined grains

By contrast the same study found yogurt, whole fat milk, vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and nuts to be the least inflammatory.



Other anti-inflammatory foods include red wine, green tea, dark chocolate, as well as many common vegetables like garlic, broccoli, onions, kale, and chile peppers.

Berries (which the Environmental Working Group labels as one of the “Top 12 Dirty Dozen” produce which must be organic) are considered high in flavonoids and anti-inflammatory, anti-parasitic, anti-microbial, and anti-oxidant effects.

Learn more about what foods to include in an anti-inflammatory diet, which resembles a Mediterranean Diet, [here](#).

Exercise as an Anti-Aging Activity

At the Centre of Inflammation and Metabolism, research supports the anti-inflammatory effects of exercise as well. “Regular exercise offers protection against all-cause mortality, primarily by protection against atherosclerosis and insulin resistance. There is also evidence that physical training is effective as a treatment in patients with chronic heart diseases and type-2 diabetes” via inducing anti-inflammatory actions (Pederson 2006).

The study suggests that regular exercise induces suppression of inflammatory activity such as TNF-alpha (tumor necrosis factor-alpha) induced insulin resistance. Brandt and Pederson (2010) also report that regular exercise offers protection against type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, colon cancer, breast cancer, and dementia via “induction of an anti-inflammatory effect secondary to reduction of visceral fat mass” or by cellular and biochemical environmental changes in the exerciser.

When a person exercises, scientists posit that contracting skeletal muscles facilitate healthy neuro-endocrine regulation. This means that exercise (like yoga or Tai Chi, for example) via contracting skeletal muscles release myokines that have an anti-inflammatory biochemical, or endocrine, effect. Further, changes in signaling pathways involved in “fat oxidation and glucose uptake” further increase the anti-inflammatory benefits of exercise. What this means is that exercise can have both local and global anti-inflammatory effects.

For example, therapists or physicians working in orthopaedic medicine should consider the enormous implications that anti-inflammatory dietary counsel-



ing would have on improved patient outcomes. Personally, it means that even after a single inflammatory meal – your body is adversely affected on both a macro (whole body health) and micro (cellular and biochemical health) level. The good news is that a single anti-inflammatory meal or bout of exercise can result in immediate improvement in your systemic health.

Benefits of having healthy “anti-inflammatory” exercise and nutritional habits include: (Gonzales 2010, Jin 2010, Larrosa et al 2010, Mamplekou et al 2010, Muller 2010, Pantsulaia et al 2010, Sticher et al 2010, Garcia-Lafuente et al 2009, Jurenka 2009, Tice et al 2003, McAlindon and Felson 1997):

- Decrease your risk for chronic diseases like heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, and dementia.
- Decrease your risk of cancers like breast, prostate, colon, and colorectal cancer
- Decrease your risk of neurodegenerative and [autoimmune](#) diseases
- Lose & maintain a healthy weight
- Improve lung/respiratory health
- Improve neurophysiological and psycho-emotional health (i.e. depression)
- Decrease allergies
- Stabilize blood sugar

Pursuit of longevity and enjoying a high quality and quantity of life depends on developing good anti-inflammatory lifestyle habits, especially for exercise and nutrition. In effect, the old cliché “you are what you eat,” really is true.

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You can reach Ms. Garner at www.gingergarner.com and www.professionalyogatherapy.org, as well as through social media and her blogs.



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Research Update

Compiled by Kevin Chen

The Evolution of Mindfulness-Based Physical Interventions in Breast Cancer Survivors.

Evidence Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine. 2012:758641. By Stan DL, Collins NM, Olsen MM, Croghan I, Pruthi S. from Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA.

Survivors of breast cancer are faced with a multitude of medical and psychological impairments during and after treatment and throughout their lifespan. Physical exercise has been shown to improve survival and recurrence in this population. Mind-body interventions combine a light-moderate intensity physical exercise with mindfulness, thus having the potential to improve both physical and psychological sequelae of breast cancer treatments. We conducted a review of mindfulness-based physical exercise interventions which included yoga, tai chi chuan, Pilates, and qigong, in breast cancer survivors. Among the mindfulness-based interventions, yoga was significantly more studied in this population as compared to tai chi chuan, Pilates, and qigong. The participants and the outcomes of the majority of the studies reviewed were heterogeneous, and the population included was generally not selected for symptoms. *Yoga was shown to improve fatigue in a few methodologically strong studies, providing reasonable evidence for benefit in this population. Improvements were also seen in sleep, anxiety, depression, distress, quality of life, and post chemotherapy nausea and vomiting in the yoga studies.* Tai chi chuan, Pilates, and qigong were not stud-



