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THE LONGEVITY OF PRIMORDIAL WUJI QIGONG

- Old Man of the South Pole
- Truths About Tai Chi for Health & Longevity
- Evolutionary Growth
and Embodied Learning in Taiji
- Winter: A Time To Reflect



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Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

Yang-Sheng

(Nurturing Life)

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A network for health, happiness & harmony

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

We wish everyone Happy Holidays and a prosperous New Year 2014!

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Editor 编者的话	5
Tales from the Dao 道的传说	6
Old Man of the South Pole <i>by Roy Hanney</i>	
Food As Medicine 食疗	10
Roses and Longevity <i>by Katrina Everhart</i>	
Daoist Internal Alchemy 道家内丹	14
Sexual Alchemy <i>by Pascal Schonknecht</i>	
Meditation in Motion 动中冥想	19
Truths about Tai Chi for Health and Longevity <i>by Eric Borreson</i>	
Feature Article 精选文章	20
The Longevity of Primordial Wuji Qigong <i>by Shifu Michael Rinaldini</i>	
The Dancing Doc 舞医	26
Longevity: Lengthen Your Telomeres with Meditation And Die Like a Squirrel <i>by Sharon Montes, MD</i>	
From the Master 师傅之窗	30
Evolutionary Growth and Embodied Learning in Taiji <i>by Mauro Carboni</i>	
Book Review 书评	38
The Sustainable You by John Loupos, HSE, MS <i>a review by Michelle Wood</i>	
Research Update 科研动态	40
Updates on Scientific Research of Longevity <i>by Kevin Chen</i>	
Spirituality of Dao 道之精神	48
Laozi 老子 - Legend or History? A brief biography of the author of the Dao De Jing <i>by Christina J. Barea</i>	
Scientific Qi Exploration 气的科学探索	50
Part 2. The Collaterals <i>by Marty Eisen</i>	
Seasonal Harmony 季节的和谐	57
Winter: A Time to Reflect <i>by Ellasara Kling</i>	
Support Yang-Sheng	65



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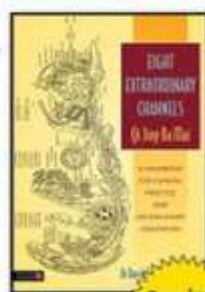
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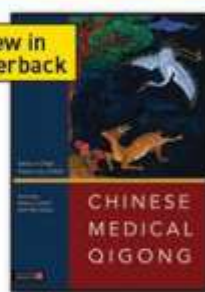
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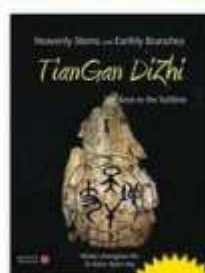
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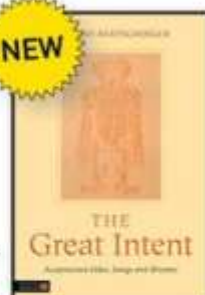
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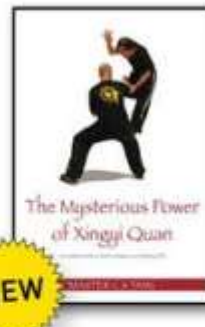
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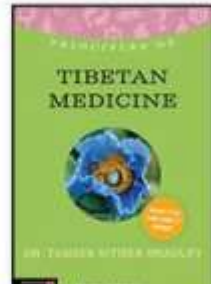
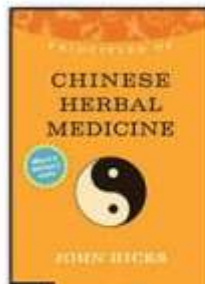
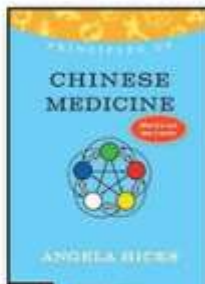
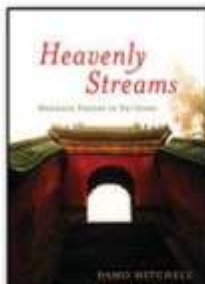
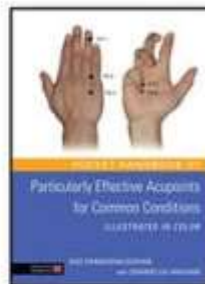
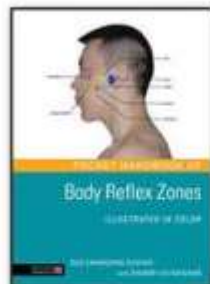
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From the Editor 编者的话

Welcome to the Longevity issue of Yang Sheng! It seems appropriate to close out 2013 on this topic since we tend to have more time for quiet activities like qigong and meditation, as well as making special holiday meals at this time of year. It's a wonderful time to focus on new practices and routines that will contribute to your long and happy life. Allowing these to become habit now will not only enhance your life and lifestyle, but help you maintain your new practices as we move later into the busier times of the year.

I know you will love the diversity of the articles we have for you this month! Our feature article,

The Longevity of Primordial Wuji Qigong by **Shifu Michael Rinaldini**, describes the philosophy of this practice which not only cultivates Five Element energies, it transmutes jing, qi and shen energies, and brings one into harmony with the Dao. It includes detailed instructions on how to practice the visualizations and movements to align oneself with Source.

Also in this issue are columns on longevity from the perspective of myths and legends about the stars; the scientific evidence of how lifestyle changes like nutrition, movement, stress-reduction and social contact contribute to a long and happy life; how the slow, studied movements in the practice of Taiji creates a unified experience of mind-body through breath and imagination; fabulously delicious recipes utilizing foods for the winter season (I can hardly wait to try the **Roasted Garlic Miso Cauliflower with Caramelized Black Plums!**).

May you have a joyful and blessed holiday season, and happy and prosperous new year.

Many blessings,

Michelle Wood
Editor in Chief



Cover Design by: Rebecca Kali

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Old Man of the South Pole

by Roy Hanney

Shòu Xīng 寿星, is the *Star of Longevity*.

The earliest known record of Shòu Xīng as a deity is the *Shǐ jí 史籍* (historical records, 149–90 BC). We know this star as Canopus, the largest of the stars in the constellation Carina, and second brightest in the heavens. In Chinese mythology, the star is known as the *Old Man of the South Pole* (Nánjí lǎorén, 南极老人) and is seen in the southern sky from the Autumn Equinox through to early spring. When observed, it usually has a reddish colour, a symbol of happiness and longevity in China. Canopus is also known in China and its neighboring countries of Korea, Japan and Vietnam as the Star of Old Age.

There are many stories that are told of the association of longevity with the *Old Man of the South Pole* but perhaps the most insightful is the tale of two old men playing chess under a mulberry tree who are visited by a youth who is destined to die at the age of 19. He bears presents of wine and deer meat which

he gives to the old men and in return one of them, after consulting the book which records the youth's fate, alters the date by transposing the two characters. The man who sat to the north of the chess board is Běi Dǒu 北斗, or the *northern dipper*, and it is he who records the date of death. The one in the south is Nán Dǒu 南斗, or *southern dipper*. It is he who records the date of birth (Bodde 1941).

In this tale, we can see that Nán Dǒu not only records the date of births but has the capability to prolong life. Nán Dǒu corresponds to the spirit of South Pole and is worshipped for blessings of longevity. Over time, in Chinese mythology, characterisation becomes conflated with the idea of the *Old Man of the South Pole* or Shòu Xīng. This popular mythological being is also rendered into being by painters during the Tang and Song Dynasties (618–1279 AD). The oldest existing example of Shòu Xīng is Ming Dynasty (1572 AD) colour woodcut.

Shòu Xīng is usually depicted as an old man of short



Fig. 1 Shòu Xīng (Star of Longevity), dated 1572.
By Jiang Baimeng (c. late 16th century), Ming Dynasty.
Color woodcut print, 146 x 98 cm.
Collection of Wang Hui, Beijing.



stature with a white beard and moustache. He always had a high forehead with three wrinkles above his eyebrows. There is often a hand-scroll tucked into his breast which probably signifies the *Book of Life*. Often Shòu Xīng is depicted with a deer which, in Daoist iconography, is an animal capable of bestowing longevity. In other images, he is depicted with a crane, another Daoist symbol of longevity. On occasion both are included in the image.

Later in Chinese history, Shòu Xīng becomes associated with a triad of gods, Fú Lù Shòu 福祿壽. The gods of happiness and good fortune (福 Fú), prosperity (祿 Lù) and longevity (壽 Shòu). The phrase, Fú Lù Shòu is commonly used in Chinese culture to denote the three attributes of a good life. In fact, the iconography of the Ming Dynasty images of Shòu Xīng, that of the deer and the crane, reflects the etymology of Fú Lù Shòu suggesting that the triad of gods

merely represents the three aspects of Shòu Xīng. So, we can think of longevity as coming about through a combination of good fortune, which in Chinese culture would have been bestowed as a gift from the gods; prosperity, or the ability to provide food clothes and shelter of a sufficient quality; along with the wisdom that comes with age.

The practice of nourishing and prolonging life (yǎng shēng 養生, health) has always been a central concern for Daoists. Writings on the subject go back to before 400 BC. When Daoism emerged as a recognisable religion in the late Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), the practice of longevity techniques, fused with traditional Chinese medicine, was integrated into almost every school or current. The texts of the time describe the guiding of Qi 氣 to nourish life through breathing exercises, gymnastics, massage, diet and supplements. They also include advice on the ways in which a person should conduct their life through harmony with nature, balance, and avoidance of excess.

To do the 'bear-hang' and 'bird-stretch', to 'inhale, blow out the old and draw in the new' are described as the practices of 'nurturers' of the body in the *Zhuāngzi* 莊子, written in the 4thC BC. The enhancement of the vital forces through harmonisation techniques such as these was not only seen as a means of preventing illness, but, also formed the foundation of Daoist inner cultivation, the first step on the road to the quest for immortality. In the *Zhuāngzi* the writer, ostensibly the a Chinese philosopher, Zhuāng zhōu 莊周, sees human beings as being part of nature and



encourages us to return to nature as a way of life. Indeed, many of the forms of movement associated with longevity techniques mimic the natural motions of animals observed in nature. The famous *Dǎo yǐn tú* 導引圖 chart, one of a number of scrolls that were excavated in 1973 in Changsha, Hunan Province. Show 44 humans in various poses and postures. Under each pose was a caption with the name of an animal, or the name of a disease that the posture might help prevent or cure. Dated from around 168 BC, the scroll shows that we only have to look to nature to find our way towards life-nourishing longevity techniques.

Descriptions of these and other forms of life-nourishing practices; exercise routines, massage techniques and other health preserving methods, are repeatedly found in a range of texts during the early the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). Around this time there appears the *Fāngshì* 方士 or 'magic recipe gentlemen' or 'master,' an expert who could utilise these techniques to alleviate pain, prevent or ameliorate diseases, increase vitality, improve well-being, and contribute to longevity. These experts, or healers further refined

the life-nourishing practices of the Daoists into slow, restful intentional body movements combined with breathing exercises, stretching or more gymnastic movements, twisting, bending, or squatting. These were coupled with visualisation techniques that encouraged the practitioner to relax or focus the breath.

In the *Bàopǔzǐ* 抱朴子 written around 320 AD by Ge Hong, the writer challenges the reader to 'embrace simplicity' and to seek our 'original nature.' He also distinguishes between the different practices for longevity and immortality. While his personal interest is more in the realm of the magical transformations of alchemy and inner cultivation, there is much that we can take from his writing and apply to our everyday lives. For example, the avoidance of excess, the seeking of a simpler life that is closer to nature, a focus on diet and exercise. In a later text, the commentator *Táo Hóngjǐng* 陶弘景 (456–536 AD) tells us that 'through breathing exercises and gymnastics, by taking herbs and plant medicines, you may extend your years' (Fong 1983). He also states clearly that before the quest for immortality can be commenced, a person must heal themselves through

longevity practices. So, the idea of slowly refining yourself, step by step, through life-nourishing, self-healing, longevity techniques sets the foundation for more spiritual practices.

Attention to diet is also given an important place in Daoism as can be seen in the *Quegu shiqi* 卻穀食氣 (Eliminating of Grains and Eating Qi). Unearthed in the same find as the *Dǎo yǎn tú*, the author recommends eliminating grains from the diet making a distinction between 'those who eat grain eat that is square; those who eat qi eat that is round. Round is heaven; square is earth' (Engelhardt 2004). The text suggest that the 'five grains' should be eliminated from the diet and instead we should draw sustenance from the circulation of Qi around the body. Many people in modern society find themselves stricken by bacterial, fungal, and parasitic infections all related to grain based diets. While the *Aggregate Nutrient Density Index* (ANDI) for grains is extremely low, almost to the point where you could say they are of little benefit to our diet. So perhaps there is some modern sense to this ancient wisdom and we should focus on our diet as a way of cultivating longevity.

There is however an important distinction to be made here between the idea of *longevity* (长寿, cháng shòu) and that of *immortality* (成仙, chéng xian). The first term describes the way in which natural life expectancy can be extended and early death avoided. The second involves the transformation of the body through transcendental practices or magical means. While the first involves simple changes to our lifestyle of the kind that most people can achieve, the latter involves long term and dedicated commitment to a set of cultivation practices that most people would not find difficult. Typically, such practices require a renunciation of the world and the removal of the body to a special place, a temple, mountain, or cave.

For most practitioners, the aim of our life-nourishing activities, which we now commonly

group under the heading of *Qigong*, is much simpler: to heal ourselves and extend our life expectancy, to be healthy and fulfilled, to find happiness and prosperity. Daoism teaches us that to achieve these simple goals, we can try to live in harmony with nature, find ways to simplify our diet, and use the forms of exercises that have been handed down to us to keep ourselves supple and fit. And if we do that, our bodies and nature will do the rest.

So next time there is a clear winter's night sky, look to the south and light a candle or stick of incense to Shòu Xīng and hope that he brings you happiness, prosperity and longevity.

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arts at his website: www.qigonginchina.com

Roses and Longevity

by Katrina Everhart

Roses given round the world indicate friendship, as well as love. Commonly used in perfumes, potpourri, sachets, and aerosols for their pleasant smell, roses look pretty, smell wonderful, and last longer than many flowers. Beyond their smell, roses have medicinal benefits. Used for the Persian emperor's wedding in the 10th Century as decorations, roses were cast into the water for the smell. As the sun shone on the fountains over time, the water became more concentrated, and more fragrant. The empress noted the droplets of oil and began using the water and oil. In Egypt, Cleopatra used rose water in her facial masks, creams, and rose oil in ointments for cleansing and their anti-aging properties. Ancient Romans bathed in rose water as it both cleansed and toned the skin causing fewer irritations, and adding a slight perfumed smell to the body. During WW II, hips were gathered to make Vitamin C syrup in England because they contain 60% more Vitamin C than citrus fruit. This juice, sent to troops, helped them deal with vitamin deficiencies and avoid diseases such as Scurvy, living longer and staying stronger.



Roses possess health benefits when used in teas, poultices, body sprays, lemonades, tinctures, salves, creams, lotions, candies, ice cream, milk shakes, baklava, scones, cakes, buns, puddings, rice, curries, soda waters, and yogurt drinks such as Rose Petal Lassi. There is also Rose milk in Malaysia. Bandung is Rose Syrup mixed with cold milk and cream. Brands include Rooh-afza or Monin. Gulkand. Rose preserves made from rose petals and sugar is eaten with toast, in sandwiches, cookies, or as a topping for cakes and ice creams. It may also be eaten by itself. Indian delicacies such as Gulab Jamun and Laddoos, and Pakistani biryani dishes use rose water to enhance the aromatic flavors as we eat with our noses just as much as our taste buds. In areas that were once known as Persia, a rose water is infused to make an iced tea and is drunk to soothe and calm the mind at tea time.

