

Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

Yang-Sheng

Nurturing Life

養生

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Water & Fire Alchemy
- Qigong & the Lymphatic System
- Seasonal Harmony...and more!



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Yang-Sheng (Nurturing Life) is an E-magazine for all Qigong, Tai Chi, Yoga, Reiki, mindfulness and meditation practitioners, spiritual cultivators and health seekers. It promotes the philosophy and methods of self healing and positive mind power, and shares knowledge and experience about daily healthy practice. Yang Sheng merges ancient wisdom and knowledge with scientific research evidence and clinic applications. It also combines traditional mind-body practices with modern living experiences. Your participation, contribution, sharing and feedback are truly appreciated.

From the Editor



Welcome to the November issue of Yang Sheng! The theme for this issue is painted with broad brush strokes and encompasses all of the Yang-Sheng, nurturing life practices.

Kevin W Chen, Ph.D. MPH. shares main points from the theories of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and medical Qigong in our featured article, Adaption in Mind-Body Integration Practice: Understanding Variations of Qigong Exercises from TCM Theories. In Healing and Transformation, Martin Brofman, Ph.D. relates his journey of healing from terminal cancer and in Heart/Mind Qigong: Gateway through the Mysterious Pass, Roger Jahnke, OMD explains that when we purposefully access the Heart-Mind and cultivate the Heart-Mind Elixir it will nourish our peace of mind and emotional healing.

In Training Tips for Going Deeper into Tranquility by Yang Yang, Ph.D. we learn that Taiji insights sometimes come from the most unexpected places. Dan Kleiman explains why a movement practice alone cannot take us to the deepest levels in Standing Meditation and in The Benefits of Getting More Alpha Waves! Narij Naik, M.Pharm. shows that when we experience alpha brain wave states tension disappears, thought processes calm down, and more. This issue also presents exciting information on Mind-Body research in articles by Matthew Komelski, Ph.D., Don E. Brown II, MSIS, and Martin Eisen, Ph.D.

Transforming Sexual Energy with Water-and-Fire Alchemy by Michael Winn explores what many Daoists, since ancient times, have sought to tap into; the power of sexuality to heal the body, deepen love relationships, and achieve elevated states of enlightenment. In Seasonal Harmony Ellasara Kling reminds us that how we eat is as important as what we eat, and offers some basic guidelines as well as seasonal foods and recipes for Winter.

Every Breath a Prayer by Solala Towler tells us that in Daoist meditation and qigong the breath anchors our practice and is the doorway between realms. The breath keeps us grounded, connected to our inner core and in deep meditation, the breath *breathes* us. Yet, another way we can use the breath is in prayer. By turning each breath into a prayer, we can become human prayer wheels. We become the prayer; we become the benediction we send out into the world.

Yang-Sheng is an E-magazine and network which promotes a philosophy that represents a new direction for health care. It is run by the non-profit, World Institute for Self Healing, Inc., WISH, a 501(c)(3) organization. However, we are young and our resources are very limited, especially in light of our dreams and vision. All of our writers, editors and contributors are volunteers since we do not currently have stable financial support. To help *Yang-Sheng* survive your generous contribution is urgently needed. If you enjoy the material we present, please become a sponsor or make a tax deductible contribution. See pages 66 and 67.

This month's cover features the Chess Pavilion on Hua Shan in a photo I took on one of my tours. Hua Shan, a Daoist sacred mountain with soaring peaks of pure white granite, towers over the Shaanxi plains. Legend goes that in the Song Dynasty the Daoist master Chen Tuan and the Emperor of China played a famous chess game. The fate of Hua Shan hung in the balance! The Emperor wanted Hua Shan for a military garrison and Chen Tuan wanted it to remain a sacred mountain. The Emperor was famous for his skill at chess, yet Chen Tuan, the Daoist master, anticipated the Emperor's every move and easily won the game. Hua Shan was saved! The Chess Pavilion is a monument to the contest, and also a reminder of the subtle benefits that arise from the authentic cultivation of one's personal practice.

As we approach Winter, the most Yin time of the year, the energetic expression is contraction. It is a season that naturally supports our going within and withdrawing from the outer world and its outer business. I invite you to give yourself the gift of spending more time going within, more time exploring and cultivating your own inner world and cultivating your own *Yang-Sheng*, (Life Nurturing) practice.

Just do the practice...and expect miracles!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Kali". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Rebecca Kali, Editor-in-Chief

Adaption in Mind-Body Integration Practice

Understanding Variations of Qigong Exercises from TCM Theories

Kevin W Chen, Ph.D., MPH

When I started learning qigong as a life-nurturing mind-body exercise and a convenient healing method, I was taught that one of the advantages in qigong therapy was that one system or qigong practice routine could be applied to various health conditions, and that it would fix all different diseases or problems. In other words, as long as you practice the same routine everyday, there would be no mistreatment or adverse effects like most modern medical therapies have. I assume that many qigong students have heard similar statements, and agreed with this generalization. In comparison with the hundreds of thousands of different diseases classified in modern western medicine, each disease having multiple possible treatments or uncertainties, qigong therapy does have the advantage of simplicity and universal application in many senses. However, if you think one qigong form or one system will fit all the different practitioners, and offer help for all different diseases all the time, that would probably be an oversimplification of the issue. As I am studying the history and development of medical qigong, and read some classic works in medical qigong therapies, I notice that variations by individual differences and adaption to the season, timing, and types of diseases are the keys to a successful qigong practice and qigong healing. Here are some main points I learned from the theories of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and medical Qigong. I would like to share with other practitioners so that we can make progress in this area together.



1. Apply the Theory of Yin-Yang and Five-Elements to Guide Practice

The theory of Yin-Yang and Five-Elements was fundamental for TCM development and application, which constitutes the basic model of nature, society and human life. In TCM the macro system of man and nature is reduced into two big paradigms of yin and yang; each of them can be further divided into sporadic yin and yang elements. That seeming simplicity implies complexity and changes, including the possible hierarchy and classification of this macro system. For the human body, the refined nutritious substances that constitute forms and structures are called yin essence; while the force driving all life movements is called yang Qi. Therefore, the basic nature of yin-yang is that yin governs quiescence (stillness) while yang governs motion; the two are actually one. Being a unity, they work together to keep the stable status of the system in a dynamic balance, by mutually depending, opposing, transforming, waxing and waning with each other. When the yin-yang is in balance, healthy status is maintained.

Ancient people said that, in practicing Qigong, one must 'have a profound insight into yin and yang'. The first step of qigong practice is to choose an appropriate method or form according to individual physical

constitutions, since ‘people are classified into lesser yin (Shaoyin), greater yin (Taiyin), lesser yang (Shaoyang), Greater yang (taiyang), and balanced yin-yang types or groups. Each differs in shape, muscles, bones, Qi and blood. For patients, yin-yang hyperactivity or deficiency should be distinguished so that different Qigong forms can be assigned to different individuals to achieve the optimal results.

In the actual process of routine or fixed forms of Qigong practice, it is also guided by the yin-yang five-element theory. The dynamic Qigong forms pertain to yang while static Qigong forms pertain to yin. Yin and yang manifest themselves in every aspect of the three adjustments. Motion and stillness, opening and closing, relaxing and tightening, being soft and hard, bending and stretching, ascending and descending in body adjustment pertain to either yang or yin. Relaxing static Qigong can restrain hyperactivity of yang and replenish yin -- ascending and opening upwards and outwards elevates yang, and descending and closing downwards and inwards restrain the hyperactivity of yang. *The Collections on Medicine* (医学汇函) recorded that “People suffering from pathogenic fire should practice Qigong with the eyes open while people without the pathogenic fire may do it with the eyes closed. When practicing Qigong, a person can guide the Qi upwards to treat ear, eye, mouth or nose diseases by bending his body backwards; treat the head disease by raising his head; and treat the diseases below his waist by focusing on his feet.”

It is equally true with the adjustment of breathing. Breath-in pertains to yang while breath-out pertains to yin. *A Miraculous Canon on Long-life through the Original Qi* (长生胎元神用经) recorded the following, “the fresh Qi taken in with the nose is yang while the turbid Qi coming out from the mouth is yin” Holding breath to retain Qi can eliminate the cold and breathing out the turbid Qi can clear the heat. Therefore, people with yang deficiency should focus on breathing-in and prolong the act of inhaling. People with yin deficiency should focus on breathing-out and prolong the act of exhaling.

The adjustment of mind includes also the change of yin-yang, especially in “keep the mind on” (意守) and mind-reach practice, fully characterized by the variation of yin and yang. Focusing on external sight can remove the heat fire, while focusing on internal sight can warm up yang. Imagining scenes of water and coldness can supplement yin, while imagining a scene of fire and heat can elevate yang. Just as *Wen Shi Taoist Canon* (文始真经) stated, “Qi is induced by the mind, as if contemplating a big fire inward, heat will be felt; contemplating a flood inward, cold feelings will ensue.”

Traditional Qigong practitioners have made it a rule to preserve health in view of the time variation of yin and yang as well as the four seasons. “Nourish yang in spring and summer, and nourish yin in autumn and winter.” If it comes to the 12 two-hour periods (时辰), practicing Qigong is helpful to yang during the six yang hours (from 11 p.m. to 11 a.m.) and good for yin during the six yin hours (from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.). The corresponding internal organs will be nourished if the Five-zang organs, seasons, dates are matched in view of the generating and restricting relationships of the Five Elements. The application methods were mentioned in *Treatise on the Essentials of Eating Qi* (服气精义论) as following: “On the six Bing days in the Spring ... (one) can nourish the liver Qi by eating Qi one hundred and twenty times for the heart, so that the heart fire can restrain lung metal, and lung metal won’t harm liver wood. On the six Wu days in summer ... eating qi can help the spleen, so that the spleen earth can restrain kidney water, and kidney water won’t harm heart fire. On the six Geng days in later summer ... (one) can nourish the lung by eating Qi ... so that lung metal can restrain liver wood, and liver wood won’t harm spleen earth. On the six Ren days in autumn ... (one) can nourish the kidney by eating Qi ... so that the kidney water can restrain heart fire, and heart fire won’t harm lung (metal). On the six Jia days in the Winter ... (one) can nourish the liver by eating Qi ... so that the liver wood can restrain spleen earth, and spleen earth won’t harm kidney (water).”