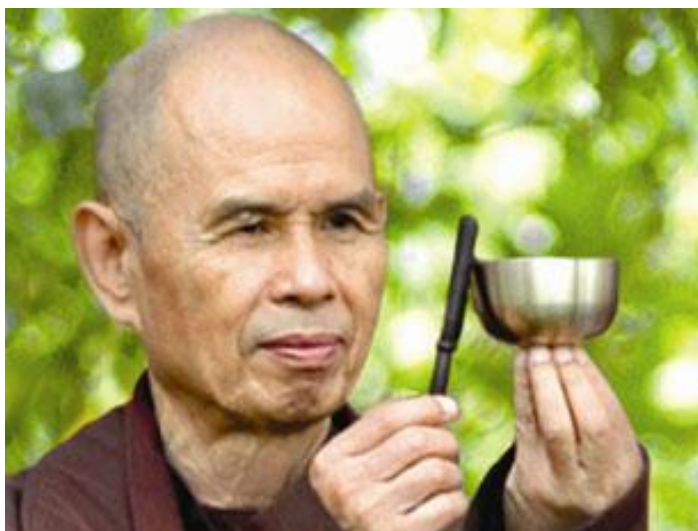
ied sufficiently in breast cancer survivors in order to be implemented in clinical practice.

<http://www.hindawi.com/journals/ecam/2012/758641>

Psycho-Physical and Neurophysiological Effects of Qigong on Depressed Elders with Chronic Illness.

Aging Mental Health. 2012 Oct 16 [Epub ahead of print] by Tsang HW, Tsang WW, Jones AY, et al. From the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

This randomized controlled trial examined the psychological, physical, and neurophysiological effects of a qigong exercise program on depressed elders with chronic medical illness. The experimental group ($n = 21$, 80 ± 7 years) was given a 12-week qigong exercise program, while the comparison group ($n = 17$, 81 ± 8 years) participated in a newspaper reading program with the same duration and frequency. Measurement of depression symptoms, psychosocial functioning, muscle strengths, salivary cortisol, and serum serotonin was conducted. At 12 weeks, the qigong group had significant reduction in depressive symptoms ($F = 11.68$; $p < 0.025$). Improvement in self-efficacy ($F = 4.30$; $p < 0.050$), self-concept of physical well-being ($F = 6.82$; $p < 0.025$), and right-hand grip strength ($F = 5.25$; $p = 0.034$) was also found when compared with the comparison group. A change in salivary cortisol



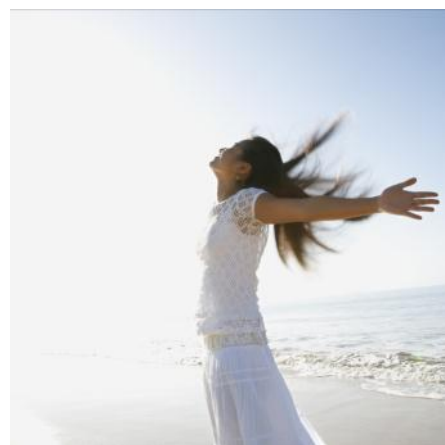
level was found marginally insignificant between groups ($F = 3.16$; $p = 0.087$). However, a decreasing trend of cortisol level was observed. The results provided *preliminary evidence for the hypotheses that the anti-depressive effect of qigong exercise could be explained by improvement in psychosocial functioning and possibly down-regulation of hyperactivity of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis.*

Adding Integrative Meditation with Ear Acupressure to Outpatient Treatment of Cocaine Addiction: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study.

Journal Alternative & Complementary Medicine. 2012 Oct 12 [Epub ahead of print] By Chen KW, Berger CC, Gandhi D, Weintraub E, Lejuez CW. From Center for Integrative Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD.

Abstract: Objectives: Cocaine addiction continues to be a major public health problem in the United States. With no U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved pharmaceutical therapy, treatment often relies on psychosocial interventions. This pilot therapy development study attempts to examine the feasibility and preliminary efficacy of adding breathing-based Integrative Meditation and Ear Acupressure (IMEA) to outpatient treatment of cocaine addiction. **Design:** Fifty-six (56) cocaine-dependent patients were recruited from an outpatient addiction treatment facility in Baltimore, MD and randomized

into either an IMEA or a treatment as usual (TAU) group for the 12 weeks of study, with weekly meetings to monitor treatment outcomes and to facilitate meditative therapy. **Outcome measures:** The outcome measures consisted of treatment retention rates by week 8 and 12; abstinence rates measured by 6 continuous weeks of negative urinalysis for cocaine, and addiction-related symptoms such as anxiety, craving, depression, and withdrawal symptoms. **Results:** With the assistance of simplified breath training and a portable MP4 device, 80% of IMEA participants self-reported practicing breathing or meditation 5+ days a week with acceptable compliance and showed strong interest in meditative techniques. *Compared to TAU, IMEA participants reported significantly higher treatment completion rates by week 8 (89% versus 63%) and week 12 (81% versus 58%), higher abstinence rates (66% versus 34%), and significantly greater reduction in craving, anxiety, and other addiction-related symptoms.* Some participants continued meditation after study completion. **Conclusion:** It is feasible to add breathing-based IMEA to outpatient treatment of cocaine addiction. Although a number of limitations exist for this pilot study, further large-scale clinical trials and therapy-development studies of IMEA for addiction are warranted.