Rose petals contain vitamins A, B, D, & E as well as the beneficial acids – citric and malic, bioflavonoids, tannins, and fructose. Rose hips, the bulbous part after the flowers fall off, also contain Vitamin B1, B2, B3, C, E, P, K, calcium, iron, phos-



phorous, citric acid, tannin, zinc, and niacin. Health remedies or treatments for petals include thirst, gastro-intestinal problems, cough and congestion, diarrhea, bladder infections, runny nose, minor internal hemorrhage or swellings, and sore throats.

Rose Petal Teas, hot or cold, clean toxins from the body as well as heat whether due to hot flashes or low level fevers from mild inflammations.

Rose Hips Teas are natural stimulants to help the bowels move, can help prevent kidney stones and help they thymus gland function.

Rose oil in boiling water, just a few drops, inhaled can help ease the effects of asthma and congestion. Rose teas, jellies from petals or waters, and pastes from petals, deal with low libido, fertility, menstrual and menopause issues, and of course stress.

Rose waters used in facials, astringents, creams, salves, and toners to increase blood flow, and balance sebum production as well as tightening pores. Because it balances the Ph of skin, it helps fight acne at any age. Rose water helps nourish the hair and scalp. It can help increase the blood flow, and prevent inflammations which cause mild forms of dandruff. Additionally, it can help deal with split ends, frizzy and dry hair, while keeping your hair in place like hair spray.

When combined with Cistus Hydrosol, rose water helps prevent wrinkles. Rose water, hydrosol, or rose glycerin, soothes the eyes and skin. Cooled, it reduces swelling and inflammation often due to minor injuries and/or allergies. Cooled Rose water or rose glycerin reduces puffiness around the eye in the morning. In water, glycerin, or creams, roses help dry skin, aging skin, and can be used as an anti-septic if kept sterile for minor cuts. Rose water tonics treat fatigue, nervous tension, heat-related issues from becoming overheated and/or dehydrated whether from over exertion or weather, as well as gout, rheumatic conditions, heart disease and peptic ulcers. Additionally, rose teas, tonics, sodas, and/or pastes in food help restore normal and essential bacteria to the intestines or gut to help with normal digestion and elimination.

Rose oil with a carrier oil such as almond, jojoba, olive, applied topically helps soothe sore muscles and muscles that can spasm, aka anti-spasmodic, due to overuse such as in running events. A small amount of oil on the stomach can help athletes who use their muscles a lot during an event such as running, climbing, or biking to reduce spasms, tremors, and

Food as Medicine 食疗



soreness. Used in cream, rose oil helps deal with sunburn, insect bites, breast disorders, and mild forms of eczema. Pastes from petals, mixed with salt, sugar, or a mud make face masks which rejuvenate the skin and help cellular turnover.

Externally, rose waters, teas, tonics, creams, and food applications play double duty solving issues and providing aromatherapy. Aromatherapy uses alone include meditative and religious. As an aroma, roses in any form are considered an aphrodisiac as well as an anti-depressant, anger depressant, and a mild sedative. Roses help folks who are grieving and those who are suffering from PTSD. Anytime stress is relieved and depression issues lifted, folks live longer and better.

The smell helps relieve the tension as well as pain when used on a compress. Whether hot or cold, used on a cold cloth for swelling and hot cloth for inflammation, the compress can be placed directly on the skin. Oils can be expensive because it takes about 60,000 petals to product just 1 ounce of pure rose essential

oil. Essential oil must often be cut with either another oil or carrier. It should not be ingested or put directly on the skin in its pure form.

Legend has it that a spoonful of Gulkand, a sweet preserve, every day is better than an apple a day. Rose preserves help memory and eyesight, purify the blood, and improve your mood. Gulkand can be made at home by layering rose petals with sugar and setting in the direct sun every day for at least three to 4 weeks, stirring every other day. Yet, it can be purchased commercially. Roses contain anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties,

thus making it perfect for disinfecting your home and workplace. Combined with Epsom salt in a spritzer or sprayer, the rose concoction can be sprayed on kitchen and bathroom counter tops.

Roses, whether used for their aroma, used topically to soothe skin, used internally to help deal with various issues, eaten in foods to enhance the aromatics, or used as home cleaners, roses help you live longer while improving your mood, relieving stress, and tension. Roses make a difference in our lives, while beautifying the



roads, gardens, and homes. Cultivated for centuries, look beyond the thorns, roses have medicinal properties that help us live longer and better at the same time.



Katrina grew up in LA, earned her Bachelor's at Stephens; Masters at University of Missouri, and is ABD at Walden University. Specializing in conflict resolution/ mediation, qualitative/quantitative research, systems theory, organizational behavior, project management, competitors, integrative medicine/research, in stress, productivity, innovation, and decision making. She's worked in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the U.S., training & conducting product research, product/service development and marketing. Past projects include Sprint's DSL, Talking Call Waiting, P&G Floor Care, American Express's Leadership Development. An author, Certified Project Manager, Mediator, Researcher, Indexer, Parliamentarian, manages her 180 year-old cattle farm and volunteers in Civil Air Patrol, USAF Auxiliary.



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Sexual Alchemy

by Pascal Schonknecht

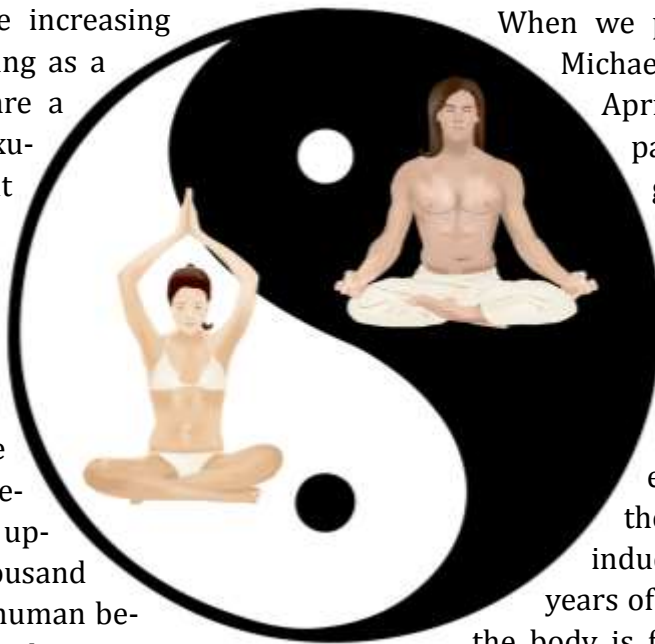
Sexual alchemy is one of the most profound and most widely known of the Taoist internal arts. At the same time, it is also one of the most challenging and poorly understood practices used today. With utmost respect and gratitude to all the effort these teachers have made so far, and the increasing popularity Qigong is enjoying as a result, I would like to share a different perspective on sexual alchemy, one which might clash with what is taught by many popular teachers.

No doubt, sexuality is a powerful beast. Between the interplay of *yin* and *yang*, it is the driving force of life which creates and destroys, in a slow but steady upward-spiral, the “ten-thousand things” of the universe. As human beings, I feel we are blessed to be a conscious witness of this unfolding. To dance, skid, or even just stumble across the surface where light and dark meet is a privilege as incomprehensible as it can be beautiful. To be sure, most creatures creeping on our pale blue dot are unwitting participants. When it is time to eat, they eat, when it is time to sleep, they sleep, and when it is time to replicate, they replicate. We have the chance to do all this, and do it consciously.

However, we have very little awareness of this great unfolding – in spite of our intelligence, we know very little about how the Tao goes about its business, about the laws of life and the universe, of the ripples and swirls through which heaven and earth blend and give birth to our human experience. We have grown enormous brains and ever-smaller stomachs, and little of what we eat we can truly digest.

When we practice sexual alchemy, as Michael Winn wrote in the March/April issue, we are consciously partaking in this great mingling of *yin* and *yang* in and through our bodies. It is not surprising that the effects can be overwhelming, to say the least. The ecstasy of sexual climax is among the most powerful experiences we know, other than those which are chemically induced or achieved through years of spiritual practice. In climax, the body is flooded with very pure and dense Qi which penetrates it at a level where Qi is usually relatively weak. It can make the body quiver, twist and arch, even shake violently. When it is over, we usually feel tired and sleep to recover the Qi we spent.

But human sexuality is not like a wind-up toy which is as ready as ever after you recharge it. The moment you are aroused, *jing* – the productive essence stored in your kidneys – starts to



transform into Qi and reproductive fluids. These fluids are the manifestation of the totality of your life: everything about you, and everything a new human being needs to grow from a fertilized ovum into an adult, is contained in them. They are an extremely dense form of Qi and information, and take a lot to produce and regenerate. For this reason, sexual activity is a rather depleting form of entertainment. The ancient Taoists knew this very well, and the Taoist canon is replete with warnings to preserve one's *jing*. But even in pre-modern China, not everyone followed this advice. Chinese emperors, who held a small army of the most beautiful women as concubines, lived in relatively sanitary conditions and had access to the best food and medical treatment, enjoyed notoriously short lifespans. When your *jing* runs out, you lose your vitality; you become brittle, listless, and ill.

Ironically, many of the issues people try to heal with sexual alchemy are caused, at least in part, by a loss of *jing* and damaged kidney Qi. Difficulty

getting out of bed in the morning, constant tiredness, poor memory, and anxiety are some of them. Problems in the bedroom, like premature ejaculation, lack of desire, and impotence, and even infertility (both in men and women) are related to it. Even more, our sexual attractiveness to others has a lot to do with our Qi condition. If your Qi is strong, your hair is shiny and full, your eyes clear and bright and your complexion vibrant. When you bristle with life-force, people feel drawn to you without you doing much at all. You don't need to try hard to seduce someone. On the other hand, when you deplete your Qi, not only do you lose your shine to others, but you might find that despite practicing very regularly, the pleasure of sex fades as less and less Qi floods your body when you get aroused. The ancient Taoist knew quite well that using the senses blunts them, and that the things that truly matter cannot be achieved by chasing them.

What, then, is the role of sexual alchemy? If sexual activity depletes your *jing* and damages your Qi, why has it been used for millennia for spiritual development? Here we need to distinguish between two traditions: the “Bedroom Arts” (房中术), and “Yin Yang Dual Practice” (阴阳双修).

The purpose of the Bedroom Arts is, plainly speaking, to improve your sex-life – to increase arousal, to activate more Qi in the body during intercourse, to enhance physical sensations, to prolong climax, and to reduce the refractory period. It also tries to reduce the depletion of Qi, for example through retrograde ejaculation. And, like



Daoist Internal Alchemy 道家内丹

Yin Yang Dual Practice, people have tried to use it as a Qigong practice to improve health. Bedroom Arts however can never deliver on this, as they always lead to the depletion of Qi – the moment arousal occurs, Qi is turned into *jing* and descends to the sexual organs. In China, this practice has been used very little as Chinese culture has a very different attitude to sexuality. In the West however it has become immensely popular. Sex, as we know, sells, and its deep connection to the process of creation itself makes it very interesting even to people who are on a spiritual, rather than a “carnal,” journey.



A Chinese print depicting "The Joining of the Essences", based on [Tang Dynasty art](#).

Courtesy of Wikipedia

Yin Yang Dual Practice, and the many practices derived from it, is also becoming extremely popular. Originally, it was only one of a number of practices used in Taoist internal alchemy. It is not something that can be practiced every Tuesday when the kids are out, or on the rug in front of the fireplace after a nice meal and a glass of red wine. It is a long process which takes a long, long time to complete.

The first requirement is to have very strong *dantien*-Qi. Even practitioners who have been working on their *dantien* every day for many years are unlikely to have sufficient Qi. The second step is to have very strong *mingmen*-fire. In traditional *dan dao* practice, this takes over 1,000 days, during which no sexual activity is allowed, including nocturnal emissions. Even just one emission means having to start over. Third, *jing*, the bodily fluids, Qi and blood have to transform into each other extremely well. One way to know how well this process is working is when you are generating very large amounts of sweet tasting saliva during Qigong practice which comes back even after swallowing it repeatedly. Lastly, you have to have a mind strong enough not to be aroused even if you were living out your most intense sexual fantasy.





Courtesy of:
<http://www.ihanuman.com/journal/matsyasana/>

With this foundation, you can control the level of desire during intercourse as you wish. In Taoist practice, this is referred to as “heat” or “fire.” Just as you need to have the right amount of fire to cook a meal, so you have to strictly control the heat during intercourse to keep it at a constant level without any fluctuation. During one practice session, which might take two hours, the practitioner cannot become overly aroused, lest the transformation of the substances is interrupted and it becomes “normal” sexual activity. You can tell that you are having ordinary sex if you get a dry mouth during intercourse, if you feel exhausted afterwards and want to sleep, or you feel pain in your lower back, lower *dantien*, or knees.

Most Yin Yang Dual practices in the West are actually Bedroom Arts – historically, very few people have succeeded in true Yin Yang Dual practice. And, even in the past, many people have been confused by the difference between the two.

The *Xiang'er Commentary to the Laozi Laozi* (老子想爾注), a manuscript of the early Celestial Master school of Taoism and the oldest known commentary on the Tao de Jing, was very critical of manuals like the *Secret Instructions of the Jade Bedchamber*:

The Way teaches human beings to congeal their essence and make spirits. In the present generation there are those who practice counterfeit arts and slyly call them the Way, teaching by means of the texts of the Yellow Emperor, the Dark Maiden, Master Gong, and Rongcheng. When engaged with a woman, they do not ejaculate, but think they can circulate their essence [through their bodies] and cause it to fortify their brains. But because their mind and spirit are not at one [with the Way], they lose what they try to preserve; though they store up their pleasure, they cannot treasure it for long.

To be sure, most scholars today agree that the *Secret Instructions* is not an example of early Daoism, and that the early Taoists in fact resolutely rejected it.

If practiced improperly, sexual alchemy can be very dangerous. Building up a lot of *dantien* Qi and working yourself to extreme peaks of arousal can lead to a huge loss of reproductive essence. It might temporarily make you feel better than anything else you have ever experienced, but it is unlikely to help you on your path of self-transformation, and it may take years to recover the lost Qi. Again, the ancients knew that unless “heaven approves of your conduct,” that is, your



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Daoist Internal Alchemy 道家内丹

life is in harmony with the great unfolding of the Tao, any kind of sexual alchemy is useless.

Sexuality, as I said at the start, is the human manifestation of the creative force which transforms *yin* and *yang* and gives rise to the “ten thousand things” in the universe. As such, it promises us to get right to the root of what it means to be human – half devil, half god - to transmute worthless lead into precious gold and so partake, ever more consciously, in the great unfolding of the Tao. This, after all, is the purpose of Taoist internal alchemy. However, playing with sexuality is, quite literally, playing with fire. It can be used to cook food and nourish your life, or to scorch the earth.