2. Use Meridian Theory to Enhance Qigong Practice

Meridian has also been translated as Channels and Collaterals, or Network Vessels, which constitute a network model of the human body. The theory of meridians is the foundation of acupuncture and qigong therapies. Meridians are generally considered to be paths or channels, through which internal Zang-fu organs interact and are nourished with Qi, and the four limbs and bones are connected. Therefore, the abnormality of either the function or structure of zang-fu organs would lead to the malfunction of the meridian Qi, and further, can be observed from the condition of the limbs and bones.

The meridian theory plays an important role in concrete maneuvers of the three adjustments (body, mind and breathing adjustments) in Qigong practice. In adjustment of body posture, the phenomenon “a proper posture is followed by smooth Qi movement” indicates that the right body posture guarantees a smooth passage and flow for the circulation of Qi and blood. Patting and massaging were frequently carried out on one or several acupoints along the meridians. Kneading elixir fields and rubbing Yongquan (涌泉), for instance, are employed in health-preserving Qigong, and patting and striking the surface of the body along the route of meridians to help relax is employed in Relaxation Qigong.

Adjustment of the mind is also closely related to the meridians, especially the skill of “keeping the mind on” (意守). The places or areas where the mind is kept focused on are mostly the acupoints in meridians, such as the three Dan-tian (elixir fields) in the internal elixir arts, or the points for a breathing pause (Zhixi Dian, 止息点) in Relaxation Qigong.

It’s equally true for adjustment of the breathing associated with the “mind reach,” which induces clear meridians for the circulation of blood and Qi by focusing on breathing. Some components in fetal breathing, such as body breathing, elixir fields breathing, skin-hair breathing, etc. are also conducted by regulating the opening and closing of some acupoints.

The Eight Extra Channels are held in high regard in Qigong cultivation, especially by the internal elixir arts, which offer detailed explanations about this subject. As early as 400 B.C.E., it was mentioned in *Zhuang Zi* that “Taking the governor vessel as a main channel to cultivate enables one to stay in good health, strengthen the vital energy, and enjoy a long life.” Although the conception and governor vessels were not specified in the *Jade Pendant Inscription of Circulating Qi*, the notion was already very clear that the coordination between yin and yang could be obtained through breathing deeply to ascend and descend Qi along the meridian.

Li Shizhen was particularly in favor of the academic thought presented by the internal elixir arts, and expressed such opinions in his book *A Study on the Eight Extra-channels*. He stated that, “the internal scenery and channels can be viewed only by those who reflect inwardly”. The important role that the interaction of conception and governor vessels, yin and yang played when their Qi merged into each other was thoroughly discussed by the internal elixir arts. It was very likely that the ancients perceived and figured out the significance of regulating the system of nerves and body fluids in life through qigong practice, and therefore, centered their qigong cultivating and practicing forms on this system.



The three adjustments in Qigong practice have the function of unblocking meridians and collaterals. The feeling of warmth inside the elixir field or feeling the pulse jumping due to “internal Qi” movement may indicate that Qi-blood is circulating vigorously in that location. Continuous practice may produce a feeling of internal Qi moving along the meridians and collaterals. The forms of Grand and Small Cosmic Circulation Qigong are practical exercises to unblock meridians and connect channels and collaterals to each other. Just as *the Incisive Light on the Source of Miscellaneous Disease · Rules of Employing Qi* (杂病源流犀烛·运功规法) said, “Settle down to the earth and focus on the middle, then, direct Qi through the route of Cosmic Circulation for one lap to disperse obstructed Qi after matured practice.”

The fact that meridian transmission induced by Qigong practice, as well as the experimental study of the meridian phenomena during Qigong practice, have proved the role that Qigong plays in helping Qi-blood circulate along the meridian system. The phenomena of meridian transmission induced by a deep qigong state when practicing Qigong or receiving emitted Qi has been reported in Beijing and Shanghai. Although we are still uncertain of the true nature and implications of the so-called “sensation of Qi”, the phenomena demonstrate that Qigong practice has a positive effect on the channels of the meridian system.

3. Theory of Essence-Qi-Spirit (精气神) and Mind-Body Practice

A crucial paradigm in ancient Chinese philosophy is that the essence Qi refers to the existence of refined substances. The word “essence Qi constitute things” appeared in *The Great Treatise* from *The Book of Changes* (周易·系辞传) without detailed elaboration. The theory of essence Qi was given a detailed explanation in *Guan Zi* (管子·内业), in which essence is regarded as refined micro Qi, “Essence is the essence of Qi”. It was also stated that the essence Qi was the source of life as well as the source of the wisdom for the Sages. It was said that “Conforming to Dao ensues Qi; Qi generates thought, and thought makes Dao known”. Therefore, human life came to exist owing to the connection between the essence Qi and the body, and then, life generated the ability to think – a function of the spirit (Shen) that owes itself to life.

The theory of Chinese medicine has not only absorbed and carried forward the above mentioned philosophical thinking, but also made it more specific. Its basic understanding of the concepts concerning essence, Qi and spirit are as follows.

Essence refers to all refined and nutritious substances, and is the material basis for the construction of the human body. Plain Questions: Sincere Remarks on the Synopsis of the Golden Chamber (素问·金匱真言论) said, “Essence is the base of the body.” Spiritual Pivot · Meridians (灵枢·经脉) said, “The essence is a prerequisite to a person. Once essence comes into being, brains and marrow will grow. The bones act as a stand of the body; meridians act as passages to nourish it; muscles help fix bones; and the flesh acts as protection. Hair grows after skin becomes strong.” Plain Questions · On True Man of the Remote Antiquity said, “Kidney accepts and stores the essence of five-zang and six-fu.” Therefore, every part of the body contains the essential element and all the organs are based on essence.

Qi is a refined nutritious substance or a functional activity of the organs in the body. The significance of Qi is just as The Eighth Problem from the Classic on Medical Problems (难经·八难) states, “Qi is the root of the human body. If the root died, all the stalks and leaves would wither up and perish.” Please refer to Dr. Elsen’s series on scientific exploration of Qi for a concrete definition and discussion on “Qi”.

Though intangible, Shen or spirit in TCM is the governor of life and represents the initiative of life activities. It is, in fact, the regulating and controlling mechanism inherent in life, namely the regulating information of life activities, including thinking, spiritual activity and the instinctive regulating and controlling functions. *Spiritual Pivot* said, “The original substance of life is called essence. When yin essence and yang essence combine, spirit is produced.” The material basis for the spirit is the interaction of the essence Qi, and all its activities have to rely on the acquired nourishment.

The theory of essence-Qi-spirit has not only been of interest to TCM doctors and widely applied in medical practice, but has also drawn much attention from enthusiasts of Yang-Sheng (life nurturing). Essence, Qi and Spirit are taken as the original life drive and the material basis of life in the Daoist school of life-nurturing Qigong. Hence the terms: three-yuan (三元, a collective name for the locations of the three elixir fields), three-cai (三才, a collective name for Heaven, Earth and Human) and three-bao (三宝, a collective name for essence, Qi and spirit).

As Dong Dening (董德宁) wrote in *Annotations on Awakening to the Essence* (悟真篇正义), “San Yuan (三元) is equivalent to the three powers (San Cai, namely Universe, Earth, and Man), which refers to the three lights in heaven: the sun, the moon and the stars; the three elements on the earth: water, fire and earth; and the three aspects in human body: essence, Qi and spirit.” *Mind-Seal Scripture of the Jade Sovereign* (玉皇心印经), an ancient book on Qigong, said, “The upmost three ‘medicines’ are essence, Qi and spirit.” In *Volume XXVIII* from *Classic of Categories* (类经·卷二十八), Zhang Jingyue also pointed out, “Thousands of words in my books on cultivation have come to nothing but the invention of the three words: essence, Qi and spirit.”

Indeed, traditional Qigong practice revolves around the cultivation of the three elements, aiming at keeping fit and attaining longevity by regulating, nourishing, resuming and replenishing essence, Qi and spirit. Different conditions or combinations of the three treasures would require different ways of qigong cultivation or different practice forms.

Approaches to Nourishing Life without Taking Medicines (勿药元詮) stated that, “It is a process from nonexistence to existence by storing up spirit to produce Qi, and storing up Qi to produce essence. It is going from existence to nonexistence by refining essence and converting it into Qi, refining Qi to nourish the spirit and training the spirit to return to nothingness (虚)” That’s how the ancient people understood human life. The spirit is occult, but as the vital information, it directs the functional activities to absorb nourishment from the outside to duplicate itself, which is a process from nonexistence to existence. On the contrary, consuming food and energy and transforming them into information for mental and functional activities is a process from existence to nonexistence.

Mind-body integration practice or Qi cultivation is, after all, no more than cultivating essence, Qi and spirit and maintaining these three treasures. In other words, it is a process of metabolism to manage the mutual transformation among information, energy and substances through mind adjustment, which is in perfect accordance with Yin-Yang theory. *Effective Approaches to a Long Life* (寿世青篇) said, “Refine essence and convert it into Qi and train the spirit to return to nothingness. However, where to start? The first stage is always concerned with the mind.” These words show that the key to Qigong practice is to adjust the mind so that it can dominate the generation and transformation of essence, Qi and spirit. Given the virtuous circle of the metabolism, the full essence and spirit can be stored up, and the body and spirit can be kept steady in the unity of opposites over a long period of time. Such is the condition under which good health and longevity ensue.