Breathing Exercises in Upper Abdominal Surgery:

A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.

Revista Brasileira Fisioterapia. 2012 Oct;16(5):345-53. By Grams ST, Ono LM, Noronha MA, Schivinski CI, Paulin E. from Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil.

Background: There is currently no consensus on the indication and benefits of breathing exercises for the prevention of postoperative pulmonary complica-

tions PPCs and for the recovery of pulmonary mechanics.

Objective: To undertake a systematic review of randomized and quasi-randomized studies that assessed the effects of breathing exercises on the recovery of pulmonary function and prevention of PCCs after upper abdominal surgery UAS.

Method: Search Strategy: We searched the Physiotherapy Evidence Database PEDro, Scientific Electronic Library Online SciELO, MEDLINE, and Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials. Selection Criteria: We included randomized controlled trials and quasi-randomized controlled trials on pre- and postoperative UAS patients, in which the primary intervention was breathing exercises without the use of incentive spirometers. Data Collection and Analysis: The methodological quality of the studies was rated according to the PEDro scale. Data on maximal respiratory pressures MIP and MEP, spirometry, diaphragm mobility, and postoperative complications were extracted and analyzed. Data were pooled in fixed-effect meta-analysis whenever possible.

Results: Six studies were used for analysis. Two meta-analyses including 66 participants each showed that, on the first day post-operative, the breathing exercises were likely to have induced MEP and MIP improvement treatment effects of 11.44 mmH₂O (95%CI 0.88 to 22) and 11.78 mmH₂O (95%CI 2.47 to 21.09), respectively.

Conclusion: Breathing exercises are likely to have a beneficial effect on respiratory muscle strength in patients submitted to UAS, however the lack of good quality studies hinders a clear conclusion on the subject.

http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1413-35552012005000052

Health and Gross National Happiness: Review of Current Status in Bhutan.

[Journal Multidisciplinary Health](#). 2011;4:293-8. By Tobgay T, Dophu U, Torres CE, Na-Bangchang K. from Department of Public Health, Ministry of



Health, Kawajangsa, Bhutan;

Worldwide, contemporary measures of the success of health development programs have been mostly in terms of the reduction of mortality and morbidity as well as increasing longevity. While these goals have yielded much-needed health improvements, the subjective outcomes of these improvements, as experienced by individuals and the communities, have not been considered. Bhutan, under the overarching policy of Gross National Happiness, has provided due consideration to these subjective indicators. Here, we report on the current status of health and happiness in Bhutan as revealed by conventional objective indicators and subjective Gross National Happiness indicators. The current literature on health in Bhutan in relation to the Gross National Happiness Survey conducted by the Centre of Bhutan Studies has been reviewed. Bhutan has made great strides within a short period of modernization, as shown by both objective and subjective indicators. Tremendous challenges lie ahead to achieve the ultimate goal of health and happiness, and how Bhutan articulates its path to modernization may be a lesson for the rest of the world.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3155859/>



The Acute Effects of Yogic Breathing Exercises on Craving and Withdrawal Symptoms In Abstaining Smokers.

Psychopharmacology (Berl). 2012 Sep 20. [Epub ahead of print] by Shahab L, Sarkar BK, West R. from University College London, London, UK, li-on.shahab@ucl.ac.uk.

Rationale: Breathing exercises have been proposed as a way of combating cigarette cravings, potentially presenting a low-cost, easily scalable smoking cessation aid.

Objective: The aim of this study is to evaluate the acute impact of breathing exercises based on yogic pranayama on cravings in abstaining smokers.

Methods: Participants visited the laboratory on two occasions 24 h apart and were asked to abstain from smoking 12 h prior to the first visit until the end of the second visit. Smokers (N = 96) were randomly allocated to a yogic breathing exercise (YBG) or video control (VCG) group. The former was instructed on breathing exercises, practised these for 10 min and asked to use these when experiencing cravings until the next visit. The latter was shown a breathing exercise video for 10 min and asked to concentrate on their breathing. Strength of urges to smoke, other craving measures and mood and physical symptoms associated with cigarette withdrawal were assessed at the beginning and end of the first visit, and again at the second visit.