So this is not a moral issue, but a practical one: if we approach sexual alchemy with the same mind-set with which we have created our society, we use it to consume our Qi, and ultimately our lives, in much the same way that we are consuming the resources of our planet. This form of self-cannibalism is a far cry from what sexual alchemy was used for in the past. More than anything, it reflects on the world we currently live in, and makes our task – to live, learn, work and dance

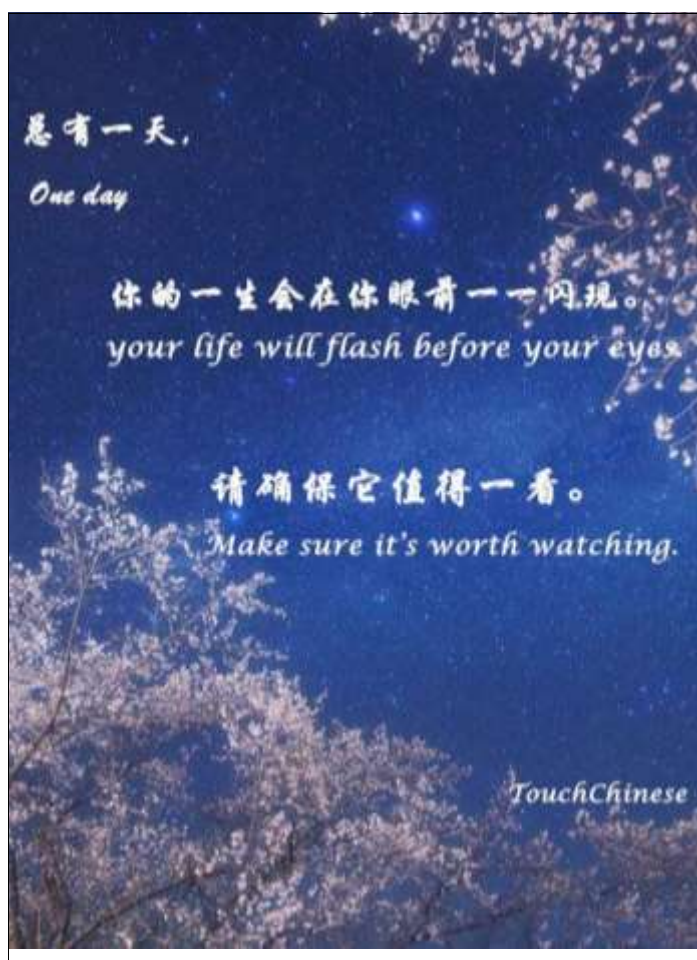


between that which is light, and that which is not yet – ever more urgent. And, even if we *have* mastered true Yin Yang Dual practice, the real alchemy doesn't happen between two bodies, but in your

Self - between you and your injuries, your hatreds, your desires and your grief. If it is true, as Michael Winn said, that the year of the snake symbolises sexuality and transformation, let's celebrate it by taking our transformation out of the bedroom.

Pascal Schonknecht offers Qigong Classes and Qi Energy Healing for Chronic Illness and Chronic Pain Relief. Learn more at

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Truths About Tai Chi for Health and Longevity

By Eric Borreson

Many scientific studies of tai chi have shown that there are significant medical benefits to practicing tai chi. These benefits include good health and longevity. However, these studies don't mention the two main obstacles to using tai chi to improve your health. It is our responsibility as teachers to make sure our students understand this early in their practice.

Truth #1 - It takes time

Many people have heard great things about tai chi. They expect wondrous benefits from showing up for class. However, they are accustomed to the ideas of Western medicine where a doctor gives you a pill and you are better in a few days or weeks at most. When the benefits of tai chi don't miraculously appear after their first class or two, they want to give up.

It is true that many people will start to feel better after a class or two and a couple of weeks of practice. Peacefulness and calmness are common feelings after a beginning tai chi class. However, studies have shown that measurable health benefits really don't show up until the student has practiced for about 10 or 12 weeks.

When learning tai chi, learning quickly is not necessarily better than learning slowly and deeply. Tai chi has many subtle details that take time to learn. You have to "digest" tai chi. It

time to learn. You have to "digest" tai chi. 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.

Truth #2 - You are responsible

You can't pass the buck. The only way to get the health benefits of tai chi is to practice what you have learned. And guess what? You need to practice for the rest of your life. If you stop practicing, your health will gradually revert to what it was before you started tai chi.

You will have ups and downs to your practice. You will have times where you get bored with it. You have to persevere. Your teacher is a great resource and can help you get over the bumps and through the doldrums.

Eric Borreson – a student and teacher, finds teaching taiji, qigong, and meditation to be a path to a more meaningful life. Eric is the founder and director of Meditation in Motion, specializing in teaching about living healthier and happier lives. He teaches taiji, qigong, and meditation at the prestigious Heartland Spa, a top 10 destination spa, located in Gilman, IL. In addition, he teaches taiji (Yang 24, Sun-style taiji, and Dr. Lam's Taiji for Arthritis and Taiji for Diabetes) at other venues. He conducts workshops and teaches private lessons on request. He writes a weekly wellness column at <http://eric-taichi.blogspot.com>.



The Longevity of Primordial Wuji Qigong

by Shifu Michael Rinaldini

(Written 2008, edited 2013)

☯ One of my favorite longevity qigong forms is Primordial Wuji Qigong. The form I practice is technically mine in origins, but the philosophy behind it belongs to a long tradition of qigong cultivation. I became interested in it during the early 2000's. At that time, I was studying the writings of a variety of qigong teachers: Roger Jahnke, Jerry Alan Johnson, Michael Winn, Daniel Reid, Solala Towler, and Ken Cohen. Several of them had written extensively or produced videos on the Primordial qigong. They referred to it in a variety of names: Hunyuan Gong, Primordial Qigong, Hundun Qigong, or "Taiji Hunyuan Nei Gong (Undifferentiated Primordial Inner Work)." [1] I was mysteriously drawn to it, even though I did not have any direct experience of its form. From the descriptions I read about it, I deduced that it consisted of a lot of circling and spiraling movements. Roger Jahnke described it as a returning and moving in reverse to the natural pattern of things. I started creating my own form, using some of my favorite rolling and spiraling qigong movements, and deepening my understanding of key principles of the Primordial philosophy.

At the 2001 National Qigong Association conference in Rhinebeck, N.Y., Omega Institute, just after the 9/11 tragedy, I spoke with Roger Jahnke. I believe it was the Saturday



afternoon when we ran into each other outside during the break between workshops. We talked for about fifteen minutes or longer, and spent a fair amount of time on my interests in learning more about Primordial Qigong. He was supportive, however, in directing me to continue developing my own version of it. As much as I can remember now, seven years later, he seemed to be saying



The Chinese Five Elements

that the external form was not nearly as important as the internal transformation of returning to the One – the undifferentiated unity of all things. This last part was not his; I forget the exact words he used.

A recent article in “The Empty Vessel” magazine has an in-depth analysis of Primordial Qigong. Ken Cohen, the author of the article, explores the philosophy, the history, the benefits, and the practice of “Hunyuan Qigong.” [2] I particularly like Cohen’s discussion on how Primordial Qigong belongs to the Daoist qigong category because it uses concepts and practices from Daoism.

“xing ming shuang xiu ‘body and spirit cultivated in balance,’ shui huo xiang jiao ‘fire and water meet,’ and lian dan ‘cultivating the elixir.’” [3]

These concepts are key ingredients for the understanding of the internal transformation I referred to earlier. When I talked about the importance of the inner work over the external movements, it was concepts like these that I had in mind. Cohen supports my claim: “External movement is always accompanied by

internal movement, and for this reason Primordial Qigong may be considered ‘inner work.’” [4] In fact, a couple years ago, I wrote to Ken Cohen and asked him if he had a video/DVD on Primordial Qigong I could purchase. He wrote back and said he had an old video on it, but it was not an instructional video. It did not explain the internal meditation, which is the heart of the form. Needless to say, I didn’t purchase the video.

Before I move onto my explanation of how to practice Primordial Wuji Qigong, I want to highlight another point Cohen made in his article. He says, “One of the most interesting aspects of Primordial Qigong is that it can, according to master Feng’s book, strengthen the prenatal primordial qi.” [5] I agree with Cohen on this point completely. It confirms what I have read from other sources that according to a Daoist perspective, our constitutional nature or qi, which we acquire at birth via our parents, ancestors, and even the environment at the time of our birth, can be altered if we “change our relationship to Heaven and Earth.



Primordial Qigong exercises and meditations teach the student to blend the subtle qi of the universe with the denser qi within the body.”[6] This is a major point in discussing the benefits of Primordial Qigong. It explains how an ordinary person can align himself or herself with universal energies, and become more like the universe. This is the path to immortality, isn’t it? Making the body’s qi as subtle as the qi of the universe. I am reminded of another ancient phrase – To live as long as Heaven and Earth – another reference to immortality. Aligning oneself with the universe may contribute to longevity and spiritual cultivation, but many people want to know if the practice will help them recover from cancer or some other serious condition. I personally feel the answer is ‘yes’ and even Cohen in his article provides a short story of people recovering from cancer who took his workshops on Primordial Qigong. I quote, “has the most dramatic effect on cancer.” And he adds, “to correct all sorts of imbalances – from too much yang, autoimmune and inflammatory conditions, or too yin, immune deficiency or depletion.”[7]



Primordial Wuji Qigong: The Philosophy

Primordial Wuji Qigong is based on reversing time and returning to the Source, or Dao. It is based in the tradition of Inner Alchemy of cultivating the Five Elements and transmutation of the Three Treasures: vital essence, jing; vital energy, qi; and spirit, shen.

The form combines a deep qigong meditation while moving the body gently. The circulating of the hands is like gathering in of universal life forces. Moving in reverse with the seasons, starting with spring, there is a turning back of time. Energetically, this reversal of time takes you back towards your prenatal original qi – the primordial qi state of pure health, pure spirit, and undifferentiated unity.

Furthermore, as you perform this form, you are aware that although you may have health problems on one level of your physical self, on a deeper level, the energetic or spirit level, you know you are already healed, whole, and united in harmony with nature or Original Nature. In this heightened state of illumination, you absorb the primordial energies deep into your body and mind.

Your qi meridians and dantian qi fields are filled. Gradually, your focus of healing shifts from the physical to the spiritual.

The goal of Primordial Wuji Qigong is to return to the ultimate nature or source of the universe. This may be described as emptiness, or the view that all things are not separate from other things.

This ultimate state is beyond intellectual comprehension, and can only be experienced directly. The Buddhists and Daoists describe this state as being already within us, and it is a process of clearing the illusions so we can clearly experience our Original Nature. The ancient Daoists called this Original Nature, the Dao. Those who achieve this level of realization are sages or immortals.

The following quote explains this interaction of what is known as the Zuowang View and Method and the Daoist Inner Alchemy tradition. It deals directly with the two traditions of alchemical change processes and the meditative traditions of an original perfected state of being already present within us.



**Quote from The Dragon's Mouth,
Autumn 2002, British Taoist Association**

"Question to Liu Ming: What about the more 'active' practices like alchemical meditation? Isn't that based on 'producing an elixir'?"

Liu Ming: It seems that way but, in fact, nothing is produced. This is an excellent point for the importance of the connectedness of view and method. The common misunderstandings of Daoism in modern times are based on poor translations and inexperienced teachers. The basis (View) of inner alchemy (neidan) is found, not produced. The action (Method) of inner alchemy is natural, not forced, and the result (Fruit) is the revelation, the revealing of things as they actually are. This revealing process is based on relaxing, not producing, on letting go, not acquiring. In that sense, there is no 'producing the elixir', there is only finding it. If our view tells us it has always been there, finding it is not really very 'spiritually exciting' or extraordinary."



The Method: Phase One

Primordial Wuji Qigong begins by standing still and facing East. Next, start opening and closing your hands in front of your Lower Dantian. Think of the Earth Element and the ground beneath your feet. Gather the Earth energy up from the ground and imagine it flowing into your stomach and spleen organs. Cultivate the qualities of nourishing, supporting, and life giving with the yellow earth energy. Visualize the **Yellow Dragon**.

Expand the open and closing movements to rolling the ball movements. Feel you are pulling in Earth energies and circulating them throughout your body.

You now transition to the Wood Element and nourish the organs of the liver and gall bladder, still facing East. Cultivate the **spring** qualities of

new growth, new beginnings, creative energy, and expansion. As you roll the ball, you can turn to your left and feel as if you are gathering the Wood energy from all around you, BUT, especially the East direction. **Visualize the Green Dragon.**



The Method: Phase Two

Begin this next phase by imagining holding a qi ball in your hands, and moving them up and down in a small circle in front of your waist. The hands move up, close to the body, and away from you, as they descend. Imagine one

hand is the yin hand and the other one is the yang hand. They represent all the Five Elements you just gathered, but now simply as the water and fire energies. Think of the earlier quote by Ken Cohen, "fire and water meet," and realize that you are now blending your own fire and water qualities. You are mixing these two vital ingredients in the cauldron of the Lower Dantian. The water energy, which normally flows downward, you are now raising up, and the fire energy, which normally rises, you are sinking downward. By blending them together, you are cultivating the Three Treasures of jing, qi and shen.



Proceeding in this alchemical transformation, you become more and more aware that there are no longer two elements, two things, you are blending; they have become one element, one undifferentiated unity. You finally realize, that is, you wake up to the truth that it was a process of clearing, of forgetting the illusions of separateness. You realize that there was never anything to produce, you just needed to relax, let go, be open as the universe, and accept Primordial Nature as your own Original Nature.

The Method: Phase Three

The hands come to rest again on the Lower Dantian. Your mind is full of clarity and stillness.

Turn towards the north direction, and focus on gathering in the energies of the Water Element. Cultivate the **winter** and Water qualities of flowing, fluidity, dormancy and storing. Harmonize the kidneys and bladder with the dark blue and black energies of the **Black Tortoise.**



As you continue to roll the ball, focus on the west direction and the Metal Element. This is the season of the **fall**, nourishing the lungs and large intestines with the white metal energy. Cultivate the qualities of substance, strength, structure, harvest, hardening and condensing. Visualize the **White Tiger.**

Lastly, turning and rolling to the south, focus on gathering the Fire Element to nourish the heart, the small intestine, the pericardium, and the triple warmer meridian. This is the **summer** season with healing red energy benefiting these organs. Cultivate the qualities of warmth, light, vitality, energy, and luminous and full growth. Visualize the **Red Phoenix.**



Complete the turning and rolling the ball by coming back to the east and standing still, hands on Lower Dantian. Be mindful of all the energies you just gathered in, and allow them to sink deep inside you.

In a spontaneous burst of energy, you move into the wuji palms facing heaven qigong movement, turning towards your right. You are now moving in the field of Hundun, the chaos of the universe. Internally, you are in harmony with the universe, and externally, your chaotic, circling movements are in harmony with Chaos. And, as I said earlier in quoting Cohen, Primordial Qigong is blending “the subtle qi of the universe with the denser qi within the body.” There is no effort, no producing at this point. You are manifesting the true state of Wu Wei, naturally doing using no force.

The Method: The Closing Phase

Slowly return to facing east. Your movements ease back into opening and closing, and then gradually, just resting the hands on the Lower Dantian, again. At this point, there is very little to say about your experience. You have gathered all the energies of the universe. You blended them all into a unity within you. You played in the field of Hundun. You dissolved into the nothingness of Primordial Oneness.



I forget where I found the following description of the dragon and the pearl, but it sums up the whole process of Primordial Qigong.

Primordial Qigong is symbolic of the immortal dragon chasing after the pearl of immortality. Once Found, the dragon ingests the pearl and lives forever in the immortal realms of Primordial nature, flowing endlessly toward the Source.



[1] Hunyuan Qigong: Tracing Life To Its Root, Ken Cohen. The Empty Vessel: A Journal of Daoist Philosophy and Practice, Winter 2008 pgs. 10-16.

[2] Ibid., pgs. 10-16.

[3] Ibid., pg. 15.

[4] Ibid., pg. 15.

[5] Ibid., pg. 15.

[6] Ibid., pg. 16.

[7] Ibid., pg. 14.

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tor of Qigong & Daoist Training Center, and a 22nd generation Longmen (Dragon Gate)

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port of Master Wan Su Jian from Beijing, China.

The Lineage is a non-monastic community of

members devoted to the spreading of Daoism and

the cultivation of the Dao. He offers Qigong Certification Programs for Advanced Trainings, local,

national and international. Shifu Michael's first book was published in May, 2013 and focuses on

the practices of a modern day western Daoist: **A**

Daoist Practice Journal: Come Laugh With Me

which is available on Amazon.com

www.qigongdragon.com



Longevity: Lengthen Your Telomeres with Meditation and Die Like a Squirrel

by Sharon Montes, MD



Chris went to see his doctor and asked him
if he would live to be a hundred.

"Well, there are some easy ways to judge," said the
doctor. "Do you smoke or drink?"