More specifically, purifying the mind and diminishing desires contribute to keeping mental tranquility and avoiding mental waste. With fair, but no stray thoughts, there will not be any doubts in mind. If so, all activities of the organism are likely to be in conformity with the principle of health-preserving, i.e. the law of nature. As *Spiritual Pivot · Central Zang* (灵枢·本藏) said, “A person’s will enables him to control his mind, constrain his hun-spirit (魂) and po-spirit (魄), adapt himself to the environment and moderate his mood.”

In the process of the three adjustments, when one focuses on the lower dantian, the heart fire can descend to warm kidney water, avoiding the “frenetic stirring of ministerial fire”, the yin essence, can therefore, be maintained. And, as fire can generate spleen earth, the acquired essence will be replenished, and the inborn essence nourished.

Adjusting the breathing quietly can stop the genuine Qi from consuming, and blowing out the old and breathing in the new helps replenish the pectoral Qi. When the elixir field is permeated with Qi, the original Qi returns to where it comes from and the food Qi will be sufficient. With adequate Qi, ample essence and thriving spirit, those who have suffered from diseases will be restored to health naturally and live a longer life.

Understanding the relationships between TCM theories and mind-body integration practice is really the key for us to adapt appropriate qigong forms and techniques to achieve optimal results of mind-body practice. Just as the old saying states, “there is no fixed method in true Dao (法无定法)”; only through our own exploration and experience can we find out what is the best way to follow for our own mind-body integration practice.



Kevin Chen, Ph.D., MPH is an associate professor at the Center for Integrative Medicine and Department of Psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine (USA). Dr. Chen was educated in the universities of both China and the United States, and has years of experience and training in blending eastern and western perspectives, and in the practice of life-nurturing methods. As a long-time practitioner of Qigong Yang Sheng, he is one of the few scientists in the U.S. to have both hands-on knowledge of mind-body practice, and an active research career in mind-body medicine, which is funded through grants by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and various foundations. Dr. Chen devotes his career and life to the practice of Yang Sheng, and promotion of self-healing and mind-body-spirit integration through the non-profit organization, World Institute for Self Healing (WISH) (<http://www.wishus.org>).

Healing and Transformation

by Martin Brofman, Ph.D.

Every symptom has a certain way of being with which it is associated.

In order to release a symptom, one must release the way of being associated with it.

Thus, the process of healing implies a process of transformation.

Anything can be healed.

One or Two Months to Live

When I had terminal cancer in 1975, I had been told that I had one or two months to live, and that the end might come very suddenly, any moment, if I coughed or sneezed. I was faced with a reality in which each day was possibly my last day, each hour my last hour, and I recognized that for whatever limited time I had remaining, I wanted to be happy.

(continued on page 10)

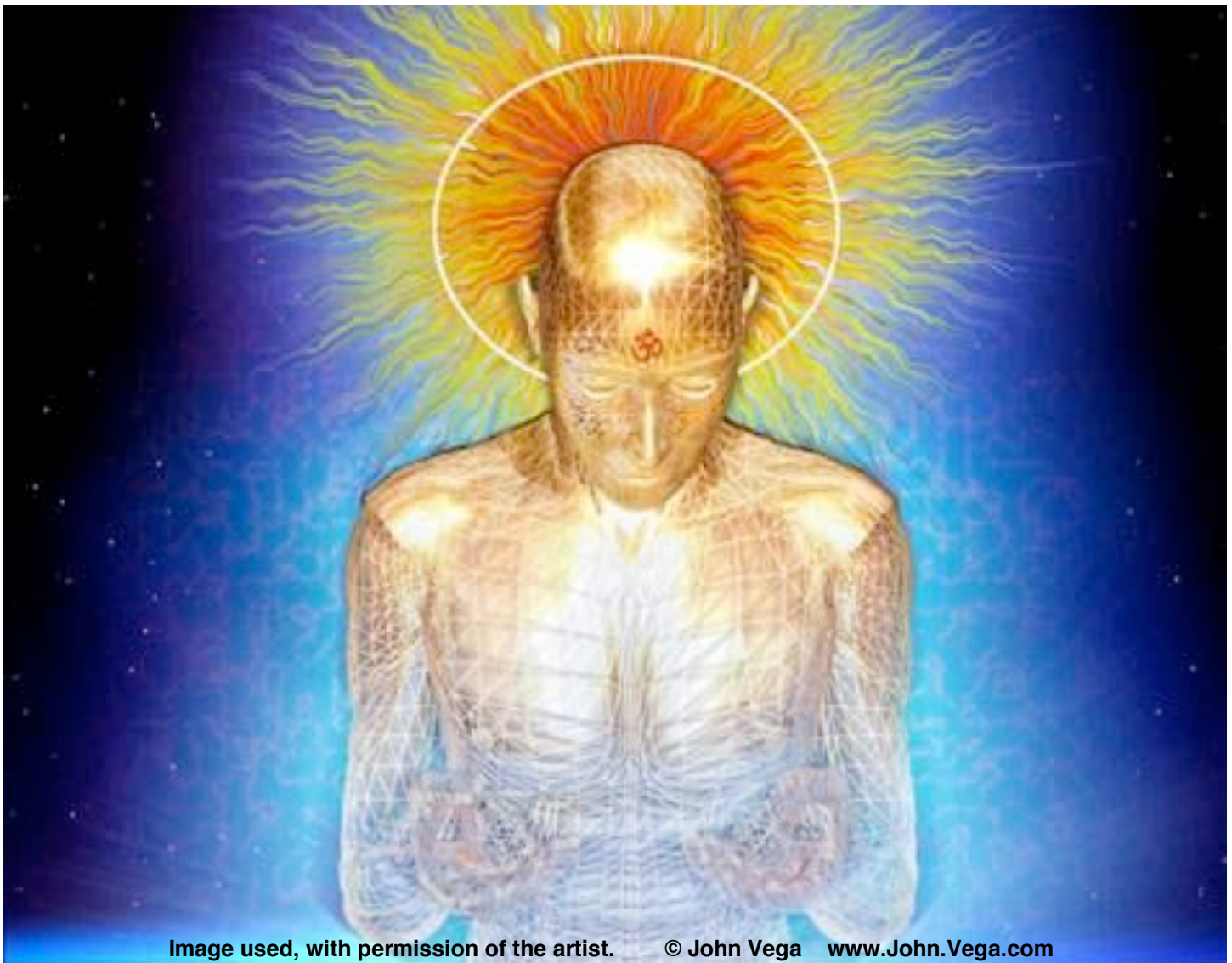


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Living a compromise made no sense to me. Since each meal was possibly the last one I would ever have, I wanted to eat whatever I had an appetite for, whatever my body was asking for. It didn't make sense to me to eat food I didn't enjoy just because someone else thought it would be healthy for me. Their loving intentions were recognized, but I knew it was not my way. My path to health had to include a sense of enjoyment in all that I did, and I had to be true to myself, to be real. I had to believe in the recovery process.

Reprieve!

Then, it was suggested to me that the cancer was the result of a process that had been going on in my consciousness, and that I could use my consciousness to get rid of it. My consciousness had been the effect of programming, in the same way that the results that a computer produces are the effects of the way it had been programmed. I could reprogram my consciousness.

I was presented with the idea that our perceptions create our reality, and I realized that I had to reprogram my consciousness to create the perception that I was well. I was not prepared for such an abrupt shift from the perception of being terminally ill, but I realized that I could much more easily create the perception that I was getting better and better, until I was indeed well.

I had had the perception that I was in a state of deterioration, getting closer and closer to dying, and I knew that if I were to have as the end result the perception that I was well, I would have to change from getting worse and worse to getting better and better. I also knew that the turn-around could happen in any moment. It was a matter of turning a switch in my mind, and insisting on knowing that it had been turned. I decided that if the moment of change could be any moment, then let it be *now*.

The Change

I felt a shift in my consciousness, and I knew then that I was in a state of improvement. I also knew the importance of maintaining the integrity of that decision, and of that moment. I knew that all of my perceptions had to reinforce the idea that I was now getting better and better. For example, I could remind myself as I ate whatever food I wanted, that it was exactly what my body needed to accelerate the healing process.

Physical sensations that felt like electric shocks in my body, which before had reinforced the idea that the tumor was growing, now had to be perceived as evidence that the tumor was shrinking. My mind looked for more and more ways of knowing that the improvement was happening.

I knew I had to stay away from those people who insisted on seeing me as still terminal, not from any lack of love, but just to maintain my own positive attitude toward my healing process. I had to be with people who were willing to encourage me on this seemingly impossible task I had set for myself. When I was asked how I was doing, I insisted on answering, "Better and better," and seeing how that was, in fact, true.

I knew that it was vital to maintain the positive programming, and that putting myself in a relaxed state of mind and talking positively to myself for fifteen minutes, three times each day, was a part of the programming process I should in no way interfere with. There were temptations to not do the relaxations, and then I would remind myself that my life was at stake. Any temptation, then, was something that stood between me and my life, and had to be removed, so that I could live.

Holding the Perception

At first, it was very difficult. I found that the integrity of the moment of change was easily compromised, by my thoughts or words acknowledging anything other than the idea that I was improving, and I had to be honest with myself, and see that, and then know that I had "blown it." Then, I could tell myself that what had happened was just a practice run, and that the real moment of change was now.