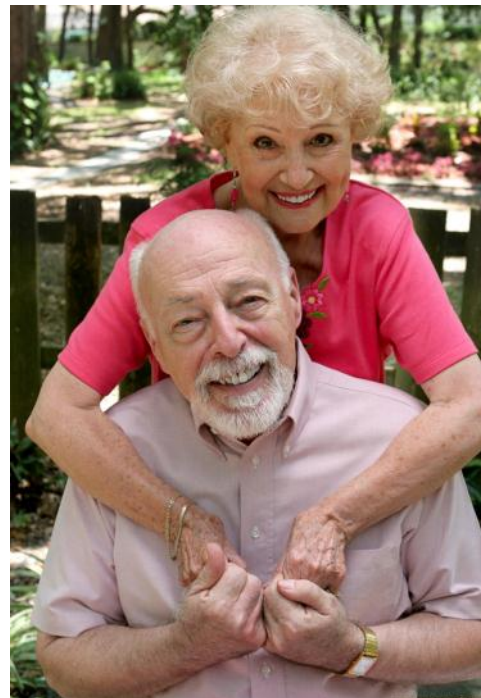
Results: At immediate follow-up, in the laboratory, all craving measures were reduced in YBG compared with VCG (strength of urges: $F(1, 96) = 16.1$, $p < 0.001$; cigarette craving: $F(1, 96) = 11.3$, $p = 0.001$; desire to smoke: $F(1, 96) = 6.6$, $p = 0.012$). There was no effect on mood or physical symptoms. Adherence to the breathing exercise regimen in the following 24 h was low, and at 24 h follow-up, there was no evidence of reduced cravings in YBG compared with VCG.

Conclusions: Simple yogic-style breathing exercises can reduce cigarette craving acutely in the laboratory. Further research is needed to determine how far this translates into field settings.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/pl4886m236656129/>

Effect of Laughter Yoga on Mood and Heart Rate Variability in Patients Awaiting Organ Transplantation: A Pilot Study.

Alternative Therapies Health Medicine. 2012 Sep-Oct;18(5):61-6. By Dolgoff-Kaspar R, Baldwin A, Johnson MS, Edling N, Sethi GK. From Department of Surgery and Medicine, University of Arizona, USA. rimadk@gmail.com



Context: Research shows that laughter has myriad health benefits, yet the medical community has not implemented it formally as a treatment. Patients awaiting organ transplantation have significant physical disabilities and are at risk for psychological distress. Attenuated heart rate

variability (HRV) is a risk factor for a negative long-term outcome in some patients.

Objective: The study intended to evaluate the clinical utility of laughter yoga in improving psychological and physiological measures in outpatients awaiting organ transplantation. Positive results would indicate promising areas to pursue in a follow-up study.

Design: Six participants met for 10 sessions over 4 weeks. The research team measured each partici-

participant's heart rate, HRV, blood pressure (BP), and immediate mood before and after the laughter and control interventions. The team assessed participants' longer-term mood (anxiety and depression) at the study's initiation, after a no-treatment control week, and at the end of the study.

Setting: The study occurred at the Department of Surgery and Medicine at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, Tucson.

Participants: Participants were patients awaiting transplants (three heart and three lung), two women and four men (ages 51-69 y). Participants had received no major surgery in the 3 months prior to the intervention, did not have a hernia or uncontrolled hypertension, and did not fall into the New York Heart Association function class 4.

Intervention: The 20-minute laughter intervention involved breathing and stretching exercises, simulated laughter (ie, unconditional laughter that is not contingent on the environment), chanting, clapping, and a meditation. The 20-minute control intervention involved the study's personnel discussing health and study-related topics with the participants.

Outcome Measures: The research team measured BP, heart rate, and HRV and administered the Profile of Mood States, Beck Anxiety Inventory, and Beck Depression Inventory-II to evaluate immediate and longer-term mood. The team had planned quantitative statistical analysis of the data at the study's initiation but did not complete it because the number of enrolled participants was too low for the analysis to be meaningful. The team visually examined the data, however, for trends that would indicate areas to examine further in a follow-up study.

Results: Participants showed improved immediate mood (vigor-activity and friendliness) and increased HRV after the laughter intervention. Both the laughter and control interventions appeared to improve longer-term anxiety. Two participants awaiting a lung transplant dropped out of the study, and no adverse events occurred.

Conclusion: This pilot study suggests that laughter

yoga may improve HRV and some aspects of mood, and this topic warrants further research.

Subjective Wellbeing and Longevity: A Co-Twin Control Study.