"No," Chris replied. "I've never done either."

"Do you gamble?"

"Nope"

"Drive fast cars?"

Chris shook his head.

The doctor leaned over confidentially. "Fool around
with any women?"

he said, with a little grin.

Chris shook his head sadly. "No Doc-never."

"Well then," cried the doctor.

"What do you want to live to be a hundred for?"

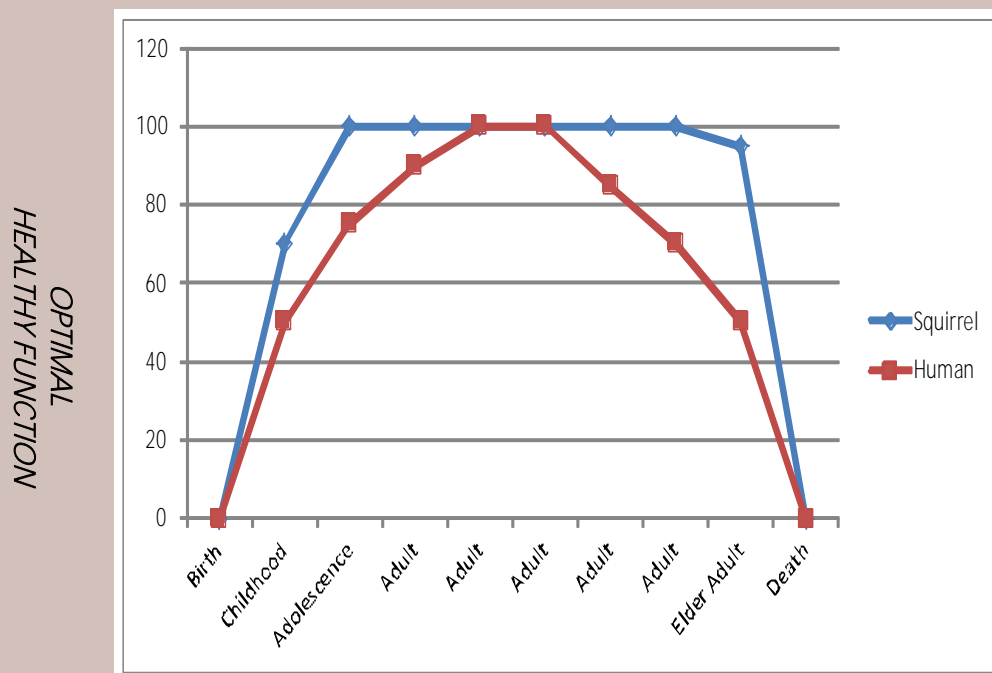


My perspective on how long I want to live and what kind of life I want to lead in my twilight years changes from decade to decade. This column started as a conversation about clowns and dance. Laughter, authentic heart-full connections, and movement are all important components of a high quality long life. Instead, today we will be having a conversation about squirrels and telomeres.

After studying geriatrics and learning about the idea of compressing the morbidity and disability of aging into the last bit of life, I have held the goal of dancing until the day I die. Alternatively, I tell people that I want to die like a squirrel - running and jumping until it is my time to either fall off the tree or

Optimal performance and function over course of lifespan – Comparison of squirrel and human

LIFE SPAN



crawl into a hole up in my tree and pass away. This theory and imagery and is captured by the above graph.

The question is what I need to do at this moment to design a life that allows me live and die efficiently or in a quality-filled way. The answer to that is found in the classic wisdom of ancient healing traditions as well as the practice and science of lifestyle medicine that has accumulated over the last few decades. While there are many brilliant humans teaching about the advantages of healthy lifestyle, I have a particular fondness for Dr. Dean Ornish.

I first learned about his work while doing my family medicine residency at a regional trauma center in Texas. As a resident, I received fantastic training in how to keep the physical body alive but only minimal training in how to effectively teach people how to prevent or reverse chronic disease. I felt a connection with Dr. Ornish because he had attended medical school in Texas. While I was in the trenches of the emergency

room and intensive care unit, he was researching ways to reverse heart disease. His research started with a small group of people with such severe heart disease that they got chest pain or shortness of breath with simple activities of self-care. With disease beyond cure from medication, they were also too sick for surgery. These people agreed to participate in this “lifestyle” research. Wow! These people had coronary arteries that OPENED and heart muscle that healed as a result participating in a four part lifestyle program that included plant-based diet, exercise, stress management, and social support.

While western medicine does a decent job of emphasizing the importance of diet and exercise, Dr. Ornish’s research demonstrated ways to emphasize the additional importance of stress management and social support/connection for physical health. (Meditation is one of his personal stress management practices.) As I explored integrating his protocols with my patients, I was very surprised to learn that social connection and sup-

port was frequently more difficult to integrate into my patient's lives than change in nutrition or increasing movement. (Notice I am not using those words DIET and EXERCISE We are framing this as a conversation about lifestyle, not short-term prescriptions.)

Building on this work, other researchers have found that meditation and nutrition can actually change the structure of our genes. Dr. Ornish and others have shown that the lifestyle decisions that we make actually turn on or turn off genes. One study "Changes in prostate gene expression in men undergoing an intensive nutrition and lifestyle intervention"

(<http://www.pnas.org/content/105/24/8369.full.pdf>) of men with low-risk prostate cancer who followed a program of intensive nutrition and lifestyle changes showed changes in genetic activity after only three months on the program. Genes that promote cancer suppression were up-regulated, while genes lead to cancer promotion were down regulated.

If you imagine our genes to be a spiral of proteins that wind and unwind to give form to various chemicals and structures in our body, the telomere is the "cap" at the ends of the spiral that keeps the spiral in order. (One writer compares it to the plastic coating on the end of a

shoelace that keeps the threads from unraveling.) With time and successive cell divisions, our telomeres become shortened and our chromosomes become somewhat frayed. It has been shown that healthy diets and stress management/meditation can lengthen our telomeres.

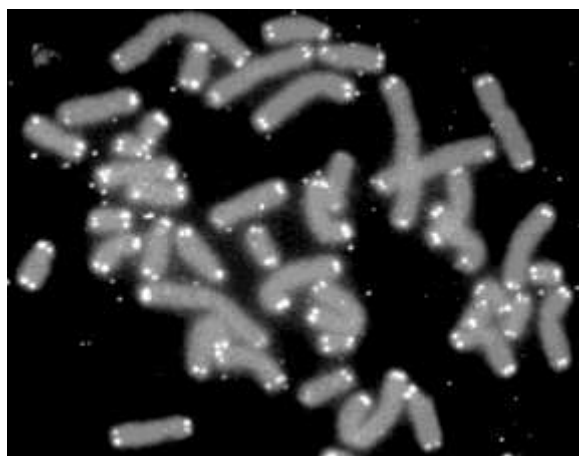
During yoga class yesterday, I imagined and spoke to the telomeres in each cell of my body, imagining them strong and long and growing



with each breath and stretch. This morning during my meditation time, I experienced my telomeres in each chromosome as bright and tight. This evening while eating out, I chose the low-fat vegetable soup.



- What are the genes you are turning on (cancer suppression, repair of blood vessel lining, creation of new neural synapses)?
- What environment are you bathing your telomeres in?
- What is the message you are giving your genes by the choices you make each moment?



Courtesy [NASA](#). This image is in the Public Domain.



“The two A’s.” This photo shows my aunt who is currently 92 and lives independently in her own apartment and my daughter who is now 14 and expresses independence in thought, word and action. They are both part of my social connection that bathes my genes in the chemistry of love and light.

Sharon Montes, M.D. – practiced and taught family medicine in medical schools for 17 years. Former medical director of University of Maryland Center for Integrative Medicine, Dr. Sharon Montes is currently living in Loveland, Colorado, joyfully dancing with 10,000 things and preparing to open a Lifestyle Medicine practice. Her email is thedancingdoc@gmail.com and her blog site is <http://drsharoninfo.blogspot.com/>



“That’s the secret to health and longevity – always do things, always stimulate your mind, always make things, and always find new passions.”

- Jay Parkinson



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Evolutionary Growth and Embodied Learning in Taiji

by Mauro Carboni

Introduction.

During the last decades, the Taiji practice has been the subject of a world-wide diffusion and has been known above all as “moving meditation.” In fact, this path of training is experienced and perceived by most practitioners as *awakening of the Self*. In this regard, the scientific literature has formulated several hypotheses in order to explain and understand in what terms this phenomena may be considered as a simply consequence of some form of shared autosuggestion, or rather, if it is really a verifiable outcome, founded on neurophysiological bases, as well as on particular relational and interactive conditions of mindfulness-based learning (Salomon & Globerson, 1987; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000; La Forge, 2005; Nedeljkovic et. al., 2012).

This ancient martial art leads to discover the body as wholeness, and may help the sense of kinesthetic awareness. Therefore, it is possible to recognize within the practice of Taiji an essential indicator, firstly as the opportunity to develop the perception of one's corporeal identity through a shared experi-

ence, secondly as outcome of reciprocal bodily interactions, visual insights and imitations; in other words, an internalized practice of *mirroring* (Carboni, 2013).



From here begins our reflection on Taiji as environment of evolutionary growth and development of human potential. The idea of change grows and develops precisely in these areas of experience, through an embodied learning, founded on a dimension of reciprocity and

mutuality, and expressed as individual and collective help for the person.

Slowness or expanding the space
in time.



For many beginners the slowness in Taiji is a primary feature. This is just the surface of a further experience more articulated and complex where this study can find its realization, at the deepest point of perception, like a personal journey of Self research.

We refer to a spatial/temporal dilation that implies a paradoxical experience. The gradual increase of the focused intention do not produce, necessarily, a corresponding increase in intensity of the quality of the movement in terms of mass, weight, or gravity. The internal energy of movement is not controlled or limited, it is distributed instead, in such a way as to act in terms of balance and proprioception, so that it inhibits the discrimination of body parts and, in a complementary way, facilitates the awareness of the whole, especially through actions, so that in this way are monitored and coordinated.

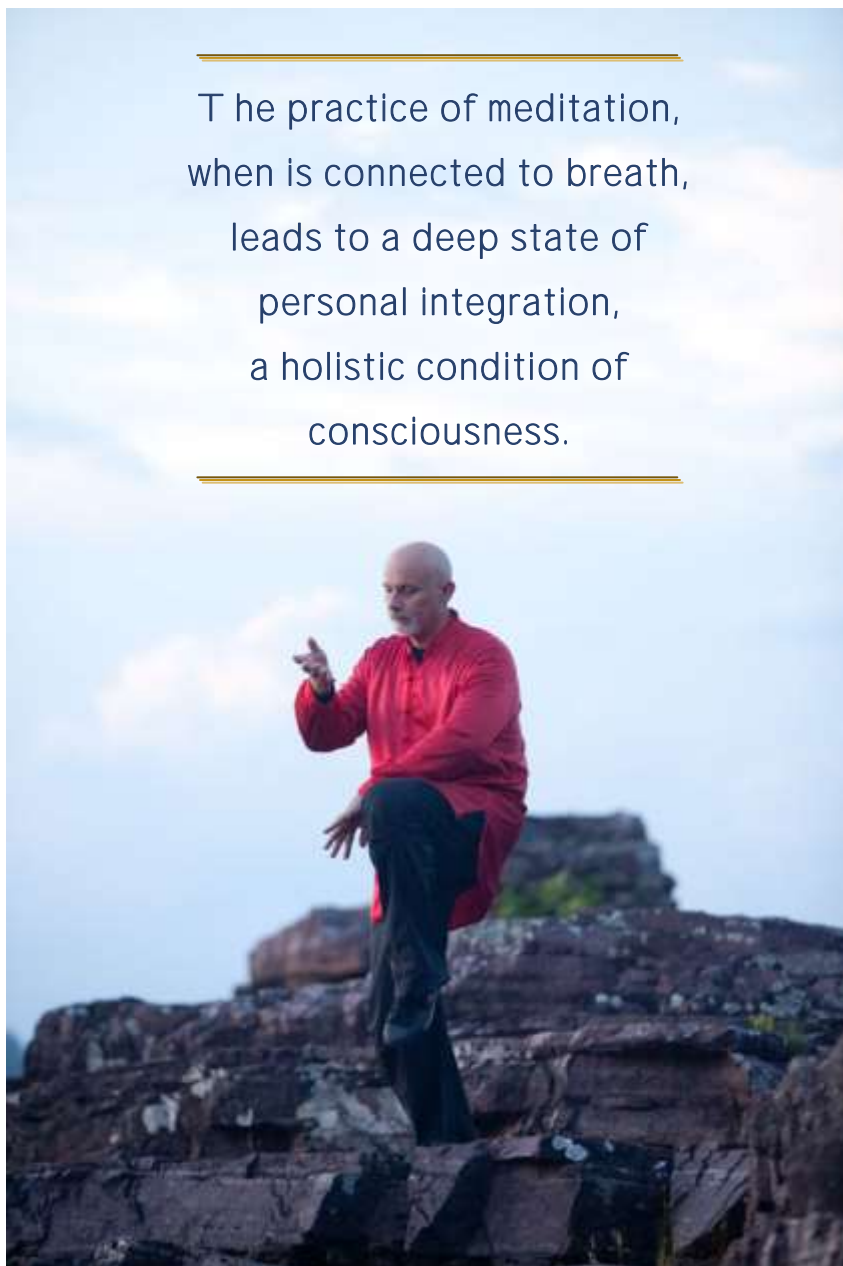
The practice of meditation, when is connected to breath, leads to a deep state of personal integration, a holistic condition of consciousness. The meditation practice through the breath stimulates the nervous system, reaching, in this sense, the quality of an integrated system. This is structured as a flow system, which as such must be Flexible, Adaptive, Coherent, Energized, and Stable (acronym: FACES). It is precisely when a system becomes integrated that it reaches the maximum complexity (Siegel, 2007: 151-152.174).

The tradition of internal martial arts defines the condition of *attunement* between corporeal engagement and vital energy as a modulated relationship between intention, mind/body, and energy (Yi, Qi, Li). This means that the practice of Taiji Quan lives and grows inside of Tao. The latter must be understood as a perceptual and phenomenological state of a

natural and universal membership. Unfortunately, in our daily experience «**five thieves destroy the spontaneous interaction between body and internal energy, by interfering in this way with the attitude of meditation in daily life. They are eyes, ears, nose, mouth and mind. If they are all too active, these thieves steal the inner energy from the body**» (Jou, 2001: 122).

Consequently Taiji offers the chance to develop a conscious perception of one's own corporeal presence, through which the practitioner can feel him or her self in the quality of particular movement in a precise moment in time. At the same

The practice of meditation,
when is connected to breath,
leads to a deep state of
personal integration,
a holistic condition of
consciousness.





time the person may perceive a sense of unity between past and future. It is something that integrates the sensory and emotional individual history in what we define as “*bodily biography*.”

In addition, Taiji as experience, regarding the perceptual field, facilitates the achievement of a state of “proactive attention.” And even more, the internal work of Taiji ceaselessly tends to return toward an undifferentiated and non-substantial state (Wu Ji), a process of non-action in action that search the stillness into the movement and gradually internalizes the “spiral power” (Chan Si Jin). The movements of “silk reeling” (qualities of gesture related to the Art of Neigong) connect the different joints of the body, increasing the internal energy with improvements in flexibility, extension of movement, and circulation of Qi. This implies a progressive study, learning, and development of various kind of physical and mental energy. Through practice these properties come to take a certain form, as postures or gestures, as well as kinesthetic qualities.

The daily practice of this gestural and corporeal engagement returns to our bodily activation in a deeper meaningful sense of identity. We are faced with a dimension of experience where *the doing seems to coincide with being*.

The slow movements performed by a person during the training even allow to achieve more fundamental transformations in relation to the capability to gain a skilful control of movement. Many studies and researches show that a constant practice of Taiji can enhance the control of the perception of gravity in terms of gait and posture. In addition, it produces a clearer sensation of changing the balance as an uninterrupted condition of physical and emotional transformations (Taylor-Piliae et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2010).