It got easier and easier. I was able to maintain integrity for just hours at first, then a day, then two days, and then I was solid. I knew the program was working. I was able to recognize the doubting voice inside, and know that it did not represent truth. I was able to identify with the encouraging voice. It became my guide, leading me back to stable health. I was more and more able to maintain the single-pointedness of knowing that positive changes were happening. When I was not feeling a symptom, I told myself that perhaps now I would never feel that symptom

again. If I experienced the symptom after that, I told myself that the process was just not yet complete, and that indeed I was feeling the symptom less than I had before.

I had to know that positive changes were happening now, possibly just at the threshold of notice-ability, so I could eagerly anticipate evidence to justify my perceptions. Naturally, I was always able to find something, and so assure myself that it was not something I was just imagining, but real, and more strength was added to the process.

The Program

During my relaxation periods, I imagined seeing the tumor which had been located in my spinal cord in the neck, and imagined that I was watching one layer of cancer cells dying, and being released, to be discarded by my body's natural elimination system. I knew that the change, perhaps not yet noticeable, was still definite. I knew that each time I released waste products from my body, the dead cancer cells were being eliminated, and I reminded myself of that each time. I insisted on *knowing* that it was true.

I knew that cancer represented something held in and not expressed, and since the tumor was located by my throat chakra (energy center), I had been holding back the expression of my Being. Since I wasn't quite sure what that meant, though, I decided that it was imperative that I express everything. Every thought, every feeling, whatever was in my consciousness that wanted to come out, I expressed, knowing that it was vital for my health. Before, I had had the perception that expressing led to discord, but now I saw that what I was expressing was appreciated by those around me, that expressing and communicating led to harmony.

Before, I had had the belief that if I expressed what I really wanted to, something bad would happen. I had to reprogram that to the belief that if I expressed what I really wanted to, something wonderful would happen. I made that decision, and it was so.

I found myself having less and less in common with my old friends. It was as though we had shared a common vibrational frequency before, say 547 cycles, whatever that means, and suddenly I found myself at 872 cycles, having few things to communicate with the 547-cycle people. I had to find new friends who were also at 872, to have someone to talk with.

I found myself attracted to the 872 crowd, and them to me, as though I had become selectively magnetic, and certain elements of my reality were being released which were no longer in accord with the new Being I was becoming. I knew the process was inevitable, and should not be interfered with. I developed a sense of compassion and understanding at that time. I knew that my life depended on releasing all elements of my life not in accord with my new vibration. The process was simple, though not always easy.

I began each day as a process of self-discovery, with no preconceived notion of who I was, yet with a willingness to discover the emerging Being, and a sense of delight with each new discovery.

I imagined the scene that would happen in the doctor's office after my work on myself was done. I could see him examining me, and finding no tumor, being puzzled. He might say, "Perhaps we made a mistake." I played the scene in my mind each day, in my relaxation periods.

I had heard that within the technology of mental programming, if I talked to myself for fifteen minutes three times each day, within 66 days, I could get myself to believe anything, and that whatever I believed to be true, would be true.

About two months after I started working on myself, I went to be examined by the doctor who had pronounced me terminally ill. On the way to the doctor, I knew that I had to maintain the perception that everything was all right. I replayed the scene in my mind, knowing it would happen like that.

Finally, the moment of truth arrived. The doctor examined me, and found nothing. He said, "Perhaps we made a mistake." I laughed all the way home.

Transformation

I have transformed my way of Being. My lifestyle has changed dramatically. It no longer makes any sense to work in any nine-to-five job, or to call any other Being my "superior," since we are all equal Beings, and all with infinite potential. I "retired" from Wall Street at the age of 38 with nothing but the dedication to the idea of doing what I

really want to do and not doing what I really do not want to do, and trusting my trip, listening to my inner voice. It's a decision I have never regretted.

With what I learned of the body/mind relationship from my experience and the research I did during my own healing process, I developed a model of healing as a way to organize in my own mind what had happened for me, and what had worked. I gradually became involved in healing others when conditions seemed to demand that, and in doing that I saw more and more examples of the body/mind interface covering many other symptoms. The model of healing I was using became more and more coherent and multi-dimensional.

I discovered the joy of sharing my experiences and ideas with others, and watching them benefit as they put the ideas to work in their own lives. The work I do now as a healer and teacher is meaningful to me, important to others as well, and is of service to humanity, and I feel a "high" when I do it. I have a strong sense of doing my life's work. I know that I am doing what I came to this planet to do. I know it's right. It's not a feeling that I had had before.

The process of transformation is an integral part of the healing process, whether the Being is healing his/her vision or releasing some serious illness; and indeed even when the out-of-balance condition has not reached the physical level, yet still exists only on the mental or emotional level.

It is for those of us who recognize the process to encourage it, and assist it where we can, so that the planetary transformation now taking place within the individuals inhabiting it may be hastened, and made as gentle as possible.

Illness or injury shows on the physical level, metaphorically, what has been happening in the consciousness of the Being experiencing the symptoms. It is related to that person's way of Being. Once the elements of a person's Being that relate to their physical out-of-balance condition are identified, they can be changed, and health and balance on all levels can be restored.

When we see the physical body as a map of the consciousness that wears it, and always balanced to it, we can also see that a change in one implies a change in the other. When a healing happens, a change in personality may be expected to reflect the change in the physical Being, and vice versa. The "new" individual will have the same Essence of Being, yet with a different way of interacting with the environment, without what had been excessive tension for that individual. In fact, they will be more themselves, whom they *really* are.

It may seem as though the individual had awakened from a very real-seeming dream, and things will make sense in a different way. A perceptual filter will have been removed; a filter through which values had been determined, and without that filter, truer values will become evident. The "new" Being may even have different tastes in food and/or clothing, and different personal habits. It will be a welcome transformation.

Approaches to healing which consider the aspect of personality change, transformation, are keyed to the idea of an inner cause to any outer symptom. Without the inner changes, the symptoms may be relieved in the physical reality, but not the causes in the inner world, and the symptoms may get re-created again. The Being then considers that part of their energy system an inherent weakness, to be continually dealt with, until they can bring about the inner changes, after which the symptoms no longer manifest. After all, the symptoms were only necessary to give a message to the "old" Being. The "new" one, not having the built-in weakness, has no need of the symptom. As a matter of fact, the formerly weak part may even become the "new" Being's strongest part. Stories of formerly paralyzed or injured patients who became Olympic stars are evidence of this.

When transformation is focused on, in addition to other parts of the healing process, another dimension is added, to accelerate the healing.

Human Energy The System

In the energy system that we each are, the energy is in a constant state of flow. This flow of energy is regulated by seven energy "pumps," called chakras. Each chakra represents specific emotions and levels of perception, elements of the Being's consciousness, and is also associated with specific parts of the body, specific functions within the body, specific endocrine glands, and specific nerve groups. Responses to a Being's perceived universe are reflected in the chakras as well.

The chakras have an optimal state of balance and flow. A healing of the individual balances the chakras. When this happens, in addition to restoring inner balance and a different state of consciousness, as well as physical balance, the rebalancing will also define different responses to the Being's perceived universe.

In other words, with a given state of balance of the chakras, a certain type of experience will be attracted to the individual, and certain types of people will be attracted, as well. When the energy changes in the chakras, as in a healing, the magnetic effect drawing a particular kind of person or experience is then released, along with the old way of responding.

For example, one Being, having different interactions with his/her mother may respond by blocking the chakra associated with security or trust. The effect would be insecurity as a perceptual filter. The individual would then attract precarious situations to justify the insecurity, as well as females who would remind that Being of his/her mother. When the chakra is cleared, the type of female formerly attracted would be attracted instead to other Beings with the same kind of blocked chakra as that formerly experienced by the Being who was healed, leaving room for interactions for that Being with females of a different energy. In addition, interactions with the mother-archetype will have a different resolution, more satisfying. Situations presented to the Being will also have more of a sense of solidity, or the Being will have a new perspective of confidence with which to resolve the situation.

We can see, then, that not only do the chakras reflect the outer environment, but in a way they also create it. With minor adjustments in a Being's energy system, only slight shifts in consciousness would be apparent. In the case of catastrophic illnesses, however, the Being was in desperate need of a major adjustment in consciousness, and then the aspects of transformation would be more profound.

Rebirth

While instantaneous change is always possible and available, most people do not seem to be prepared for so abrupt a shift in their way of Being. Gradual change seems generally more comfortable for the Being involved, as well as for others in the Being's environment.

With instantaneous change, there is the experience of sudden clarification of what had been obscure, and a sense something like what might be experienced by a Being suddenly finding itself in a body, and watching a movie unfolding around itself, a movie that had just begun. The Being would find itself as one of the characters, with a sense of seeming to be different than what the others seemed to be seeing the Being as, and in fact, would be very different. Others would be holding the perception of the Being who no longer exists.

It would then be important for the Being to maintain his/her new way of Being, the new sense of clarity or enlightenment (yet possibly combined with the confusing sense of sudden newness), and establish quickly the way in which parts would have to change in some way.

In the case of a Being who had had a serious illness, and who recognized the relationship between lifestyle and the physical symptoms, there would have to be a willingness to change all aspects of the lifestyle that did not result in happiness, because it would be clear that it was those aspects which were directly related to the illness. It would be clear as well that to not bring about the necessary changes would be to recreate the symptoms of the illness.

When it becomes a matter of life and death, the choice becomes a clear one, and simple, although not always easy.

Interactions

To those people close to the Being, it could be a very confusing time, as well. It could seem as though the person they had known the Being to be, had suddenly changed in a way, gone crazy. Habitual patterns of behavior and responding would suddenly no longer be there, and it could be very confusing. For the Being's health and well-being, however, they would have to be totally supportive of the new Being, since attempts to re-create the old Being would be perceived by the Being involved (correctly) as a threat to its health, and perhaps even to its life.

There must be a willingness to adapt to the Being's new way of Being.