Twin Research & Human Genetics. 2011 (3):249-56. By Sadler ME, Miller CJ, Christensen K, McGue M. from Roosevelt University, USA. mi-chael.sadler001@gmail.com

Mental health is increasingly defined not only by the absence of illness but by the presence of subjective well-being (SWB). Previous cohort studies have consistently shown that indicators of SWB predict favorable life outcomes, including better mental and somatic health, and longevity. The favorable effects associated with SWB have prompted new research aimed at raising happiness and well-being through individual interventions and public health initiatives. Standard observational studies of individual-level associations, however, are subject to potential confounding of exposure and outcome by shared genes and environment. The present study



explored the association between SWB and increased longevity, using twin pair analyses to determine whether the association is consistent with causality or is due to genetic or environmental confounding. The study sample of 3,966 twins aged 70 or older, followed for a median time period of 9 years, was drawn from the population-based Longitudinal Study of Aging Danish Twins (LSADT). The association between SWB, operationalized as affect and life satisfaction, and all-cause mortality risk was examined using between-individual and within-pair



survival analyses. As expected, at the individual level, SWB predicted increased longevity. Exposure effects were also present in unadjusted and adjusted within-pair analyses of 400 dizygotic (DZ) pairs and 274 monozygotic (MZ) pairs, indicating that SWB is associated with increased longevity independent

of familial factors of genes and shared environment.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3105329/>

Yoga in the Schools:

A Systematic Review of the Literature.

[International Journal of Yoga Therapy](#) 2012; (22):101-10. By [Serwacki ML](#), [Cook-Cottone C](#). from University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

Objective: The objective of this research was to examine the evidence for delivering yoga-based interventions in schools. **Methods:** An electronic literature search was conducted to identify peer-reviewed, published studies in which yoga and a meditative component (breathing practices or meditation) were taught to youths in a school setting. Pilot studies, single cohort, quasi-experimental, and randomized clinical trials were considered. **Research:** quality was evaluated and summarized. **Results:** Twelve published studies were identified. Samples for which yoga was implemented as an intervention included youths with autism, intellectual disability, learning disability, and emotional disturbance, as well as typically developing youths. **Conclusion:** Although effects of participating in school-based yoga programs appeared to be beneficial for the most part, methodological limitations, including lack of randomization,

small samples, limited detail regarding the intervention, and statistical ambiguities curtailed the ability to provide definitive conclusions or recommendations. Findings speak to the need for greater methodological rigor and an increased understanding of the mechanisms of success for school-based yoga interventions.

Meditation-related increases in GABA(B) modulated cortical inhibition.

[Brain Stimulation](#). 2012 Sep 7. [Epub ahead of print] by Guglietti CL, Daskalakis ZJ, Radhu N, Fitzgerald PB, Ritvo P. from York University, Department of Kinesiology and Health Science, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Background: Recent reports suggest meditation practice improves attentional performance and emotional regulation. The process of meditation apparently increases activation in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and stimulates the reticular nucleus of the thalamus, implicating the production and delivery of the inhibitory neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). GABAergic inhibitory interneurons have a central role in cortical inhibition (CI), modulating cortical excitability and neural plasticity.

Objective/hypothesis: Changes in CI, after completion of a single meditation session, were investigated and compared to a non-meditating control activity.

Methods: Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a non-invasive method of examining CI, was used to evaluate changes before and after a 60 min meditation session. Seventy right-handed healthy subjects (n = 35 meditators, n = 35 non-meditators) were assessed using TMS related measures of cortical silent period (CSP) and short intra cortical inhibition (SICI), with stimulation of the motor cortex coordinated with EMG recording of peripheral hand muscles.

Results: For the meditators, CSP and SICI were measured before and after meditation sessions while age-sex matched healthy control subjects were iden-



tically assessed after a non-meditating activity (television watching). The meditators showed a statistically significant increase in CSP after meditation compared to non-meditators after an equivalent period of television watching ($P = 0.02$) while no significant between-group differences were observed in the SICI.

Conclusion: These findings indicate *meditation processes are linked to GABAergic cortical inhibition, a mechanism previously implicated in improved cognitive performance and enhanced emotional regulation.*

Meditation as a Potential Therapy for Autism: A Review.

[Autism Research & Treatment](http://www.hindawi.com/journals/aurt/2012/835847/), 2012;2012:835847.
By [Sequeira S](#), [Ahmed M](#), from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, USA.

Autism is a chronic neurodevelopmental disorder of unknown cause that affects approximately 1-3 percent of children and four times more boys than girls. Its prevalence is global and its social impact is devastating. In autism, the brain is unable to process sensory information normally. Instead, simple stimuli from the outside world are experienced as overwhelmingly intense and strain the emotional centers of the brain. A stress response to the incoming information is initiated that destabilizes cognitive networks and short-circuits adequate behavioral output.

As a result, the child is unable to respond adequately to stimulation and initiate social behavior towards family, friends, and peers. In addition, these children typically face immune-digestive disorders that heighten social fears, anxieties, and internal conflicts. While it is critical to treat the physical symptoms, it is equally vital to offer an evidence-based holistic solution that harmonizes both their emotional and physical well-being as they move from childhood into adult life. Here, we summarize evidence from clinical studies and neuroscience research that suggests that an approach built on yogic principles and meditative tools is worth pursuing. Desired outcomes include relief of clinical symptoms of the disease, greater relaxation, and facilitated expression of feelings and skills, as well as improved family and social quality of life.