Through the slow movement, the practitioner of Taiji tries to find continually a *particular condition of precariousness* where it feels suspended, in every single moment, between substantial and nonsubstantial, full and empty.

But movement is transitory and intangible. If you hold it still, you destroy it; if you don't, it is over and gone. But if you repeat it, slowly, many times, you begin to perceive details and nuances that escaped your notice at the start (Strauch, 1986).

Unified Experience through breath
and imagination.



As a sphere has its own support on only one point, always different and always equal, every movement in Taiji is also permanently connected to its axis in such a way so that it creates a constant state of search of balance *through and during* a continuous flow of changed and adapted movements. It is a dimension of experience that connects pace and gait with gestures and postures. What that seems to be as an apparent limit of a changing of balance, actually becomes the resource and the real strength of the martial art itself.



Not by chance, in the Classics of Taiji, we can find a lot of metaphorical imagery. The function of these suggestions is to help the pupil in the learning, laying the basis for a better understanding of a complex and multidimensional study. This reflects the intrinsic and sophisticated range of insights related to the balance and human movement (Wayne & Kaptchuck, 2008: 96).

In recent years, a large number of experimental protocols and accurate analysis of the movement components, has demonstrated that during the practice of Taiji, meaningful changes occur related to neuromuscular and cognitive functions. We refer to the special conditions of practice, in which the tone supple and the postural flexibility are directly linked with the continuity and smoothness of movements as a whole.

These properties of body action are focused on inner perception, ensuring an increase in

strength and flexibility, and finally and especially, in improvements in the balance adjustment. (Jacobson et al. 1997; Lan et al. 1998; Lan et al. 2000).

This means that the movement, especially in the practice of Taiji, has to be understood as result of a constant adjustment, to which corresponds a wider process that satisfies common physical needs, to move fluidly and efficiently (Strauch, 1986).

Ultimately, the continuity of the movement and the whole sense of body relate to common principles that are synthesized in the exercise of *spiral power* (Chan Si Jin).

This is a fundamental element of Neigong (internal work) and Taiji. Is a set of spiral movements that brings the body to be firmly “anchored” to the ground and, at the same time, makes it possible to climb skyward lightly. The energy and the movement, in this way, can expand itself in every direction, and, paradoxically, focuses and places the core of energy exactly in the center of the Taiji Sphere. Even the social sciences are struggling to understand how this composite “mechanism” can be a help to harmonize an individual’s health and well-being. The peculiar gestures expressed in Taiji represent precise qualities of experience: awareness, fluidity, softness, lack of effort, concentration, regulation of breathing and energy. In addition, Taiji operates as a simultaneity of structures and functions (breathing, movement, attention/concentration, memory, positive emotions, knowledge, and self-awareness), and is able to activate positive per-

sonal resources, as well as adjustment of mechanisms and adaptive capacities (Posadzki et al., 2010).

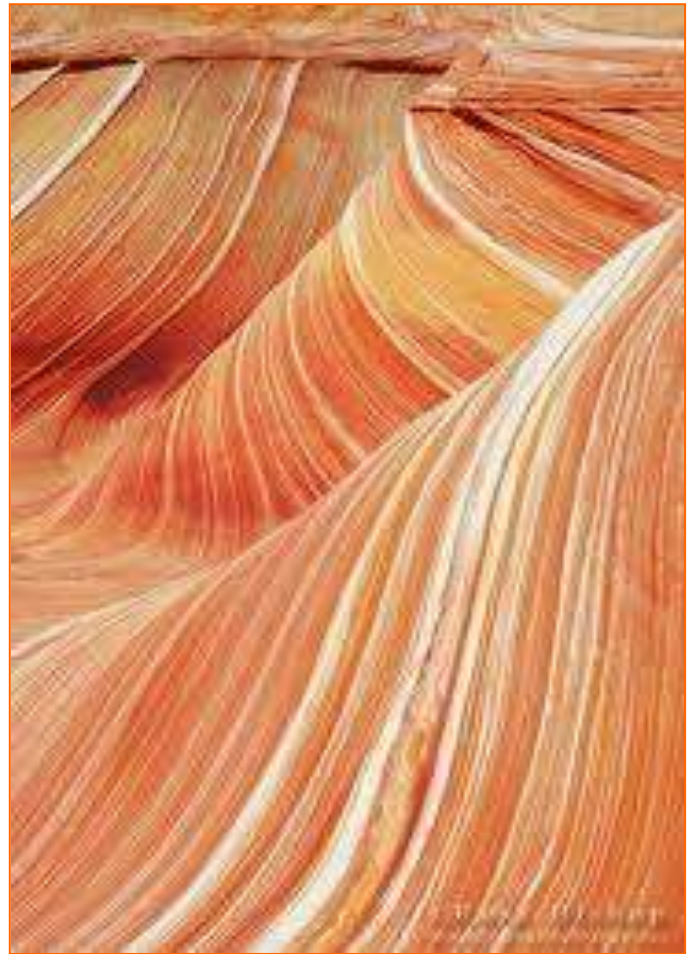
In this perspective of reflection we can recognize the actuality of the phenomenological thought of Merleau-Ponty, who explains that **«The body is our general medium for having a world.»** (Merleau Ponty, 1962: 146). It is an holistic approach to information's process which realizes itself as awareness condition, especially when trying to understand the movement or motility **«as basic intentionality. Consciousness is in the first place, not a matter of “I think that” but of “I can”»** (Merleau Ponty, 1962: 137).

The development of learning experience it is here considered as a knowledge form mediated by associative interactions. In other words, the kinesthetic organization of movements and gestures, according to various forms of manipulation and exploration of objects and materials, is like a property which is part of the growth path of a human person from the evolutionary age already.

Repetition: empowerment and transformation.

The approach of repetition as way to study becomes, in time, progressively more internal. This also means to live the imperceptible change in a seemingly immutable experience. In addition, it implies that the same movement, through experience, acquires different and new meanings, in which the quality of gestures changes.

Finally, it is precisely in the context of “repetition,” as the core of the learning process, where we can recognize those rhythmic qualities



that are the fundamental structures of the majority of movements.

This allows one to control the shape of the movement together with the ability of anticipating and projecting the image of the Self in time and space. “The skill to perceive rhythmic structures is one of the primary memory supports. This because there is a direct relationship between the short term memory (...) and the ability to perceive the temporal forms represented by rhythmic structures» (Le Boulch, 1982). And again, «rhythm and motion have in common physical qualities as time and duration, focus, energy and intensity, direction and cyclicity. All this in a dense network of reciprocity and shared elements which leads everything to coincide in a unified experience» (Le Boulch, 1987). In particular, the perception of personal movement in terms of rhythm and energy, shape and quality of ges-

tures, enables everyone to capture the richness and complexity of knowledge, mediated by the corporeal experience.

The dynamic activation of body is a fundamental element, in an evolutionary sense, included in the overall framework of the action. It is the core and starting point of a continued and renewed processing of experiences and, in a broader sense, of the meaning processes. Time and space, in so far as they represent the real dimensions of our existence, are intimately connected with the physicality of our experiences, and, in addition, are perceived and understood as qualities of human action, as fulfillment of our being.

This ensures that, in every single moment, the perception of space (or time), if is acted and lived through the movement, can become reality and, thus, can be a tool of recognition and interaction.



From this vision of corporeal experience emerges *a social dimension of life as shared culture*, that, as such, can be related to the researches on the mirror neurons and the embodied functions (Gallese, 2001; Gallese & Sinigaglia, 2010).

The Taiji has, therefore, a function of calibration, of communication and relational attunement between the group and the person. We are specifically referring to the mutuality and reciprocity of a mirroring that we perceive as creativity of being. A space-time in which the expectations and the targets to be achieved, are not the consequence of outcomes or judgments, but might be considered by the perspective of interpersonal relationships.



Gesture and Corporeality as Value.

The enhancement of corporeality in terms of bodily and gestural communication is an essential reference in the educative planning. This, in a broader sense, which involves the context of the implementation and achieving of the inclusion processes, is where the search of reci-

procity, as exchange of experiences, nourishes the creativity of knowing.

Ultimately, the formative orientation of Taiji operates through a multidisciplinary educational approach. This means that *any educational device* in the practice of Taiji can be the source of a learning experience in which the internal work facilitates and leads the process of construction of knowledge. In this sense, the teacher proposes experiences that can provide different approaches in solving a task.

Consequently, the study of Form incorporates the learning in a real and meaningful context. The fluidity and the individual expression, during the practice of Taiji, are requested and encouraged as personalization of the learning process. In addition, the study of “pushing hands” creates the ideal conditions for a learning process as social experience, as well as the adoption of imagery which allows the use of many kinds of knowledge representation (Carboni, 2013).

Therefore, among the basic criteria of Taiji as *Evolutionary Embodied Environment* we can recognize the presence of three important methodological assumptions:

- ☯ ***the empowerment of self-awareness as cohesive mediation of corporeality;***
- ☯ ***the enhancement of educational activity as dialogical situations characterized by bodily mediation;***
- ☯ ***the development of communication as motivational improvement.***

In this respect, within the practice of Taiji, three modes of implementation that are typical of the inclusion processes also emerge:

the conception of space appears as a rule inherent in the relational cohesion, facilitating the stabilization of situations of confrontation, of recog-



nition and differentiation in the context of welcoming dynamics;

the timeline dimension is lived within a dimension of continuity, in connection with the various representations of perceived identity by each and over time;

the emerging social interactions in the Taiji setting reveal the complex network of mechanisms and projective identifications, in structuring relationships between personal identity, context, and environment.

Therefore, *the enhancement of personal growth* in the training path of internal martial arts is achieved as heritage of shared experience, combining the emergence of sensory memories and of perceptive experiences. This comes *together* and also *through* the development of the synesthesia as holistic process of knowledge.

Finally, this increases the capacity of viewing the movement in a representative form which leads toward the structuring and the consolidation of the sense of identity and of belonging.

References available on Yang-Sheng.com

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Physical Activity (master-level degree), Professor at International Doctorate in Culture, Disability and Inclusion: Education and Training. Is one of the founding members of the Italian Society of Special Pedagogy (S.I.Pe.S). His research interests include the processes of inclusion and the educative integration through analogic mediators (gesture, music and image) connected with the empathy as essential factor of relationship, notably through a methodological analysis of learning environments. He studied Taiji and Nei Gong with the Master Guo Ming Xu and attended workshops with many other Chinese masters. He is a pupil of Master Flavio Daniele at Nei Dan School of Martial Arts where he earned the title of Taiji Instructor (Yang style). E-mail address : mauro.carboni@uniroma4.it. Affiliation: University of Rome "Foro Italico" – Department of Educational Sciences for the Motor Activities and Sports



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The Sustainable You: Somatics and the Myth of Aging

by John Loupos, H.S.E., M.S.,

**Langdon Street Press, Minneapolis,
2001, pb, 278 pages,
ISBN 978-1-936782-13-0**

As I picked up the book, I certainly was more than curious to know what somatics is. I received this definition from the Forward by Judith Eve Lipton, M.D. Somatics is “expanding the use of the human brain to improve communication with muscles and the rest of the body, resulting in vastly improved levels of function and pain reduction.”

A review

by Michelle Wood,
Editor-In-Chief,
Yang Sheng Magazine

A logical and reasonable second question I asked was, “What is the myth of aging?” Surely, we age or do we? According to Loupos, “... there are certain popularly held misconceptions about aging...” in particular the belief that as we grow older in years, we make assumptions about how we should feel, and those beliefs create our aging experience.

Somatics asks that we take another look at those beliefs and, instead of assuming a physical decline in age, we learn “... how to live in your body in the best and most sustainable way.” With somatics comes “the understanding that much of the neuromuscular decline normally attributed to aging can be mitigated.” Both the decline and the possible reversal are very thoroughly explained throughout the book both through scientific evaluations and reports of case studies, as well as anecdotal experiences.

Just a few of the people who have benefited from somatics education are a woman who suffered a stroke, a woman who has lived with back pain for over 45 years after twisting her back as a

THE SUSTAINABLE YOU

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BEST BODY

JOHN LOUPOS, H.S.E., M.S.

child, a college-age man diagnosed with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome, a woman whose knee surgery did restore functionality, a British footballer with a back and pelvis injury, the star runner on a college women's track team, and the author's own experience with somatics following his knee surgery.

Also recounted are the experiences of an auto accident victim, another auto accident where the victim suffered whiplash, a case of frozen shoulder, recuperative efforts with elderly clients who'd had surgery, a client with scoliosis, and several cases in which children were helped via somatic education.

Included in the book is an invaluable section on the practices themselves, eight practices designed to show you how to sense, experience, and evaluate the "muscular nuances involved, as well as the interplay between your intention, your self-awareness, and your breath."

The exercises address the areas of the back and neck, lower (lumbar) middle (thoracic) and upper (cervical) spine, and include both a physical practice and mindful reflection of the movement.

Mr Loupos is not only certified as an educator in the methods of somatics taught by Dr. Thomas Hanna, he is also a martial artist who has practiced and taught since 1966. His practices include Taijiquan, qigong, several styles of Kungfu, and others. He also has a background in Classical Homeopathy, and conducts seminars on martial arts and on somatics.

Updates on Scientific Research of Longevity

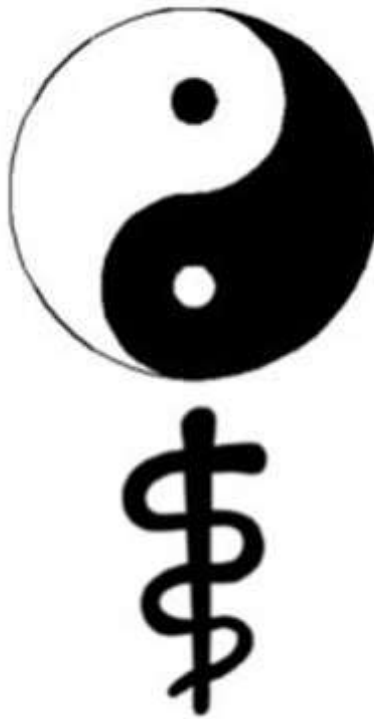
Compiled by Kevin W Chen, Ph.D.

Exploring the role of genetic variability and lifestyle in oxidative stress response for healthy aging and longevity. Int J Mol Sci. 2013; 14(8):16443-72. By Dato S, Crocco P, D'Aquila P, et al. from Dept of Biology, University of Calabria, Italy. s.dato@unical.it

Oxidative stress is both the cause and consequence of impaired functional homeostasis characterizing human aging. The worsening efficiency of stress response with age represents a health risk and leads to the onset and accrual of major age-related diseases. In contrast, centenarians seem to have evolved conservative stress response mechanisms, probably derived from a combination of a diet rich in natural antioxidants, an active lifestyle and a favorable genetic background, particularly rich in genetic variants able to counteract the stress overload at the level of both nuclear and mitochondrial DNA. The integration of these factors could allow centenarians to maintain moderate levels of free radicals that exert beneficial signaling and modulator effects on cellular metabolism. Considering the hot debate on the efficacy of antioxidant supplementation in promoting healthy aging, in this review we gathered the existing information regarding genetic variability and lifestyle factors

which potentially modulate the stress response at old age. Evidence reported here suggests that the integration of lifestyle factors (moderate physical activity and healthy nutrition) and genetic background could shift the balance in favor of the antioxidant cellular machinery by activating appropriate defense mechanisms in response to exceeding external and internal stress levels, and thus possibly achieving the prospect of living a longer life.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3759920/>



Epigenetic genome-wide association methylation in aging and longevity. Epigenomics. 2012 Oct;4 (5):503-9. By Ben-Avraham D, Muzumdar RH, Atzmon G.