Gradual change is easier for most people, but it must be emphasized that the magnitude of the gradual change is no less than that of immediate change. It is just spread out over a longer period of time. The same issues must be examined. The same changes must be made. In addition, the Being must maintain a single-mindedness of purpose, and stay on purpose, with a total willingness to release all aspects of their life which are stress-related, and all

patterns of interacting which are not success-oriented, until life is again harmonious, and the body's state of health and well-being indicate that the Being has returned to balance, and may now identify with the way they are. The transformation and healing will then be complete.

Anything Can Be Healed!

When an individual who has been out of balance has made the decision to return to balance, they must make it a high priority project. Nothing else must be more important. Particularly in the case of a catastrophic illness, the return to health necessarily becomes more important than family, friends, or job. When there has been the recognition of a path to health, nothing must interfere with that path. The development and maintenance of a positive mental attitude is imperative.

Each of us is a self-organizing autonomous system of consciousness. Each of us is an energy system. Energy flows through our Being, and is directed by our consciousness. This energy is in a state of movement, flow, and in a healthy organism the energy is harmonious, and flows smoothly. When the flow of this energy is blocked or interrupted, it is experienced by the organism as an imbalance, and the organism's tendency is to return to balance and harmony, to return to health. This tendency toward harmony is an aspect of love.

All illness, all injury, is energy blocked or interrupted, or a call for love. Each of us, including you, the reader, has the ability to sense energy, detect it, and direct it.

Ultimately, any energy block can be released by your consciousness. It is not a question of whether it can be done, but rather how it can be done.

Within your Being, within your consciousness, is the ability to love, to perceive without judgment or expectation, to care. You have a potential for infinite love, whether or not you choose to recognize it, and whether or not you choose to manifest it. In fact, this love is the very nature of your Being.

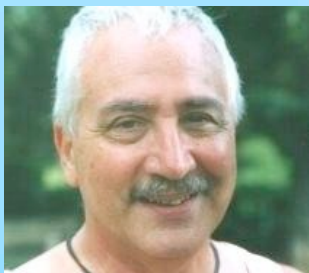
You have the ability to love wherever there was a perception of a lack of love, or a call for love. Love heals.

You have in your consciousness the potential and ability to heal anything, on any level, in yourself as well as in any other Being, since it's all just love and energy. What remains is for you to realize this fully and actualize that potential.

Love heals.

We are all healers.

Anything can be healed.



Martin Brofman, Ph.D., author of *Anything Can Be Healed*, and *Improve Your Vision, (Findhorn Press)* developed the Body Mirror System of Healing and A Vision Workshop after having healed himself of terminal cancer in 1976. For more information contact: Brofman Foundation, 3, Place de la Riponne, Lausanne, CH-1005, Switzerland or The Brofman Foundation for the Healing Arts, 1133 Broadway, Suite 706, New York, NY 10010 U.S.A www.healer.ch

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Mind-Body Medicine Research Update

Tai chi exercise for treatment of pain and disability in people with persistent low back pain: A randomized controlled trial. *Arthritis Care Res.* 2011 Nov;63(11):1576-83. by Hall AM, Maher CG, Lam P, Ferreira M, Latimer J. from The George Institute for Global Health and University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. amandahall@georgeinstitute.org.au

Objective: To determine the effect of tai chi exercise on persistent low back pain. **Methods:** We performed a randomized controlled trial in a general community setting in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Participants consisted of 160 volunteers between ages 18 and 70 years with persistent nonspecific low back pain. The tai chi group (n = 80) consisted of 18 40-minute sessions over a 10-week period delivered in a group format by a qualified instructor. The waitlist control group continued with their usual health care. **Bothersomeness** of back symptoms was the primary outcome. Secondary outcomes included pain intensity and pain-related disability. Data were collected at pre- and postintervention and analyzed by intent-to-treat. **Results:** Tai chi exercise reduced bothersomeness of back symptoms by 1.7 points on a 0-10 scale, reduced pain intensity by 1.3 points on a 0-10 scale, and improved self-report disability by 2.6 points on the 0-24 Roland-Morris Disability Questionnaire scale. The followup rate was >90% for all outcomes. These results were considered a worthwhile treatment effect by researchers and participants. **Conclusion:** This is the first pragmatic randomized controlled trial of tai chi exercise for people with low back pain. It showed that a 10-week tai chi program improved pain and disability outcomes and can be considered a safe and effective intervention for those experiencing long-term low back pain symptoms.



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Early intervention for autism with a parent-delivered Qigong massage program: a randomized controlled trial. *Am J Occup Ther.* 2011 Sep-Oct;65(5):550-9. by Silva LM, Schalock M, Gabrielsen K. from Teaching Research Institute, Western Oregon University, P.O. Box 688, Salem, OR 97308, U.S.A. Imtsilvaqigong@comcast.net

Abstract: A recent randomized controlled trial (RCT) of a dual parent and trainer-delivered qigong massage intervention for young children with autism resulted in improvement of measures of autism as well as improvement of abnormal sensory responses and self-regulation. The RCT evaluated the effects of the parent-delivered component of the intervention. Forty-seven children were randomly assigned to treatment and waitlist control groups. Treatment group children received the parent-delivered program for 4 mo. Trained therapists provided parent training and support. Improvement was evaluated in two settings--preschool and home--by teachers (blind to group) and parents. Results showed that the parent-delivered program was effective in improving measures of autism (medium effect size) and sensory and self-regulatory responses (large effect size). Teacher data on measures of autism were confirmed by parent data. Results indicate that the parent-delivered component of the program provided effective early intervention for autism that was suitable for delivery at home.



Meditation promotes insightful problem-solving by keeping people in a mindful and alert conscious state.

Sci China Life Sci. 2011 Oct;54(10):961-5. By Ren J, Huang Z, Luo J, Wei G, Ying X, Ding Z, Wu Y, Luo F. from College of Education, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, 321004, China, renj@zjnu.cn.

Abstract: Although previous studies have shown that sleep can inspire insight, it is still unclear whether meditation can promote insight. Meditation differs from other types of passive rest such as relaxation and sleep because it requires full consciousness and mindfulness of targets such as one's breathing. Forty-eight university students without meditation experience were recruited to learn a simple meditation technique. They were given a list of 10 insight problems to solve (the pre-test session). In this study, we focused on the unsolved problems and examined if they could be successfully solved after a 20 min rest interval with or without meditation. Results showed that relative to the control group that listened to Chinese or English words and made a language judgment, the groups who learned meditation successfully solved significantly more failed problems from the pre-test session, providing direct evidence for the role of meditation in promoting insight. Further analysis showed that maintaining a mindful and alert state during meditation (raising a hand to report every 10 deep breaths compared to every 100 deep breaths) resulted in more insight regarding the failed items from the pre-test session. This implies that it was watchfulness in meditation, rather than relaxation, that actually contributed to insight. Consistently, in the meditation session or control task, the percentage of alpha waves-a brain index of mental relaxation-was negatively correlated with insight. These results suggest a meditation-based insight-promoting mechanism different from that involved in passive rest such as relaxation and sleep.



A Randomized Trial Comparing Yoga, Stretching, and a Self-care Book for Chronic Low Back Pain.

Arch Intern Med. 2011 Oct 24. [Epub ahead of print] by Sherman KJ, Cherkin DC, Wellman RD, Cook AJ, Hawkes RJ, Delaney K, Deyo RA. From University of Washington, Seattle

Background: Chronic low back pain is a common problem lacking highly effective treatment options. Small trials suggest that yoga may have benefits for this condition. This trial was designed to determine whether yoga is more effective than conventional stretching exercises or a self-care book for primary care patients with chronic low back pain. **Methods:** A total of 228 adults with chronic low back pain were randomized to 12 weekly classes of yoga (92 patients) or conventional stretching exercises (91 patients) or a self-care book (45 patients). Back-related functional status (modified Roland Disability Questionnaire, a 23-point scale) and bothersomeness of pain (an 11-point numerical scale) at 12 weeks were the primary outcomes. **Outcomes** were assessed at baseline, 6, 12, and 26 weeks by interviewers unaware of treatment group. **Results:** After adjustment for baseline values, 12-week outcomes for the yoga group were superior to those for the self-care group (mean difference for function, -2.5 [95% CI, -3.7 to -1.3]; $P < .001$; mean difference for symptoms, -1.1 [95% CI, -1.7 to -0.4]; $P < .001$). At 26 weeks, function for the yoga group remained superior (mean difference, -1.8 [95% CI, -3.1 to -0.5]; $P < .001$). Yoga was not superior to conventional stretching exercises at any time point. **Conclusion:** Yoga classes were more effective than a self-care book, but not more effective than stretching classes, in improving function and reducing symptoms due to chronic low back pain, with benefits lasting at least several months. (clinicaltrials.gov Identifier: NCT00447668.)

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The effect of Ti Chi exercise on the sleep quality of the elderly residents in Isfahan, Sadeghieh elderly home. Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res. 2011 Winter;16(1):55-60. by Hosseini H, Esfirizi MF, Marandi SM, Rezaei A. from Department of Health Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran.

Background: Sleep disturbances are common among older adults. Recently there is much interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) from the population in general, and the elderly are no exception. Tai Chi exercise as a CAM can be performed by older adults. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of Tai Chi Exercise on sleep quality of elderly residents in Sadeghiyeh elderly care home. **Methods:** In this Clinical Trial, 62 older subjects aged older than 65 years residents of elderly home in Isfahan were studied. They randomized in two experimental and control groups. The intervention was the Tai Chi Exercise sessions were held three times per week for 12 weeks. Duration of exercise was 5 minutes at first session which gradually increased to 20 to 25 minutes by the midpoint of intervention. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was used for pre and post evaluation of older adult sleep quality. Data analyzed using the SPSS(14) software. **Results:** There were no differences in demographic characteristics or psychological variables between two groups. Mean age of studied subjects in experimental and control groups was 68.74(5.48) and 69.42(5.34), respectively. In the Tai Chi group sleep quality was improved significantly with decrease in PSQI global score. In control group sleep quality was not changed significantly. At the end of study, mean differences of PSQI global score between two groups different significantly. **Conclusion:** Our finding is coherent with other studies in this field indicated that the Tai Chi Exercise can have a significant effect on sleep quality in older adults.