<http://www.hindawi.com/journals/aurt/2012/835847/>

Kevin W Chen, Ph.D. – is an associate professor at the Center for Integrative Medicine and Department of Psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine (USA). 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>).

Traditional Chinese Medicine Views and Treatment of Hypothyroidism

Helen H. Hu, OMD, L/Ac.

Hypothyroidism is under activity of the thyroid gland that leads to inadequate production of thyroid hormones and a slowing of vital body functions.

Facial expressions become dull, the voice is hoarse, speech is slow, eyelids droop, and the eyes and face become puffy.

Usually only one blood test is needed to confirm the diagnosis.

People with hypothyroidism need to take a thyroid hormone for the rest of their life.

Hypothyroidism is common, especially among older people, particularly women; about 10% of older women are affected. It can, however, occur at any age. Very severe hypothyroidism is called myxedema.

Hypothyroidism can develop after treatment of hyperthyroidism or thyroid cancer because use of radioactive iodine or drugs that interfere with the body's ability to make thyroid hormones or surgical removal of the thyroid gland leads to a lack of thyroid hormone production.

A chronic lack of iodine in the diet is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in many developing countries. However, iodine deficiency is a rare cause of hypothyroidism in the United States because iodine is added to table salt and is also used to sterilize the udders of dairy cattle and thus is present in dairy products

Symptoms

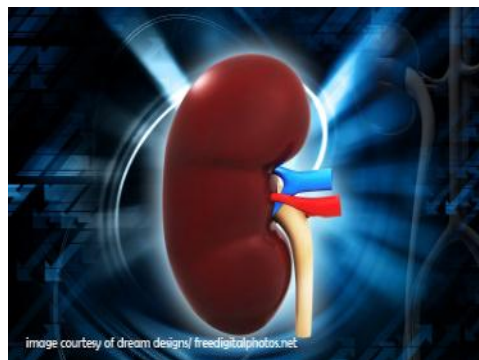
Insufficient thyroid hormones cause body functions to slow. Symptoms are subtle and de-

velop gradually. They may be mistaken for depression, especially among older people. Facial expressions become dull, the voice is hoarse and speech is slow, eyelids droop, and the eyes and face become puffy. Many people with hypothyroidism gain weight, become constipated, and are unable to tolerate cold. The hair becomes sparse, coarse, and dry, and the skin becomes coarse, dry, scaly, and thick. Some people develop carpal tunnel syndrome, which makes the hands tingle or hurt. The pulse may slow, the palms and soles may appear slightly orange (carotenemia), and the side parts of the eyebrows slowly fall out. Some people, especially older people, may appear confused, forgetful, or perplexed—signs that can easily be mistaken for Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia

In TCM view of Hypothyroidism categorized as “over exertion (Xu Lao) and Jia Di. There are two patterns within the hypothyroids.

A. Heart and kidney yang deficiency:

People with this pattern often have heart palpitations, shortness of breath, low tolerance and lower back pain with coldness sensations on the back. Some patients might have edema on the



lower leg. Other clinical symptoms are low libido, clear and long urination, especially during the night.

Spleen and kidney yang deficiency:

Patients with this pattern may have diarrhea, or watery with non-digested food in the stool with pale complexion and feel coldness of four limbs. Patients might have mixed patterns; however, one pattern is predominated. Beside seeking professional help for the condition either western medicine or traditional Chinese medicine with herbal formula, diet therapy is very beneficial to hypothyroidism. It not only treats mild hypothyroidism, or reducing certain medication, but more importantly ensures a natural way for well being for those patients

Here are some examples of food therapy for patients who suffer hypothyroid

1. Go Ji Lamb:

Go ji berry: 20g

Astragals 30g

Lamb 200 g (cut into square pieces)

Ginger 15g

Cooking wine; 20 g

Crystal sugar: 30g

Put all ingredients into put bring to boil, the lower temperature cook till meat softens.

Serve once a day, drink the soup and eat the meat.



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2. Herbal egg

Chicken egg: 2

Chuan Du Zhong: 12 g

Chuan xu duan: 12 g

Put all egg and herbs in ceramic pot with water. Boiling eggs until done. Then peel the shell from the egg and slow cooking the egg in the herbal juice again for 15-20 min.

Serve: drink the herbal juice and eat the egg. Once a day.



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3. Cinnamon congee:

Cinnamon bark: 10 g (powdered)

Spring rice: 50g

With water, cook both spring rice and cinnamon together



7. Black Chicken

one black chicken (100 g better to use male)

Rou cong round: 20g

Ginger 15 g

Salt

Add all ingredients with chicken together in a pot , bring it to boil, then lower temperature to continue cooking until chicken is cooked.