The aging phenotype is the result of a complex interaction between genetic, epigenetic and environmental factors. Evidence suggests that epigenetic changes (i.e., a set of reversible, heritable changes in gene function or other cell phenotype that occurs without a change in DNA sequence) may affect the aging process and may be one of the central mechanisms by which aging predisposes to many age-related diseases. The total number of altered methylation sites increases with increasing age,

such that they could serve as marker for chronological age. This article systematically highlights the advances made in the field of epigenomics and their contribution to the understanding of the complex physiology of aging, lifespan and age-associated diseases. (For an introductory video on epigenetic and mind-body connection, please see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-Hh7b3Nxxc>)



Exercise and longevity. Maturitas. 2012 Dec;73(4):312-7. By Greameaux V, Gayda M, Lepers R, et al. from Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation Center (Centre ÉPIC), Montreal Heart Institute, Quebec, Canada.

Aging is a natural and complex physiological process influenced by many factors, some of which are modifiable. As the number of older individuals continues to increase, it is important to develop interventions that can be easily implemented and contribute to "successful aging." In addition to a healthy diet and psychosocial well-being, the benefits of regular exercise on mortality, and the prevention and control of chronic disease affecting both life expectancy and quality of life are well established. We summarize the benefits of regular exercise on longevity, present the current knowledge regarding potential mechanisms, and outline the main recommendations. Exercise can partially reverse the effects of the aging process on physiological functions and pre-

serve functional reserve in the elderly. Numerous studies have shown that maintaining a minimum quantity and quality of exercise decreases the risk of death, prevents the development of certain cancers, lowers the risk of osteoporosis and increases longevity. Training programs should include exercises aimed at improving cardiorespiratory fitness and muscle function, as well as flexibility and balance. Though the benefits of physical activity appear to be directly linked to the notion of training volume and intensity, further research is required in the elderly, in order to develop more precise recommendations, bearing in mind that the main aim is to foster long-term adherence to physical activity in this growing population.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378512212003015>



The role of exercise capacity in the health and longevity of centenarians. Maturitas. 2012; 73(2):115-20. By Venturelli M, Schena F, Richardson RS. From Dept of Neurological, Neuropsychological, Morphological and Movement Sciences, University of Verona, Italy. massimo.venturelli@univr.it

Aging is a continuum of biological processes characterized by progressive adaptations which

can be influenced by both genetic and physiological factors. In terms of human maturation, physically and cognitively functional centenarians certainly represent an impressive example of successful healthy aging. However, even in these unique individuals, with the passage of time, declining lung function and sarcopenia lead to a progressive fall in maximal strength, maximal oxygen uptake, and therefore reduced exercise capacity. The subsequent mobility limitation can initiate a viscous downward spiral of reduced physical function and health. Emerging literature has shed some light on this multi-factorial decline in function associated with aging and the positive role that exercise and physical capacity can play in the elderly. Recognizing the multiple factors that influence aging, the aim of this review is to highlight the recently elucidated limitations to physical function of the extremely old and therefore evaluate the role of exercise capacity in the health and longevity of centenarians.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3618983/>

Exploring age-related brain degeneration in meditation practitioners.

Ann N Y Acad Sci. 2013 Aug 7. by Luders E. from Dept of Neurology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, Ca.

A growing body of research suggests that meditation practices are associated with substantial psychological as well as physiological benefits. In searching for the biological mechanisms underlying the beneficial impact of meditation, studies have revealed practice-induced alterations of neurotransmitters, brain activity, and cognitive abilities, just to name a few. These findings not only imply a close link between meditation and brain structure, but also suggest possible modu-



lating effects of meditation on age-related brain atrophy. Given that normal aging is associated with significant loss of brain tissue, meditation-induced growth and/or preservation might manifest as a seemingly reduced brain age in meditators (i.e., cerebral measures characteristic of younger brains). Surprisingly, there are only three published studies that have addressed the question of whether meditation diminishes age-related brain degeneration. This paper reviews these three studies with respect to the brain attributes studied, the analytical strategies applied, and the findings revealed. The review concludes with an elaborate discussion on the significance of existing studies, implications and directions for future studies, as well as the overall relevance of this field of research.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nyas.12217/abstract;jsessionid=65A62141CD6B1FFE3F79C58C709CE16E.f02t01>

The search for longevity and healthy aging genes: insights from epidemiological studies and samples of long-lived individuals.

J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci. 2012; 67(5):470-9.
By Murabito JM, Yuan R, Lunetta KL. From National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Framingham, MA, USA. murabito@bu.edu



Genetic factors clearly contribute to exceptional longevity and healthy aging in humans, yet the identification of the underlying genes remains a challenge. Longevity is a complex phenotype with modest heritability. Age-related phenotypes with higher heritability may have greater success in gene discovery. Candidate gene and genome-wide association studies (GWAS) for longevity have had only limited success to date. The Cohorts for Heart and Aging Research in Genomic Epidemiology Consortium conducted a meta-analysis of GWAS data for longevity, defined as survival to age 90 years or older, that identified several interesting associations but none achieved genome-wide significance. A recent GWAS of longevity conducted in the Leiden Longevity Study identified the ApoE E4 isoform as deleterious to longevity that was confirmed in an independent GWAS of long-lived individuals of German descent. Notably, no other genetic loci for longevity have been identified in these GWAS. To examine the conserved genetic mechanisms

between the mouse and humans for life span, we mapped the top Cohorts for Heart and Aging Research in Genomic Epidemiology GWAS associations for longevity to the mouse chromosomal map and noted that eight of the ten top human associations were located within a previously reported mouse life-span quantitative trait loci. This work suggests that the mouse and human may share mechanisms leading to aging and that the mouse model may help speed the understanding of how genes identified in humans affect the biology of aging. We expect these ongoing collaborations and the translational work with basic scientists to accelerate the identification of genes that delay aging and promote a healthy life span.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3326242/>



Genetics of healthy aging and longevity.

Hum Genet. 2013 Aug 8. by Brooks-Wilson AR. From Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre, BC Cancer Agency, Vancouver, BC, Canada, abrooks-wilson@bcgsc.ca.

Longevity and healthy aging are among the most complex phenotypes studied to date. The heritability of age at death in adulthood is approximately 25 %. Studies of exceptionally long-lived individuals show that heritability is greatest at the oldest ages. Linkage studies of exceptional-

ly long-lived families now support a longevity locus on chromosome 3; other putative longevity loci differ between studies. Candidate gene studies have identified variants at APOE and FOXO3A associated with longevity; other genes show inconsistent results. Genome-wide association scans (GWAS) of centenarians vs. younger controls reveal only APOE as achieving genome-wide significance (GWS); however, analysis of combinations of SNPs or genes represented among associations that do not reach GWS have identified pathways and signatures that converge upon genes and biological processes related to aging. The impact of these SNPs, which may exert joint effects, may be obscured by gene-environment interactions or inter-ethnic differences. GWAS and whole genome sequencing data both show that the risk alleles defined by GWAS of common complex diseases are, perhaps surprisingly, found in long-lived individuals, who may tolerate them by means of protective genetic factors. Such protective factors may 'buffer' the effects of specific risk alleles. Rare alleles are also likely to contribute to healthy aging and longevity. Epigenetics is quickly emerging as a critical aspect of aging and longevity. Centenarians delay age-related methylation changes, and they can pass this methylation preservation ability on to their offspring. Non-genetic factors, particularly lifestyle, clearly affect the development of age-related diseases and affect health and lifespan in the general population. To fully understand the desirable phenotypes of healthy aging and longevity, it will be necessary to examine whole genome data from large numbers of healthy long-lived individuals to look simultaneously at both common and rare alleles, with impeccable control for population stratification and consideration of non-genetic factors such as environment.



Aging and longevity: why knowing the difference is important to nutrition research. *Nutrients*. 2011 Mar;3(3):274-82. By McDonald RB, Ruhe RC. From Dept of Nutrition, University of California, Davis, CA. rcruhe@ucdavis.edu

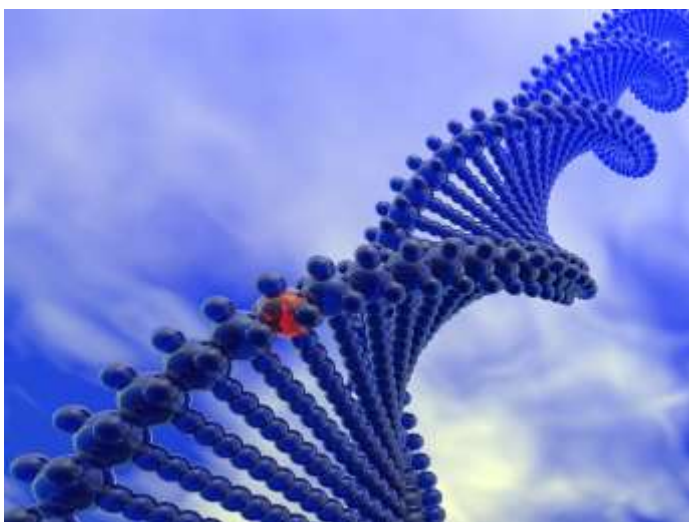
Life expectancies after the age of 70 and the number of individuals living with age-related chronic conditions that affect daily activities continue to increase. Age-specific nutritional recommendations may help to decrease the incidence or severity of age-related debilitating chronic disorders. However, research in this area has seen limited success in identifying nutrition-related mechanisms that underlie the functional loss and chronic conditions that occur as a function of time. We believe that the limited success in establishing age-specific nutrition recommendations for the older population reflects, at least in part, research designs that fail to consider the evolutionary and biological bases of aging and longevity. Longevity has evolved as a by-product of genes selected for their contribution in helping the organism survive to the age of reproduction. As such, the principle of genetic determinism provides an appropriate underlying theory for research designs evaluating nutritional factors involved with life span. Aging is not a product of evolution and reflects stochastic and/or random events that most likely begin during the early, reproductively-active years. The genetic determin-

ism model by which young (normal, control) are compared to old (abnormal, experimental) groups will not be effective in identifying underlying mechanisms and nutritional factors that impact aging. The purpose of this commentary is to briefly discuss the difference between aging and longevity and why knowing the difference is important to nutrition research and to establishing the most precise nutritional recommendations possible for the older population.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3257745/>

Gender and the regulation of longevity: implications for autoimmunity. Autoimmun Rev. 2012; 11(6-7):A393-403. By Pan Z, Chang C. from Nemours/A.I duPont Hospital for children, Division of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, USA.

For humans and other animals, gender has an influence not only on their physical attributes, but also on life span. In humans, females have a longer life span than males. The reasons for this are not entirely clear. The role of gender in the regulation of longevity may be linked to gender specific genetic differences, including the expression of sex hormone patterns and the changes in these patterns during an individual's lifetime. In addition, the effect of sex hormones on other physiologic responses to environmental influ-



ences on cellular stress and oxidative damage may play a role in longevity. Gender can impact many disease states, including autoimmune diseases, and the factors that affect the development of autoimmune diseases and the regulation of longevity may share common mechanistic pathways. Other factors that may play a role include telomere and telomerase related differences, caloric restriction and changes in mitochondrial DNA. Inflammatory and regulatory pathways such as insulin/IGF signaling and Target of Rapamycin (TOR) signaling may also play a role in longevity and aging-related diseases such as Alzheimer's. The role of gender differences in the regulation of these pathways or factors is not entirely clear. The role of X-chromosome inactivation in longevity has also yet to be fully elucidated.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1568997211003053>



Genetic mechanisms of longevity responses to dietary restriction. [Article in Chinese] Yi Chuan. 2011 Nov;33(11):1153-8. Huang J, Yang Z. from Institute of Geriatrics, The 5th Medical College of Peking University, Beijing, China. 55hj55@163.com

Dietary restriction effectively extends lifespan in mammals and decreases the incidence and progression of many age-dependent diseases. To understand the genetic mechanisms that longevity responses to dietary restriction would have far-reaching impacts on future medical treatments to deal with the aging problems. Until recently, we knew nothing about these mechanisms in metazoans. Recent advances of the genetic bases of energy sensing and life control in yeast, invertebrates, and mammals have begun to settle the problem. More evidence indicates that the brain has a principal role in sensing dietary restriction and extending lifespan in metazoans. This paper reviews recently development of mechanisms, regulatory factors, genes, nervous control, and related hypothesizes of DR-longevity mechanisms in metazoans.



Vitamin D, sunlight and longevity. Minerva Endocrinol. 2011 Sep;36(3):257-66. by Pérez-López FR, Fernández-Alonso AM, Mannella P, Chedraui P. from Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Zaragoza, Zaragoza, Spain. faustino.perez@unizar.es

Humans acquire vitamin D through skin photosynthesis and digestive intake. Two hydroxyla-

tions are needed to obtain the bioactive compound, the first produces 25-hydroxyvitamin D [25(OH)D], and the second 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D [1,25(OH)2D]. There is no consensus regarding the appropriate cut-off level to define the normal serum 25(OH)D range. Experimental, epidemiological and clinical studies have related low vitamin D status with longevity. Although some results are controversial, low serum 25(OH)D levels have been linked to all-cause, cardiovascular, cancer and infectious related mortality. Throughout life span a significant proportion of human beings display insufficient (20-30 ng/mL) or deficient (<20 ng/mL) serum 25(OH)D levels. Appropriate lifestyle changes, such as regular short exposures to sunlight (15 min a day), and an adequate diet that includes vitamin D rich components, are not always easily accomplished. Studies relating to vitamin D supplementation have methodological limitations or are based on relatively low doses. Therefore, dosages used for vitamin D supplementation should be higher than those traditionally suggested. In this sense, there is an urgent need for prospective controlled studies using high daily vitamin D doses (2,000 IU or higher) including cardiovascular, cancer, infectious and other endpoints. Relationship between vitamin D and health outcomes is not linear, and there are probably various optimal vitamin D levels influencing different endpoints.

<http://www.minervamedica.it/en/journals/minerva-endocrinologica/article.php?cod=R07Y2011N03A0257>

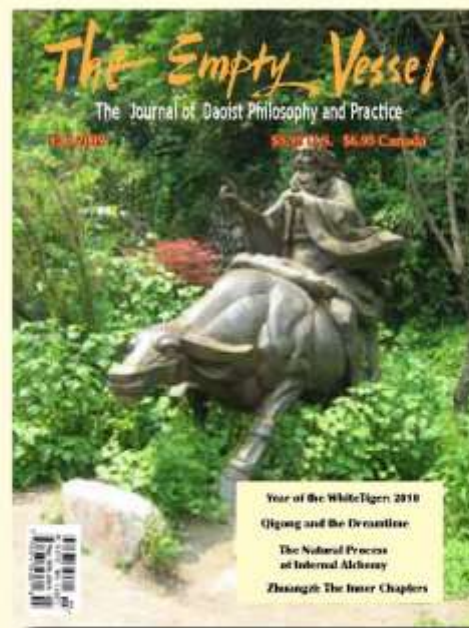
Wisdom and method: extraordinary practices for the realization of longevity and optimal health. Ann N Y Acad Sci. 2009;1172:344-7. by Tsondu GN, Dodson-Lavelle B. from Tibet House, New York, New York, USA.

The focus in our discussion of longevity-enhancement has centered on developing techniques and technologies to control the environment as well as the physical body and its functions. The Tibetan contemplative and medical sciences offer a sophisticated view of the mind-body complex in which efforts to control the external world are insufficient without the development of "inner" technologies to train the mind. From the Tibetan perspective, training the mind is in fact essential to the realization of extraordinary levels of longevity, happiness, and optimal health.



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Laozi 老子 – Legend or History?

A brief biography of the author of the Dao De Jing

By Christina J. Barea

Many people are familiar with the Dao De Jing 道德經, a classic of Daoist studies, which is a compilation of 5,000 characters divided into 81 chapters which includes instructions on living life in balance and harmony. The Dao De Jing (Scripture on Virtue and The Way) is commonly attributed to Laozi (Old Teacher) as author. Although some scholars are now suggesting that the Dao De Jing is actually a collection of works from various sources, all agree that the Dao De Jing is an ancient literary work dated at approximately 500 BCE.