A diet, physical activity, and stress reduction intervention in men with rising prostate-specific antigen after treatment for prostate cancer. Cancer Epidemiol. 2011 Oct 19. [Epub ahead of print] by Hébert JR, Hurley TG, Harmon BE, Heiney S, Hebert CJ, Steck SE. from South Carolina Statewide Cancer Prevention & Control Program, University of South Carolina, 915 Greene St, Columbia, SC 29208, United States.

Background: Nearly 35% of men treated for prostate cancer (PrCA) will experience biochemically defined recurrence, noted by a rise in PSA, within 10 years of definitive therapy. Diet, physical activity, and stress reduction may affect tumor promotion and disease progression. **Methods:** A randomized trial of an intensive diet, physical activity, and meditation intervention was conducted in men with rising post-treatment PSA after definitive treatment for PrCA. Intention-to-treat methods were used to compare usual care to the intervention in 47 men with complete data. Signal detection methods were used to identify dietary factors associated with PSA change. **Results:** The intervention and control groups did not differ statistically on any demographic or disease-related factor. Although the intervention group experienced decreases of 39% in intakes of saturated fatty acid (SFA as percent of total calories) ($p<0.0001$) and 12% in total energy intake (218kcal/day, $p<0.05$), no difference in PSA change was observed by intervention status. Signal detection methods indicated that in men increasing their consumption of fruit, 56% experienced no rise in PSA (vs. 29% in men who did not increase their fruit intake). Among men who increased fruit and fiber intakes, PSA increased in 83% of participants who also increased saturated fatty acid intake (vs. 44% in participants who decreased or maintained saturated fatty acid intake). **Conclusion:** Results are discussed in the context of conventional treatment strategies that were more aggressive when this study was being conducted in the mid-2000s. Positive health changes in a number of lifestyle parameters were observed with the intervention, and both increased fruit and reduced saturated fat intakes were associated with maintaining PSA levels in men with biochemically recurrent disease.



Combined Therapy Using Acupressure Therapy, Hypnotherapy, and Transcendental Meditation versus Placebo in Type 2 Diabetes. *J Acupunct Meridian Stud.* 2011 Sep;4(3):183-6. By Bay R, Bay F. from Department of Family Medicine, University Sains Malaysia (USM), Malaysia.

Abstract: Type 2 diabetes is one of the most widespread diseases in the world. The main aim of this research was to evaluate the effect of combined therapy using acupressure therapy, hypnotherapy, and transcendental meditation (TM) on the blood sugar (BS) level in comparison with placebo in type 2 diabetic patients. We used "convenience sampling" for selection of patients with type 2 diabetes; 20 patients were recruited. For collection of data, we used an identical quasi-experimental design called "nonequivalent control group." Therapy sessions each lasting 60-90min were carried out on 10 successive days. We prescribed 2 capsules (containing 3g of wheat flour each) for each member of the placebo group (one for evening and one for morning). Pre-tests, post-tests, and follow-up tests were conducted in a medical laboratory recognized by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of Iran. Mean BS level in the post-tests and follow-up tests for the experimental group was reduced significantly in comparison with the pre-tests whereas in the placebo group no changes were observed. Combined therapy including acupressure therapy, hypnotherapy, and TM reduced BS of type 2 diabetic patients and was more effective than placebo therapy on this parameter.

Motivational and mindfulness intervention for young adult female marijuana users. *J Subst Abuse Treat.* 2011 Sep 20. by de Dios MA, Herman DS, Britton WB, Hagerty CE, Anderson BJ, Stein MD. From Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Providence, RI 02912, USA; Butler Hospital, General Medicine Research Unit, Providence, RI 02906, USA.

Abstract: This pilot study tested the efficacy of a brief intervention using motivational interviewing (MI) plus mindfulness meditation (MM) to reduce marijuana use among young adult females. Thirty-four female marijuana users between the ages of 18 and 29 were randomized to either the intervention group (n = 22), consisting of two sessions of MI-MM, or an assessment-only control group (n = 12). The participants' marijuana use was assessed at baseline and at 1, 2, and 3 months posttreatment. Fixed-effects regression modeling was used to analyze treatment effects. Participants randomized to the intervention group were found to use marijuana on 6.15 (z = -2.42, p = .015), 7.81 (z = -2.78, p = .005), and 6.83 (z = -2.23, p = .026) fewer days at Months 1, 2, and 3, respectively, than controls. Findings from this pilot study provide preliminary evidence for the feasibility and effectiveness of a brief MI-MM for young adult female marijuana users.

[Compiled by Kevin Chen]



Tai Chi for Insomnia

Dr. Irwin studied 112 people (ages 59 to 86). He split them into two groups. 59 people tried Tai Chi, while 53 began health education. Each program took a total of two hours each week and lasted for 25 weeks. Dr. Irwin assessed everyone's self-rated sleep quality after 25 weeks. He used the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). It is a tool that measures sleep in seven different areas. Patients simply fill out the survey and add the component scores together to get a global PSQI score. The PSQI is very accurate. A study at the University Hospital of Luebeck in Germany shows it has 98.7 percent sensitivity in identifying insomnia.

Patients practicing Tai Chi showed major improvements in PSQI scores. Their sleep quality, efficiency, and duration all improved. Tai Chi achieved a rate of treatment response for poor sleep quality that is comparable to levels achieved by treatments of insomnia," says Dr. Irwin.

Dr. Robert J. Thomas is a professor at Harvard Medical School and also the Sleep Medicine Fellowship Director at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Dr. Thomas did a sleep study on patients who experienced heart failure and had sleep difficulties. Ten patients received drugs with diet and exercise counseling. The other eight took hour-long classes of Tai Chi twice a week. Dr. Thomas also concluded that Tai Chi practice enhanced sleep stability and quality of sleep in patients with chronic heart failure.


Learning Tai Chi thoroughly takes a long time. For example, just learning the original long Yang form takes on the average 5 to 6 years. Experienced Tai Chi teachers soon learn that most students cannot learn Tai Chi because they do not devote enough time to practice alone, memory problems, etc. Seniors especially are taken advantage of by false advertising and their misconceptions about Tai Chi. Non-strenuous Qigong for health would be more beneficial, easier to learn and practice.

Many teachers, whose primary source of income is Tai Chi or some other martial art, make up their own

form of 5 - 10 moves or teach some other modified short form incorrectly.

Tai Chi research is frequently done by scientists who have little knowledge of Tai Chi and may select incompetent teachers for their subjects. They are difficult to repeat since teachers claiming to teach the same form modify it. The investigations are usually too short for people to learn any form of Tai Chi and should really be entitled the effects of learning Tai Chi. Many studies do not have any control group and the same results might have been obtained by doing any form of relaxing exercise consistently.


[Supplied by Dr. Martin Eisen]



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Taiji and Qigong Practitioners Report a Cornucopia of Benefits

by Matthew Komelski, Ph.D.

An in-depth qualitative report about the experiences of Taiji/Qigong practitioners enrolled in an intervention study at the University of Illinois has just been published in the *Journal of Aging Research*. (Yang, DeCelle, Reed, Rosengren, Schlagal, and Greene, 2011). This article presents an analysis of interviews with a group (N=8) of elderly (aged 67-82) novice Taiji practitioners who all decided to continue practicing Taiji after completing a 6 month Taiji intervention program. The intent of the study was to explore the personal experiences, motivations, and perceived benefits of the intervention in order to better understand the participants' decision to continue with Taiji after the study had ended.

Although each participant revealed unique and individuated experiences, their accounts also shared important similarities. The study found that the interviewees were all initially motivated to join the Taiji study for physical reasons related mostly to pain and mobility limitations, but by the end of the intervention, each member in the group described complex multidimensional practice benefits (physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual), many of which crossed over into their everyday lives and contributed to their motivations for continuing their Taiji practice after the study had ended. The authors describe this complexity of benefits as the "Hallmark" of the interviewee's experiences.

This point resonates with the findings of several other studies (Docker, 2006; Wenneberg et al., 2004; Kutner, Barnhart, Wolf, McNeely, and Xu, 1997), and closely supports the work of Scholars at Harvard Medical School's Osher Research center, Peter Wayne and Ted Kaptchuk, who have theorized that the mechanisms through which Taiji takes effect are too complex to study using the same methods used to research pharmaceuticals (Wayne and Kaptchuk, 2008). Although this study has the same limitations of any small qualitative study, Yang, DeCelle and colleagues' findings are sure to provide the scientific community with insight into the complex multidimensional nature of the changes experienced by novices who embrace a well-structured Taiji/Qigong program.

In an interview the paper's second author, Sharon DeCelle, commented that this report was the third of three papers investigating the effects of a Taiji intervention designed and taught by Yang Yang in 2003 and 2004. The previous papers (Yang, Verquilen, et al 2007a; Yang, Mariani, et al 2007b) examined intervention outcomes related to physical and immune system function. The purpose of the current paper was to analyze and report on participants' experiences of the intervention. She stated, "We were just amazed at the depth and breadth of the subjective experiences the participants were describing. We hope that other researchers will find this work useful as a way to help capture and analyze the relevant factors that may be inherent to the practice of a conscious mind-body activity, such as Taiji."