Server with meal. Once a day. (one chicken - two servings)

4. Yi zhi Congee; (one day serving)

Yi zhi ren 5g

Spring rice: 50g

Pinch of salt

Add water to make rice soup . serve twice day, warm both in the morning and night)

5. Black sesame congee:

Black sesame seeds: 30g (baked in the fried pan, and then crash the sesame seeds)

Spring rice: 100g

Put spring rice and water to make rice soup. When soup is done, add the crushed black sesame seeds in the soup and cook for short time. Serve once a day. Two weeks as a course of treatments

6. Zhu yu ginger congee

Shan zhu yu: 120g

Dried ginger: 5g

Spring rice: 100g

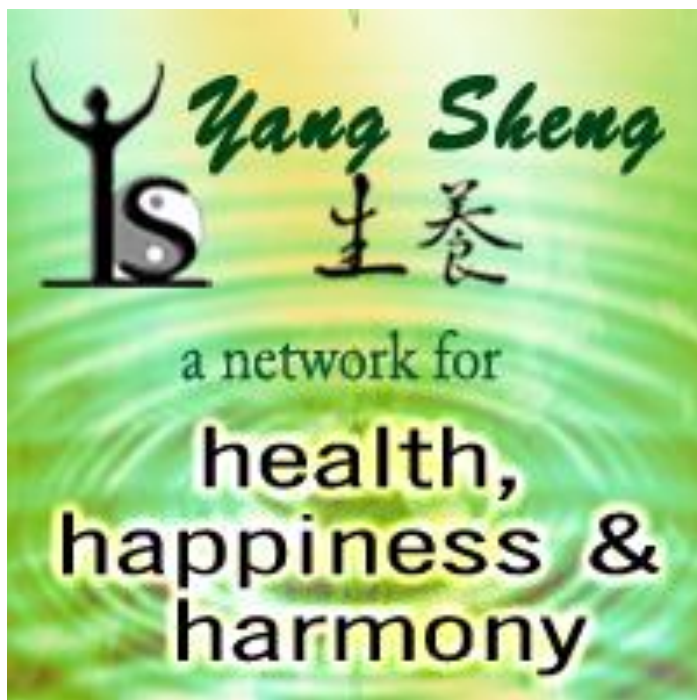
Add all ingredients in ceramic cooking pot to make soup, cook it till all soft and pasty. Add a little white sugar before it done if preference. Serve: once a day, 5 days as course of treatment.

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 Acu-

puncture 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.omidweb.net/>



The Importance of an Open Hand Position in Qigong and Taiji

By Raven Cohan

In qigong practice, it is important to challenge oneself to open the hands properly. In this article, we set out to speak of how to begin a conscious development of our hands. Humans continually evolve through conscious programs of development as we certainly do in Qigong and Tai Chi.

Throughout the ages all over the world, medicine keepers or shamans of tribes would diagnose the personalities, as well as the physical condition, of people via the way they held their hands and other hand characteristics. For example, palm readers can observe that a shy personality or a person who does not care to reveal their personality will go so far as to actually clench inwardly their fingers into the palms. In contrast, a more open personality often is seen to spread apart the fingers as if they are setting out to grab something. The latter type will sometimes, in excess, push the wrist forward or hyper-extend the hand and/or individual fingers back and away from what they are pushing toward. That little extra push winds up weakening their intention. (People in everyday life who “try too hard” can trip themselves up; and in martial arts we call that ‘muscling.’)

Reading palms was something I had a natural interest in after only being told where the life line was located on the hand. Later on, my clients would be impressed by the revelations of a per-

fect stranger who was reading only one line on their hand. It became clear that there must be some type of veracity to the ancient art. When I was 22, I was compelled to learn all the lines, shapes, pads, comparative finger lengths and the very manner in which people tended to hold their hands normally or in order to be read. These traits could influence an accurate reading, according to the people themselves who were read.



Becoming better at any art you practice is natural, so eventually being able to offer additional insights became easy. For dozens of years, my dance partner and I travelled all over the world and I amused people during that time with palm reading; eventually adding up to reading thousands of palms at various types of venues. But

I have retired from that part of my career. The important thing is that I trusted the ability to see typical traits that people have due to their type of hand. As just one example, I used to read palms at convention parties, and I observed that 90% of engineers who were read had distinctively broad, thick fingered hands that were quite inflexible. This observation is also well known amongst authors and other practitioners in this field.

When I began teaching tai chi, it seemed evident that certain students had a more challenging time in assimilating the correction to open the hand in a specific configuration accord-

ing to personality type. None of my teachers had, in specific words, ever suggested that such a standard of utilizing the gestalt



of the opened-hand position greatly helped improve forms. So having learned from palm readings' clues, I could see that a person needs to heal their repressions which, in turn, cause them to step back from certain areas in their life. How effectively they can do that depends on the amount of practice with the right chi kung/qigong/neigong methods and focusing upon internal changes.