Laozi himself is the subject of several legends contributing to the ambiguity of his life and the actual origin of the Dao De Jing. In summary,

these legends say that Laozi was a mortal man who, following the teachings of the Dao, gave up his worldly connections to live a simple life communing with nature. Before he left and eventually ascended to the 9 levels of Heaven, Laozi recorded the Dao De Jing, leaving a valuable resource which thrives to this day.



Laozi's Symbolic Mortal Life

One version regarding the origin of Laozi's life is mythical. In this account, Lao Tzu, whose name at that time was Li Erh, is born of his mother after 62 years of gestation. He is birthed as a grown man of 80 years with white hair and long ears, both symbols of wisdom. According to Chinese symbolism and mythology, both the numbers used to mark his gestation and birth age, along with the physical traits of his being, would all be a poetic emphasis on the wisdom he embodies.

8 is a magical number considered good luck by Daoists.

Laozi's Probable Chronology

Another version is that at the age of 80, Laozi retired from years of service in the libraries of Zhou city to a remote region in Western China, far away from the pressures and obligations of village life. Meeting the Guard Yin Xi upon exiting the city, he was asked to impart some final wisdom. Laozi gifted the guard with a 5,000 character scroll containing the Dao De Jing and then disappeared into the mountains never to be seen again.

Laozi- Half Human, Half Immortal

Daoist priests share one final version where nestled in the remote mountains of Western China, Laozi's faithful meditations and spiritual practice were rewarded with the transmission of the Dao De Jing by the immortal version of himself. Having recorded this precious work, Laozi ascended the highest level of Heaven on a black ox. This version emphasizes the Daoist belief that a person can have an immortal soul (shen xian), a version of the self that persists through many lifetimes; while at the same time possessing a spirit (yuan shen), translatable to that part of the self,

attributed to the combination of both the time/place of birth and the energies of mother and father.

In all versions, Laozi now resides in the highest levels of the Daoist Pantheon. He is one of the "San Qing" - Three Pure Ones and continues to exert his influence on all beings to this day. The many altars and places of worship of "Tai Shang Lao Jun" (his respected immortal name) around China visually demonstrate how important the Dao De Jing is even after 2500 years. And, the legends regarding his teachings continue to evolve.



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balance through Medical Qigong Therapy, Qigong & Tai Chi instruction, and TCM related talks, workshops and courses. She is a member of the National Qigong Association, and currently serves on the Board of Directors. Christina has just completed 2 books, the first, a translation of Daoist Scripture, and the second on qigong exercises. For more information about her please visit: <http://www.therisinglotus.com/>



Part 2. The Collaterals

by Marty Eisen Ph.D.

[continued from September/October 2013 issue]

(f) The Heart Collateral Meridian

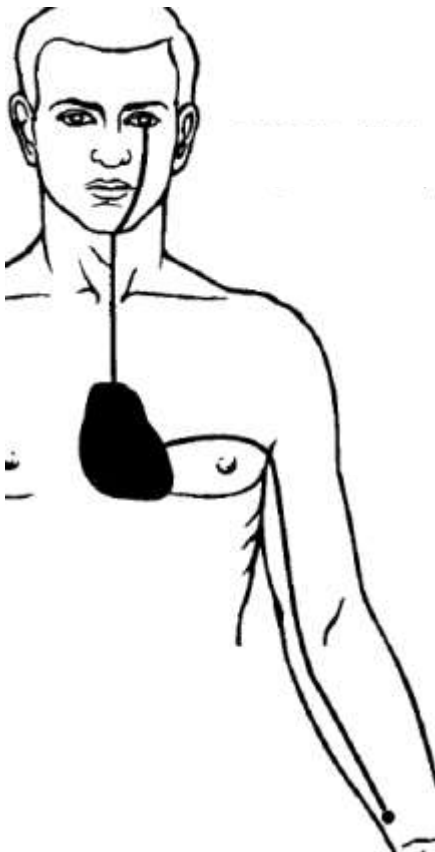


Figure 6 The Heart Collateral Meridian

Bifurcating from H 5 (Located with the palm facing upwards, on the radial side of the tendon of m. flexor carpi ulnaris, 1 cun above the transverse crease of the wrist.), it connects with the Small Intestine Meridian. About 1.5 cun above the transverse wrist crease, a branch follows the

Heart Meridian and enters the Heart. Then it runs to the root of the tongue and connects with the eye (See Fig. 6).

(g) The Small Intestine Collateral Meridian

Originating from SI 7 (1, 2), it connects with the Heart Meridian. Another branch ascends, crosses the elbow and connects with Jian Yu (Shoulder Bone, LI 15: antero-inferior to the acromion, on the upper portion of m. deltoideus. When the arm is in full abduction, the point is in the depression appearing at the anterior border of the acromioclavicular joint.) See Fig. 7.



Figure 7 The Small Intestine Collateral Meridian

(h) The Bladder Collateral Meridian



Figure 8 The Bladder Collateral Meridian

Arises from B 58 (1, 2) and connects with the Kidney Meridian (See Fig. 8).

(i) The Kidney Collateral Meridian

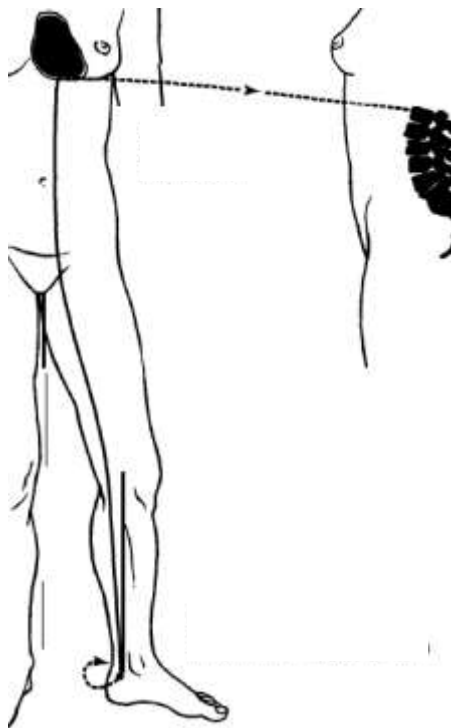


Figure 9 The Kidney Collateral Meridian

It branches from K 4 (Posterior and inferior to the medial malleolus, in the depression anterior to the medial side of the attachment of Achilles' tendon.), crosses the heel and joins the Bladder Meridian. Another branch ascends, following the Kidney Meridian to a point below the Pericardium and then spreads into the lumbar vertebrae. See Fig. 9.

(j) The Pericardium Collateral Meridian

It begins at Neiguan P-6 (2 cun above the transverse crease of the wrist, between the tendons of m. palmaris longus and m. flexor radialis.), on the anterior of the forearm, ascends along with the Pericardium main Meridian to the Pericardium and then connects with the Heart, as shown in Fig. 10.



Figure 10 The Pericardium Collateral Meridian

(k) The San Jiao Collateral Meridian

It arises from SJ 5 (1, 2), ascends the posterior aspect of the arm and runs over the shoulder the shoulder. Then, it disperses into the chest meeting the Pericardium Meridian, as shown in Fig. 11.



Figure 11 The San Jiao Collateral Meridian

(l) The Gallbladder Collateral Meridian

Begins at G 37, joins the Liver Meridian and disperses over the dorsum of the foot as shown in Fig. 12.

Figure 12 The Gallbladder Collateral Meridian



(m) The Ren Collateral Meridian

Separating from Ren 15 (On the midline of the abdomen, 7 cun above the umbilicus and 1 cun below the sternocostal angle.), it spreads over the lower abdomen, as shown in Fig. 13.

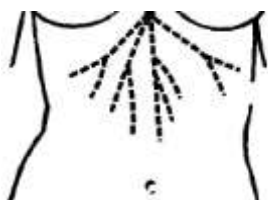


Figure 13 The Ren Collateral Meridian

(n) The Du Collateral Meridian

Originating from Du 19 (On the midline, midway between the tip of the coccyx and the anus.), it ascends on both sides of the spine to the nape of the neck and spreads over the top of the head. At the scapular region it connects with the Bladder Meridian and spreads through the spine (See Fig. 14.).



Figure 14 The Du Collateral Meridian

5. Shi (Excess or Full) and Xu (Deficient or Empty) and Symptoms in Collaterals

Shi and Xu are concepts used in diagnosis in Chinese medicine. They are distinguished by the presence or absence of a Pathogenic Factor (Interior or Exterior) and the strength of the Antipathogenic Qi, that is all of the body's energetic resistance (3,7). The distinction between Full and Empty is made on the basis of observations of signs and symptoms of clinical manifestations.

A Full condition is characterized by the presence of a Pathogenic Factor and the fact that the Antipathogenic Qi is strong. The resulting battle results in pathological changes which produce various symptoms and signs.

An Empty condition is characterized by weakness of the Antipathogenic Qi and the absence of a Pathogenic Factor. This includes deficiency of Yin, Yang, Qi, Blood, Essence, Body Fluid, and hypo-function of the Zang Fu Organs.

There are also mixed conditions of Full with Empty, Empty with Full and Empty and Full (7).

The symptoms of Full and Empty conditions of the Collateral Channels appear in [Table 3](#) on the facing page.

Table 3 Symptoms of Full and Empty Conditions of the Collateral Channels

Collateral	Full	Empty
Lung	Hot palms or wrists.	Frequent yawning, enuresis; shortness of breath
Heart	Chest oppression (sticky, heavy feeling)	Speech loss
Pericardium	Heart pain	Rigidity & pain in the neck & head
Small Intestine	Fever, headaches and blurred vision	Atrophy of arm & elbow muscles; loose joints
Large Intestine	Toothache and deafness	Teeth oversensitive to cold; fullness & congestion in chest
Triple Heater	Muscle spasms & stiffness in elbow	Flaccid muscles in arm & elbow, difficulty in bending arm; body weakness and pain
Bladder	Nasal congestion, headache; back pain	Runny nose with clear fluid; nosebleeds
Spleen	Sharp intestinal pain, vomiting; diarrhea	Abdominal swelling
Kidney	Enuresis, depression; unstable emotions	Lower back pain
Liver	Swollen testicles	Pubic itching
Stomach	Epilepsy and insanity	Pharyngitis, sudden aphasia; flaccid or atrophied legs or feet muscles
Gallbladder	Fainting	Weak and flaccid feet muscles
Du (Governing)	Stiffness along the spine	Dizziness or heaviness in the head
Ren	Pain on abdominal skin	Itching of abdominal skin
Spleen Creat Luo	General pains and aches over entire	Weakness in muscles of limbs and joints

6. Treating Disorders of the Yin/Yang Related Channel or Zang Fu with Luo points

The Guide of the Classic of Acupuncture contains the statement that if the Luo points are needled, then symptoms of the Yin/Yang related Channels can be treated. Acupuncturists use these points to treat disorders of the corresponding Channels and Zang Fu and also their related Yin/Yang Zang Fu and Channels. The following examples illustrate their use.

- (a) **L 7** treats headache, neck pain, Wind affecting the head. The effectiveness of this point is explained by the pathway the Lung Luo Channel which runs into its paired Channel the Large Intestine.
- (b) **LI 6** treats acute edema, when External Wind disrupts the Lung's regulation of the Water Passages.
- (c) **S 40** assists in the transformation of Phlegm, accumulating when the Spleen does not perform function of transformation and transportation properly.

- (d) **Sp 4** harmonizes the function of the Spleen and Intestines (which are governed by the Spleen) and so treat upper (Stomach) and lower (Spleen) abdominal Pain.
- (e) **H 5** can treat enuresis due to the accumulation of Heat in the Bladder. Heat can transform from the heart to the Small Intestine and then to the Bladder.
- (f) **SI 7** can regulate and calm the Spirit of the Heart and so can treat many psycho-emotional problems.
- (g) **B 58** can treat Kidney Deficiency and Cold in the lower body (lumbar pain, weak and cold legs etc.) and also Yang Uprising in the Bladder Meridian (dizziness, heat, headache, etc.).
- (h) **K 4** can be used for enuresis (Excess) and lumbar pain (Deficiency).
- (i) **P 6** is well-known for treating nausea and vomiting. Both the Pericardium and its Yin/Yang related Triple Heater Meridian descend through the three Heaters which reinforces the ability of P6 to treat Middle Heater problems.
- (j) **SJ 5** is only used for tightness and oppression of the chest, the sole indications of the paired Triple Heater and Pericardium Meridians. However, in clinical practice SJ 5 and P6 are often joined by through-needling for chest pain which radiates to the back.
- (k) **G 37** is used frequently in the treatment of eye disorders from a disharmony of the Liver.
- (l) **Liv 5** is used for swollen testicles, persistent erection (Excess) and sudden itching of the genitals (Deficiency).

Additional treatment properties of the Luo points can be rationalized by knowing the regions reached by their Luo Channels, as discussed in the following examples.

- (a) **L 7** is used to treat thumb disorders because its Luo Channel is distributed over the thenar eminence.
- (b) **LI 6** is frequently used to treat ear problems (e.g. tinnitus and deafness) since its Luo channel ascends to the ears.
- (c) **S 40** is indicated for a painful or swollen throat (with or without sudden voice loss) and a plum-pit throat, since its Luo Channel terminates in the throat.
- (d) **Sp 4** can treat disharmonies and pain in the intestines and Stomach since its Connecting Channel enters the abdomen and connects with these Organs.
- (e) **H 5** treats speech impairment, especially after a stroke, and a stiff tongue since its Connecting Channel reaches the tongue.
- (f) **K 4** is used in the treatment of agitation of the Heart with Fullness and vomiting, restlessness and palpitations, since its Connecting Channel terminates just below the Pericardium.
- (g) **Liv 5** is used to treat disorders in the region of the genitals, since its Luo Channel ascends there.

7. Yuan/Luo or Guest/Host Combinations in Clinical Practice

By combining a point on a Yang channel with another on its paired Yin channel, the cumulative effect is greater than needling either point separately. Frequently used combinations of this type are between the Yuan (Source) point on the channel primarily affected by a disease, and the Luo

(Connecting) point on the paired channel. In this combination, the Source point is called the Host and the Connecting point the Guest.

The idea behind this form of combination is to divert excess energy from the diseased organ to its paired Yin/Yang related Channel. Stimulating the Host point drains an overactive Organ, since Source points are in close relation to their Organ. The stimulation of the Luo point of its paired Meridian, ensures that the excess Qi would leave through the closest possible point, since Luo points form a passage between two Yin/Yang paired meridians. Some examples are:

- (a) **LI 4** (Source) and **L 7** (Luo) - sore throat, nasal congestion, colds and respiratory flu. This combination is used for the invasion of Pathogenic Wind. LI 4 expels the Pathogen and L 7 assists in dispelling the Patho-

gen and restoring the Disseminating and Descending functions of the Lungs.

- (b) **L 9** (Source) and **LI 6** (Luo) - acute upper body edema, absence of sweating and difficult urination. The root of this pattern is Lung Deficiency and so Pathogenic Wind can disrupt the function of the Lungs, especially in the upper body. LI 6 Opens and Regulates the Water Passages and is used when Pathogenic Wind disrupts the Lungs' function.
- (c) **Sp 3** (Source) and **S 40** (Luo) - phlegm. Spleen Deficiency is the root cause of the formation of excessive phlegm. S 40 resolves phlegm and Sp 3 Tonifies the Spleen.
- (d) **H 7** (Source) and **SI 7** - psycho-emotional issues. H 7 calms and Regulates the Spirit and is aided by the strong action of SI 7 on psycho-emotional disorders.