Dr. Yang's papers, present paper included, have also addressed another important issue in Taiji/Qigong research by providing clear descriptions of intervention curriculum. Without understanding the exact protocol and curriculum used in a particular Taiji study, it is difficult to make appropriate comparisons between studies. A general lack of detail in the Taiji and Qigong intervention literature has allowed reviews and meta-analyses of Taiji and Qigong to make comparisons without specifying or questioning curricular differences.

This writer is hopeful that the work of Yang and colleagues will help to form the new cutting edge of Taiji research, marking the onset of a period of critical inquiry where practical trials will be better informed about the complexity of Taiji through the inclusion of both participant perspectives and traditional practice paradigms.

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Matthew Komelski teaches taiji through various community organizations in Southwestern Virginia. He has MA in Asian Studies from the University of Hawaii and is currently an adjunct faculty at Virginia Polytechnic & State University in the department of Human Development and the Center for Gerontology. His work focuses on understanding and developing theoretical models to relate the role that mind-body practices can play in community and individual development across the life-course.



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TRAINING TIPS FOR GOING DEEPER INTO TRANQUILITY

BY YANG YANG, PH.D.



photo courtesy of Alice Dodds

Taiji insights sometimes come from unexpected places. It happened to me earlier this year on a visit back home to Illinois. The occasion was a conversation with a good friend who had just retired from the University as a professor. I asked him how his life was now that he had retired. He said, "It is a special kind of feeling: I wake up in the morning without pressure to teach any classes, to meet any deadlines for grant application, to attend administrative meetings, to meet my graduate students . I do not have an agenda for today." Afterwards, I wondered about that feeling because I had never experienced it. These days my efforts are focused on initiating more Taiji/Qigong research projects and disseminating our evidence-based Taiji and Qigong program. On a typical evening, I summarize what I have done during the day and come up with a list of what I am planning to do the next day. I wake up every day with a busy agenda.

I usually practice my sitting meditation in the early morning for about 45 minutes. During the sitting session, thoughts about different projects and other issues pop up. I had been using different techniques to lead myself into tranquility. After the visit, I decided to try this method. At the beginning of my meditation, I now say to myself, I am

retired and I do not have an agenda for today. I remind myself at the very beginning and a couple times during the sitting session. It is amazingly effective.

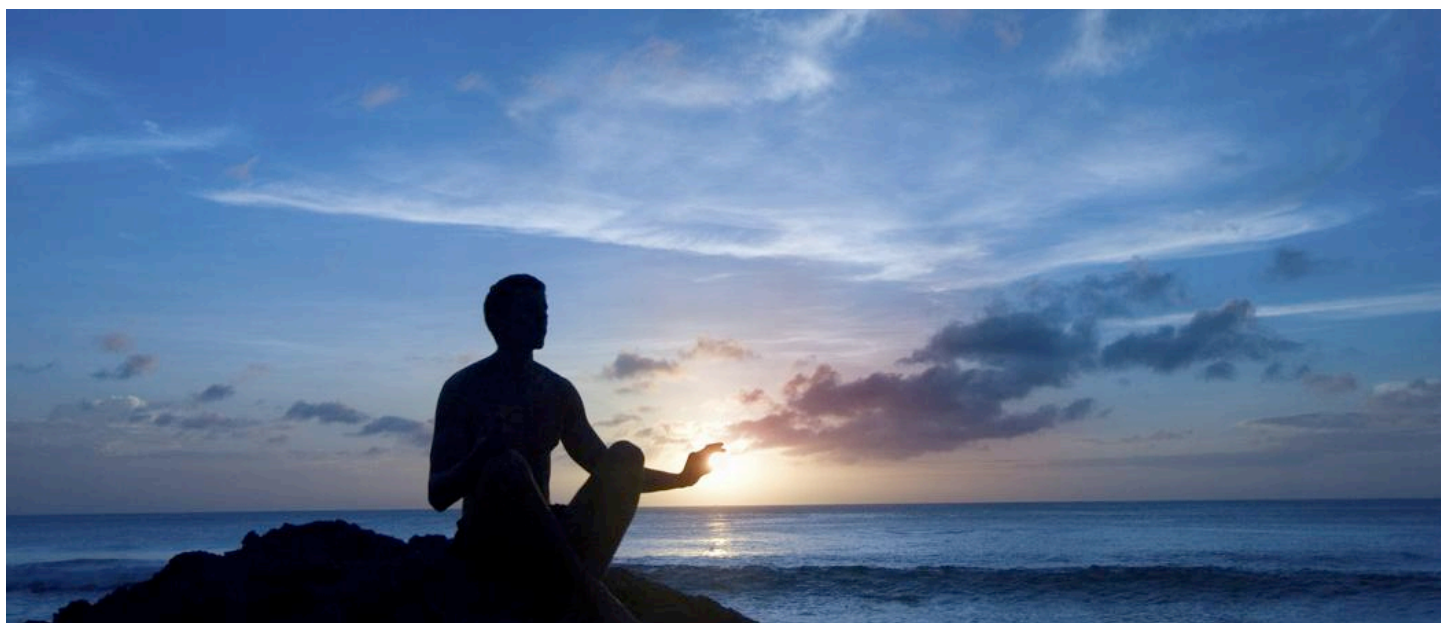
You might have heard the famous Chinese saying regarding the mechanism of Qigong healing: "Why does Qigong have a healing effect? It is because of Song (mental and physical relaxation) and Jing (tranquility of mind)." You may have practiced meditation for 20 or 30 years, and you may think you know relaxation well and you can enter into tranquility easily. You are correct, but you can go deeper by using this technique: say to yourself at the beginning of your meditation: I am retired and I do not have an agenda for today.

Everyone has his or her own favorite techniques for going into tranquility. This is simply another method you can try. It might generate additional Song and Jing. You might come out of your sitting session with a clearer mind and a better focus, and you might have a more tranquil and efficient day.

The occasion was a conversation with a good friend who had just retired from the University as a professor. I asked him how his life was now that he had retired. He said, "It is a special kind of feeling: I wake up in the morning without pressure to teach any classes, to meet any deadlines for grant application, to attend administrative meetings, to meet my graduate students . . . I do not have an agenda for today." Afterwards, I wondered about that feeling because I had never experienced it. These days my efforts are focused on initiating more Taiji/Qigong research projects and disseminating our evidence-based Taiji and Qigong program. On a typical evening, I summarize what I have done during the day and come up with a list of what I am planning to do the next day. I wake up every day with a busy agenda.



Yang Yang, Ph.D.- is one of the few individuals who are recognized within the traditional Taiji and Qigong community as a master practitioner and instructor, as well as an academic researcher who's using western science to explore evidence-based Eastern philosophy and healing arts. He is author of the highly acclaimed book "Taijiquan: The Art of Nurturing, The Science of Power", and in 2006 was honored as the "Qigong Master of the Year" at the 9th World Congress on Qigong and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Yang trained in China under several of the 18th generation grandmasters of the Chen style – Chen Zhaokui, Gu Liuxin, and Feng Zhiqiang. He was a three-time Taiji champion at the Shanghai collegiate tournament and former instructor at the Shanghai Chen Style Taiji research association. To understand the power and mechanics of Taiji and Qigong beyond traditional explanatory frameworks, Master Yang completed a doctorate degree in kinesiology at the University of Illinois, where he remains as an adjunct faculty. Dr. Yang is currently the Director of the Center for Taiji and Qigong Studies www.centerfortaiji.com in New York City.



Every Breath A Prayer

by Solala Towler

We talk a lot about breath in Daoist meditation and qigong practice. It is the breath that anchors our practice. It is the breath that is the doorway between realms. It is the breath that keeps us grounded and connected to our inner core. It is the breath that, in deep meditation, *breathes* us.

We use breath when we recite invocations or Daoist texts such as the Dao de Jing or other religious texts. In this way, the practice of recitation becomes a form



Prayer Wheels at Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet

of qigong. Indeed, Daoism is wonderful in its ability to interweave various practices such as movement, visualization, breath work, and chant into one seamless whole. Most internal alchemical practices use breath—both symbolically, as a bellows for firing up the inner cauldron—and as a way to calm and center our own energy system.

Another way we can use the breath is in prayer. By turning each breath into a prayer, we can become human prayer wheels. In Tibet the devout walk along the road or street spinning their prayer wheels, each one filled with many slips of paper, most commonly consisting of Om Mani Peme Hum, the invocation to

Chenresig, the bodhisattva of wisdom and compassion. It is believed that each time the prayer wheel is turned it releases the prayer into the atmosphere. In each temple, there is often a whole line of large prayer wheels the pilgrims turn as they walk along.