At a young age as a dancer, I thought myself to be comparatively slow at copying movement well. Years later, through the study of chi kung and tai chi/taiji, I would come to witness an improvement. I observed how many of my teachers were, in the below numbered ways, configuring their hands in the position to be discussed, while doing ward off, press, push, knife hands and more. It appeared that the more openly they used their hands powered by tendons, the more chi-filled was their form. Many (but not all) of the teachers around the world, who I observed in classes, workshops and in photos, used one similar structuring that I copied and believe to be powerful:

1. They open the space between their thumb and index fingers quite widely. My teacher, Mantak Chia, was the first person who showed me that portion of the hand and said it was named, "The Tiger Mouth."
2. The index finger is held up away from the other smaller fingers -lifting towards the back of the palm.
3. Observing the rest of the hand one sees that the three small fingers are not greatly spread apart. A half-finger's width apart is sufficient. It seems



the entirety called the "Fair Lady hand."

4. An important observation maintained in the gestalt of "Fair Lady," is its power gained by use of the "unbent wrist" that is regarded as the way to maintain strength throughout the hand and continuing into the arm, via the tendons.

Most teachers and students learn that grand attainments can be made through practicing easier things first. That is an important lesson. If people never learn to open their hands, it is harder for them to advance. This applies toward much of what we do in life: little by little. Consider that if we let our hand collapse, we lose strength that is connected down in the ground and through all our tendons of our feet on up to our 'fair lady hands' which express our chi power that can be projected out. Do become better at being aware of the varied strength in your hand because it will enforce your nature to its very core. Simply practice imitating the proper position, for example, at a break from any work where you might require a rest. Stand up, connect to the earth and place your hands in imitation of the photos below.



Raven Cohan is a teacher and author who is writing a book of her experiences of her teacher's system called Universal Healing Tao, Mantak Chia. Raven is a Senior instructor there. She has other teachers and not all believe

we must find our own ways to come to the Oneness of respect and gratitude that will help us to better evolve as beings and care-takers. This one planet Earth we know certainly habituates life. Let's all grow! See Raven's web site at www.taoTLC.com. There you can find other articles and links.

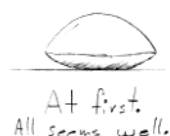
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Comedy Moment

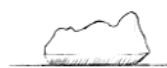
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The Amazing Transformation of a Meditation Cushion



At first.
All seems well.



After 15 min.
It's feeling suspiciously
lumpy.



After 30 min.
It occurs to you that
perhaps you're actually
sitting on a lump of
rock.



After 45 min.
It becomes crystal
clear what you are
really sitting on.

After 59 min.
It is obvious that
you no longer have
any legs, so it really
doesn't matter.



Q: What happens when a Buddhist becomes totally absorbed with the computer he is working with?

WHY ARE THERE NO GOOD BUDDHIST BLUES GUITARISTS?

THEY HAVE NO SOUL!

~ UNKNOWN ~

A: He enters Nerdvana!

Master and Pupil

Says the Master to his pupil:

"Do you understand that you don't really exist?"

Upon which the pupil replies:

"Whom are you telling that?"

All comedy stories courtesy of http://www.rudyh.org/_buddhism_jokes_fun_humor-quotes.htm unless stated.



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Yang-Sheng is an E-magazine and a network run by the non-profit World Institute for Self Healing, Inc. (WISH, a 501(c)(3) organization registered in New Jersey), and all of our writers, editors and contributors are volunteers since we do not have a stable financial support at this moment. *Yang-Sheng* promotes philosophy and methods of self-healing, positive thinking and health preservation, which represents a new direction of future medicine and healthy living. However, we are young and our resources are very limited, especially in light of our dreams and vision. Since no one can really profit from a self-healing system except for practitioners themselves, our programs are largely run by volunteers, sponsors and donations. To help *Yang-Sheng* survive and develop your generous contribution is urgently needed. Your financial contributions will help *Yang-Sheng* and WISH to continue its course to advance a completely new medicine and to build a unique community of our own that is dedicated to a healthy, happy and harmonious life for all!

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- Pay for experts and professional writers in the special field to write special columns or tips, and answer commonly-concerned questions for our readers (such as web seminars)
- Pay for translation service or software to make Yang-Sheng available in other languages, especially in Chinese and Spanish, and translate more of proverbs, tips and stories of Yang Sheng from Chinese into English.
- Pay for professional management staff to run daily editing and communication business with appropriate compensation so that they are dedicated to what they are doing for us.
- Build a more professional web site with online database and information tips to guide people daily life-nurturing and mind-body practice in different situations and healthy conditions.
- Publish *Yang-Sheng* magazine both online and in-print to let more people have access to the life-nurturing knowledge and to share their experiences.
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Yang Sheng

Cultivating Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

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.

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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.
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