Table 4 Luo Points for Psycho-Emotional Disorders

Luo Point	Indications
L 7	Tendency for laughing, poor memory
S 40	Great happiness, mad laughter, desire to climb to high places & sing, run around nude, manic depression, seeing ghosts
Sp 4	Raving, restlessness, insomnia, manic depression, excessive sighing; Gallbladder Deficiency
H 5	Depressive disorder, sadness and fright, sadness with frequent groaning & yawning, frequent agitation with burning sensation of the Heart
SI 7	Sadness & anxiety, manic depression, fear & fright, restless Zang disorder
K 4	Mental retardation, dementia, restlessness, palpitations, somnolence, tendency to anger, fright, fear & unhappiness, desire to close the door & stay home
P 6	The 5 types of epilepsy, loss of memory after Wind stroke, insomnia, mania, sadness, apprehension, fear & fright
Liv 5	Depression, fear & fright, worried oppression, palpitations from fright, plum-pit sensation in throat

- (e) **KD 3** (Source) and **UB 58** (Luo) - lower back problems, weakness in the lower limbs. These problems are the result of Excessive Yang rushing upwards because it is not rooted because of deficient Kidney Yin. KD 3 benefits Kidney Yin and UB 58 decreases Excessive Yang.
- (f) **LV 3** (source) w/ **GB 37** (Luo) - eye problems. These are caused by LV disharmonies, such as, Deficient Blood or Yin or Liver Fire. Recall that the Liver opens into the eyes. LV 3 is used for these Liver Organ disharmonies and GB 37 benefits the eyes.

The following results combining Yuan and Luo points are also used in acupuncture:

If a Meridian is Deficient (Empty), Tonify its Source Point and Disperse the Luo Point on its Yin/Yang paired Meridian to normalize it. If a Meridian is Excess (Full), Disperse its Source Point and Tonify the Luo Point on its Yin/Yang paired Meridian to normalize it.

8. Use of Luo Points for Psycho-Emotional Disorders

The Luo points in Table 4 on the previous page are used frequently in the treatment of such problems.

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Winter: A Time to Reflect

By Ellasara Kling

It seems that our already busy lives become even more filled with activities during the Winter months. Ironically, Winter is the Universal time for going deeply inward and conserving our resources. Nature shows us her pattern. Most of the trees/shrubs have shed their adornments and stand open awaiting a new surge of energy from within so they can sprout again in Spring. The Autumn harvest has given us its glorious bounty and now the most common foods of winter are root vegetables, winter squashes and humble cabbages. Thus, the Universe teaches us simplicity, elegance, frugality, equanimity, restraint.

This time of year is ruled by the Kidney system, a storehouse of energy to be used in times of transformation and/or stress. In nurturing our lives we can use this season to nourish our Kidney

qi and thereby increase our vitality. The innate energy stored in our Kidneys is our *jing*, which can be understood as the energy of our constitution. According to TCM principles, our lives last as long as our *jing* lasts. Each season teaches us how to take care of ourselves and how to be healthy throughout our life.

True health is found in internal balance and harmony. We find it in the ongoing interplay of “forces” within ourselves as

we walk through our lives. It is clearly up to us to nourish ourselves and strive for this balance/harmony. The Universal shows us clearly what is required. Darkness comes early: go to sleep sooner – get more rest. Cold and damp are prevalent: dress warmly, cover the head and feet, eat warming foods, conserve energy physically, mentally and emotionally. Allow time every day

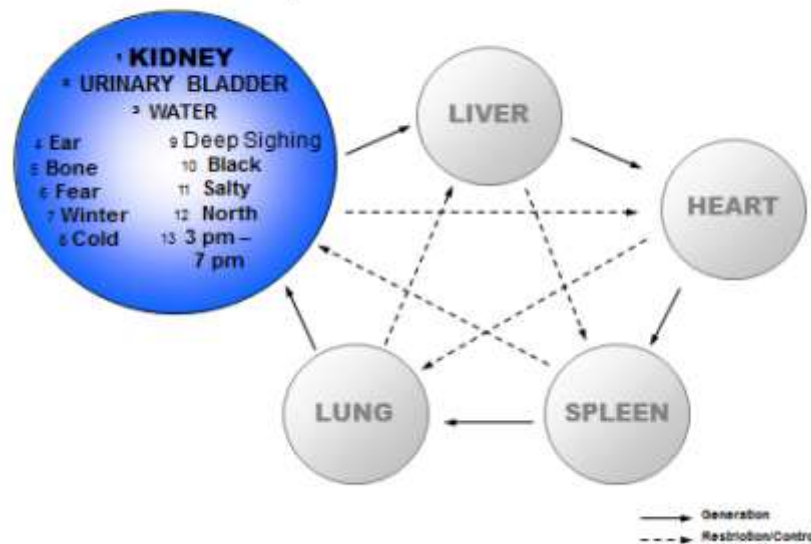
“The wise nourish life
by flowing with the
four seasons”
- *Nei Jing*



Seasonal Harmony 季节之和谐

for reflection and/or relaxation without an activity. Use this quietude to learn more about yourself as well as family and friends. Be like water, the element of the season, let yourself be soft and flow effortlessly. Release tension: receive a massage, tuina, acupuncture or other energy healing treatment. It seems so simple and uncomplicated and it is, when we get out of our own way. **My longevity recipe for everyone is: follow the Universal, follow the seasons, follow your heart/higher intuition, nurture yourself as if you were the most precious person because you are.**

Five Element Theory



Self-massage for Winter:

These two simple techniques are well-known and excellent for supporting your health especially during the cold days of Winter.

Teeth Tapping: **Lightly** tap your teeth together 50 times in the morning (and any other time as well). The teeth are connected to the Kidney and by doing this you are stimulating your Kidney qi function. If you do this with a smiling mouth at the same time, you will find it to bring a surprise.

Kidney Rub: Preferably while sitting, place your hands on your back at the bottom of your rib cage, letting them fall naturally covering your back to your natural waist. (Your thumb will be pointing towards the front of your body and your other fingers will be pointing towards your spine.) This should cover the area where your Kidneys are located. Firmly, but gently with vigor, rub the area up and down at least 100 times. Feel the warmth. Smile.

Some Foods That Are Particularly Good For The Winter Season:

Beets, Black Beans, Black Mushrooms, Blackberry, Black lentils, Black sesame seeds and oil, Black soybeans/tofu, Bone marrow, Cabbages, Cardamom, Celery, Chard, Chestnuts, Cinnamon, 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. *Generally, warming foods and spices and hearty soups and stews are good for Winter.*

Recipes



Urad Dal (split black lentils)

(Easily Available in Asian and Indian Markets)

Ingredients

- 1 cup Urad Dal
- 2 TB oil
- ½ tsp Salt and 1 tsp fresh ground black pepper
- 1 large onion - diced
- 4 large cloves garlic - diced
- 2 TB shredded fresh ginger
- 2 TB crushed red pepper
- 1-1/2 C water
- 2 TB Turmeric
- 1 large Tomato – cut into chunks
- ¼ cup cilantro

Directions

Carefully hand rinse the Urad Dal until the water runs clear. Strain out excess water. Then place in a bowl, cover with fresh clean cold water, cover and let sit overnight. When rinsing, be certain to check for small stones, stems, etc.

Rinse the Dal again, strain and set aside in a bowl.

Heat a wok or skillet and add the oil, salt and

black pepper. Heat until the oil shimmers.

Add Onion, garlic and ginger. Saute until the onion begins to become translucent.

Add the red pepper and Dal and stir everything lightly together.

Add the water. Stir and cover and simmer on low or medium heat for about 30 minutes until the liquid is absorbed and the Dal is tender. (The time and liquid may vary depending on your pan and heat, so please check so as to neither burn the lentils nor make them mushy)

Add the Turmeric, tomato, and cilantro and stir together.

Cover. Remove from heat and let sit for a few minutes. Serve with rice.

This dish is particularly strengthening for the Kidney, Lung, and Stomach functions. Turmeric is especially good for breast health.



Roasted Garlic Miso Cauliflower with Caramelized Black Plums

Ingredients

- 4-6 cups raw Cauliflower cut into florets
- ¼- ½ cup Oil
- 1 large head Garlic
- 1-1/2" Ginger – finely minced
- 3 TB light Miso
- 3 TB dry sherry (optional)
- 1 cup water/plum juice/pear juice
- 4 black plums cut into eighths
- 3 TB honey
- 1 TB balsamic or black vinegar

Directions

Roasting the Garlic (can be done the day before)

Remove most of the outer papery layers covering the garlic head, but try not to break the head into individual cloves

Cut off the top of the garlic head so that the individual cloves can be seen

Brush a little oil on the exposed cloves

Wrap the garlic head in foil and bake at 400 for about 30 minutes. Set aside and let it cool.

Preparing the Cauliflower

Cut the cauliflower following the stem of each floret so that there is an individual "flower head" and stem.

Toss Lightly in oil

Place on a baking sheet and roast in the oven for about ½ hour or until the cauliflower is just beginning to brown.

Preparing the Miso Sauce

Unwrap your head of garlic and cut out each of the individual roasted cloves

Mash about 2 TB of garlic into 3 TB of miso so that it is well mixed.

In a small bowl mix together the sherry, water, ginger and the miso/garlic mixture.

Heat in a small pan for about 15-20 minutes until the sauce is slightly thickened.

Put the roasted cauliflower in a large skillet or wok and pour over the Garlic/Miso sauce.

Toss lightly and heat through.

Caramelized Plums

Cut the plums into eighths

Heat a pan and add 1 TB of oil, the honey, and vinegar. Stir and add the plums

Coat them lightly in the mixture and let them heat through until they begin to caramelize.

Remove and serve with the cauliflower. (Can be made while the garlic\miso sauce is reducing)

This dish uses seasonal foods with a variety of flavors and becomes representative of all the elements.



Basic Bone Marrow Soup

Ingredients

1 lb marrow bones

2 quarts water

2" sliced ginger

6 scallion whites

1 bay leaf

Part 2

1 diced carrot

1 diced stalk celery

1 quartered plum tomato

Salt and pepper to taste

¼ cup cilantro/parsley

Directions

Put the marrow bones, bay leaf, ginger, and scallions in the water and bring to a boil, reduce heat and **simmer for at least 3 hours - add water as needed.**

Let cool--Poke marrow out of bones and discard everything except water. **You should now have**

about 3 cups of broth.

Add veggies, cover and cook till veggies are done. Add salt and pepper to taste ... serve and sprinkle with cilantro

To this basic recipe you can add other root vegetables such as turnip, or green vegetables such as kale. Adjust this to your own taste.

Bone marrow soup is considered to be a strengthening soup that is good for prevention and also for recuperation if someone has been ill. It is also very warming to the bones. Most cultures with cold winters have some version of bone marrow soup for the winter time.



Black Rice with Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients

Black rice

Water

A variety of vegetables cut for roasting

Oil

Black sesame seeds

Optional: Seaweed

Optional: Toasted Walnuts or Pine Nuts

Directions

Rinse the rice and cook as directed.

Choose a variety of vegetables and cut them into large pieces – Try to choose colorful vegetables such as orange squash, white sweet potato, carrots, celery, kale leaves, and so on.

Toss lightly with oil and roast in the oven until tender. If you have added kale or other leafy green, they will roast faster than root vegetables or squashes so it is easiest to roast them in a separate pan that can be removed and set aside.

While they are roasting, toast the sesame seeds in a pan on the stove – they toast VERY quickly.

Serve your vegetables over the black rice sprinkled with the black sesame seeds. The black rice forms a background that will make your vegetables “pop” with color.

Some people use toasted seaweed such as Nori on this dish instead of sesame seeds.

Basic Ginger Tea

1” fresh ginger – sliced, chopped

4-5 scallions – whites only

Rind of one dried tangerine

4 cups of water

Rock/ Brown sugar/ honey to taste



Add all the ingredients together and bring to a boil. Simmer for no more than 5 minutes as it will get bitter. Remove the foods. Drink hot.

This common recipe for Ginger Tea is especially warming. Among other things, ginger assists circulation. This tea is also known for “clearing” head colds and sinus congestion. Many people who drink this tea daily claim it keeps their respiratory system clear all winter long.

Seasonal Harmony 季节之和谐



ENERGY SNACK: 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 or someone whose appetite is weak.

Calling All Authors

We welcome your submissions for the next issue of Yang-Sheng!

Articles related to health & wellness, taichi, qigong, natural living, Food as medicine, spirituality, and other mind/body practices are welcomed.

Please send your article for review to editor@yang-sheng.com

Wishing you good health!

Remember to smile at all things.

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



lasara has been studying *Wu Ming Qigong* with Master and Dr. Nan Lu for many years and has participated in special classes through TCM World Foundation and the Tao of Healing

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- ☑ Has Taiji, qigong or meditation made a difference in your health?
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- ☑ Are you considering making a tax-deductible contribution by year-end?
- ☑ Would you like more people to benefit from meditation and qigong therapy?

We Need Your Support for Scientific Study of Meditative Therapies and Qigong Healing

Kevin W Chen, *Ph.D. MPH*

As the publisher of Yang-Sheng magazine, I work full-time as a research scientist at University of Maryland Center for Integrative Medicine (CIM). Our center is an internationally recognized leader in the field of integrative medicine, and a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Center of Excellence for over 16 years. We have teamed up with qigong master Faxiang Hou and other well-known practitioners and plan to conduct a series of scientific studies of meditation and qigong therapy for health problems such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, asthma, anxiety disorders and chronic pain, in randomized controlled trials. You can get more information about CIM from our web site at <http://www.compmed.umm.edu>

However, with recent budget cut at NIH and other federal agencies our scientific research has come to a pause due to lack of resources. Although qigong therapy from traditional Chinese medicine is gaining increased popularity in the U.S., there has been a lack of scientific documentation of its effectiveness, and a lack of sufficient support of the scientific study of qigong healing, which has seriously demoted its credibility. We decide to call for support from our own community of mind-body medicine. The Center for Integrative Medicine at University of Maryland has made a commitment to scientific examination of meditation and qigong healing, and we will employ the most rigorous scientific methodologies of Western medicine to this Eastern tradition, through the conduct of randomized controlled clinical trials to determine its efficacy. Following is a list of some studies under planning:

- ◆ External Qigong therapy for treating fibromyalgia
- ◆ Treating comorbid anxiety disorders among patients of addiction with integrative meditation
- ◆ Stress Management with Wellness and Resilience Mastery through Mindfulness

- ◆ Qigong therapy for asthma and food allergy among children
- ◆ Qigong therapy for treatment of type-II diabetes

As a practitioner of mind-body medicine or someone whose own life has been touched by the benefits of meditation and qigong, we are turning to you for assistance and asking if you would consider a financial contribution to this endeavor. Without a thorough and well-conducted pilot study of meditative therapies and qigong healing, further definitive and expanded research may not be possible. If it does proceed, however, the benefits of meditation and qigong therapy eventually could be brought to patients all over the country. Furthermore, if rigorous scientific studies prove the health effects of meditation and qigong healing, it may be possible for health insurance to cover these mind-body therapies in the future. The entire process begins with the one small study, and your generous support and donation of any amount could make this first significant step possible. Can we count on your support?

Your donation will be tax deductible and we will keep you informed on the results of this study as well as the future qigong studies.

Please make your check payable to: "University of Maryland, Baltimore Foundation" (with memo "Gift for CIM Qigong Program"). Please mail your check to:

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May your life be filled with positive Qi and lasting health in body, mind and spirit!



Yang-Sheng Needs Your Financial Support

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!

Additional funding is needed to:

- Purchase high-quality copy-righted images to vitalize the contents of magazine and web site
- Make the contents of Yang-Sheng available in other media – an audio and video enhanced publication, available in many forms and multiple ports.
- 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.
- Initiate online support networks and database for healthcare professionals to search for mind-body medicine and Yang Sheng practices.
- Sponsor lectures, workshops and conferences on life-nurturing related subjects

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Yang Sheng

A Community for Health, Happiness & Harmony

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

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

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

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Mission Statements

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