So then, to begin this practice of turning each breath into a prayer set your intention. This means that each time you breathe in or breathe out, decide what you want to send out into the world and what you want to take in. This can be things like sending out peace and healing into the world, and taking in the sorrows and the sufferings of the world in order to transform them into peace and healing. Really spend some time setting this intent; because it is from this that your whole practice will arise. You can always change it at a later date but at first it is important to really lay a strong foundation for your practice. Take some deep, gentle breaths and send out the message, intent, vibration or whatever it is you have decided upon. See that intent really spreading out into the world, from deep inside you. Then, concentrating on the inhale, really feel in your energy body whatever it is that you are breathing in. Feel it fill your energy body once again, where it can be transformed and sent back out again. Or, you may decide to breathe peace and healing both on the out-breath as well as the in-breath. This is entirely up to



Prayer Wheels at Drepung Monastery, Lhasa, Tibet



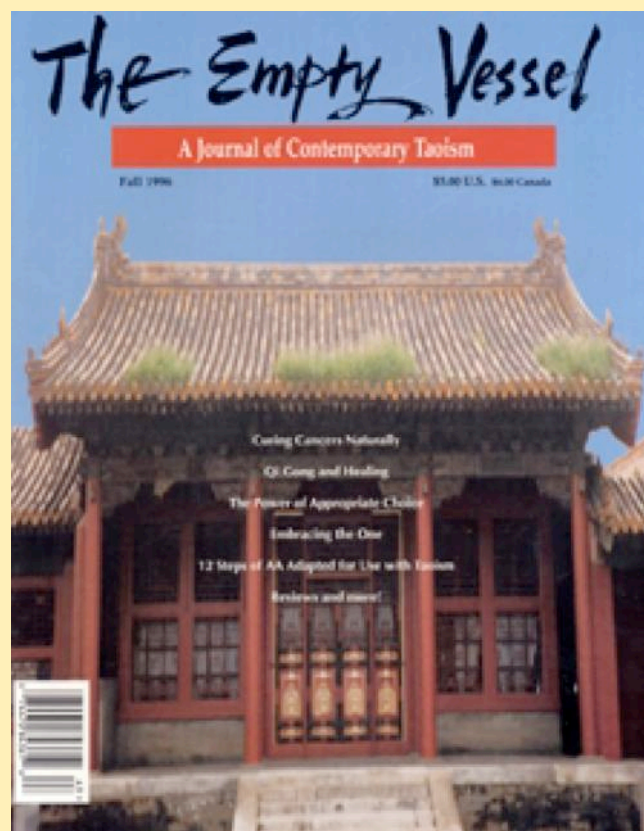
you. The next step is to pay attention. As you go about your day, pay attention to your breath and what the prayer is that you are sending out into the world and breathing back in into your inner world.

From here, it is all a matter of gently bringing yourself back to your breath at various times and remembering that you are also sending out a prayer with each breath. You don't need to think of the message itself but just remind yourself that each of your breaths is a prayer going out into the world. As we breathe thousands of times a day, our prayers go out continually over and over again. In this way, we have become a living prayer wheel, turning for the highest good of all!



Solala Towler is the editor and publisher of *The Empty Vessel: The Journal of Daoist Philosophy and Practice*, now in its 20 year of publication. See it online at www.CommunityAwake.com. Mr. Towler has written a number of books on Daoist thought and practice, including *Cha Dao: the Way of Tea* and *the Inner Chapters of Chuang Tzu*, and has been leading

tours to China to study Qigong and other Daoist practices in the sacred mountains of China since 1997. In addition, he has recorded four CDs of meditation, relaxation, and movement music, using Tibetan singing bowls, and both Chinese and Native flute with harmonic overtone singing. You can find more information about Solala Towler on his website, <http://www.abodetao.com>



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Heart-Mind Qigong: Gateway Through the Mysterious Pass

With excerpts from The Healing Promise of Qi by Roger Jahnke, OMD

Published by Contemporary Books, A Division of McGraw-Hill, April 2002

At the Nine Clouds Mountain Qigong Sanatorium near the Six Harmonies Pagoda in Hangzhou, Zhu Hui, a medical doctor and master teacher of Qigong from Tian Tai Mountain, told this Three Treasures story one morning during a tea break. Master Zhu had been practicing Chinese medicine for nearly 50 years, and his teaching was always a rich mix of medical, Daoist and Buddhist influences.

A young monk felt he was prepared to deepen his cultivation practice and his master gave the assignment to cultivate inner quiet and discover the secret of the source of life and its application to the preservation of health and vitality. He gave the suggestion to focus on the Earth Elixir Field (Di Dan Tian). After some months of practice, the young monk reported to the master that he felt sure that the most practical answer regarding the secret was nourishment, rest and the conservation of Qi and inner resources. The master encouraged the young monk, "You have found the secret to preserve the Jing and sustain the body, but you have not found the source of life." The master teacher asked the young monk if he was still interested in pursuing the deeper secret. The monk nodded and the elder gave him the suggestion to focus on the Heart-Mind Elixir Field (Xin Dan Tian).



This time it was considerably longer before the monk visited the elder. When he returned, now older, he responded that the secret of the source of life and its preservation were associated with accepting what naturally arises and bringing love and compassion into the world. The master agreed and encouraged the monk to continue his good work of compassionate service. The monk said to the master, "I know that I have penetrated to the secret of highly refined interactions of the Qi and the opening of the Heart-Mind. It has inspired me to be of service to my fellow humans. It is clear that this sustains life, my own and others. But I have not determined the secret of the source of life." The master suggested, "Focus on the Celestial Elixir Field (Ling Dan Tian), the entry place of Heaven in the living human being."

Some years passed. When the younger monk returned he was older. The elder monk said, "Tell me in one word". The younger monk said, "Unity". They both smiled quietly, knowing their was nothing more to say. They parted, both knowing that even though they would not meet again, they were always together at the Source.

When people turn to Qi cultivation, like the young monk, the focus is usually on health and the preservation of the body. When people discover the magnitude of the power of the Qi (after all it is the energy that runs the entire universe), body health and longevity frequently become secondary benefits of attaining peace of mind and heart.

In the tradition of Qigong, it is believed that once you taste or experience one of the treasures that you are destined to pursue the cultivation of that treasure. As you begin to deeply understand and experience your Body Essence (Jing), your Heart-Mind (Xin) or your Spirit (Shen), you will likely be inspired to cultivate them because the promise is so great. When we cultivate Body Essence it leads to vitality and physical healing. When we purposefully access the Heart-Mind

and cultivate the treasure of Heart-Mind Elixir it nourishes peace of mind and emotional healing. It is a rare person who does not become attracted to having peace of mind once they have begun to experience it.

The Spirit does not require healing; Shen is inherently and supremely well. Shen resides within the Heart-Mind longing to be revealed, expressed, and radiated. When the Heart-Mind is cleared of its typical restraints including fear, judgment and all sorts of trauma, Shen expresses as radiance. The cultivation of the treasure of Spirit can trigger the release of miracles.

The Heart-Mind is the secret gate through which thoughts, feelings, emotions and attitudes are cleansed and purified. The sincere deepening of Qi cultivation practice requires that intention and will become major focus areas in practice and in life. In ancient traditions, retiring to a cave in the mountains or going to the desert, to disassociate from the material world were primary ways to pass through this secret gate. That is why it is often called the “Mysterious Pass”. It was also called the “dark feminine” in many translations because the Heart-Mind gate operates more on surrender



Heart-Mind (Xin)

communication and collaboration than on conquest or control. The legendary Bodhidharma, who many revere for having brought Buddhism to China and who was legendary founder of the Shaolin Temple, faced the wall of a cave in deep meditation for nine years. The intensity of his Heart-Mind purification burned his image into the cave wall.

In modern times, however, most people find it difficult to clear the Heart-Mind, even with years of meditation practice. The intensity of the busy and confused world constantly challenges and activates the nervous system, the heart and the mind. If distraction, busy-ness, constant list making or worry and judgment (of self and others) challenge your Qi cultivation, consider integrating holistic mind/body medicine and group support or counseling along with Qigong and Tai Chi, as complementary tools for helping to clear the Heart-Mind.

In other words the fire of intent that is required to change Heart-Mind integrity (behavior) is so dynamic that it radiates a profound heat. This suggests that changing the habits of the personality (Heart-Mind) will require rigor and discipline – Heart-Mind fire.

Intentful mind leads the Qi. You can combine Qigong practice with meditation, purposeful declaration, and visualization into powerful imagery and focus that can be used in either stillness or movement. In the relaxed state, mind (intent) with directed visualization or inner affirmation combined with the body movement and purposeful breath practice purify the Heart-Mind Qi.



Spirit (Shen)

When you make the choice to “let go” of a grudge or forgive someone who has been unfair, you are removing a factor that may have been depleting or stagnating your Qi -- inner resources. The grudge or withheld forgiveness is not hurting the begrudged or the unforgiven one. Instead, the damage is done to the one who holds the grudge or withholds forgiveness. Holding these kinds of feelings constrains the Heart-Mind, exhausts the Qi and overshadows the incredible but buried splendor of the radiant Shen spirit.

Declarations and blessings in chants or prayers may be integrated into Qigong practice to sustain the benefits throughout the day – starting upon waking and including the moments before and even continuing into sleep. Zhu Hui, was from the Tain Tai mountain – a melting pot of Daoist and Buddhist influences. He often said it is the mind (Heart-Mind) focus that makes what appears to be a simple exercise into a powerful Qigong practice. He often used the following chant in conjunction with his teaching of one of his favorite Buddhist forms, Lotus Flower Qigong.

Extra Qi is pulled out into nature,
Disturbed Qi is pulled down into the earth.
In this my heart is purified.
Who seeks Dao,
Will achieve Dao.

We could as easily say, more contemporarily:

Spent emotional and physical energy is naturally pulled out into nature,
Disturbed and distressed emotional energy is pulled down into the earth.
In this my heart and mind are purified.
Who seeks awareness of Oneness and Unity,
Will achieve Oneness and Unity.

This declaration, and any declarations like it, stated with sincerity and intent helps the practitioner to sustain the focus on purifying the Qi in the practice. Everything from physical sickness to mental/emotional disharmony is being dispelled – Qi channels and pathways are cleared with the power of intent. “Who seeks Dao, achieves Dao” is a promise of Qigong, Tai Chi and all forms of Qi cultivation. It acknowledges that cultivation in a purposeful state will connect the practitioner with his or her true state of radiant wellbeing and eternal spiritual life.



Dr. Roger Jahnke, OMD – has practiced clinical Chinese medicine for over 30 years. He has traveled to China 8 times to research Qigong and Tai Chi in universities, hospitals, temples and sacred mountain sites. He is a co-founder of the National Qigong Association and is director of training and research at the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi IIQTC, <http://IIQTC.org> and <http://FeelTheQi.com>. Dr. Jahnke is the author of *The Healer Within*, which is widely used in wellness and health promotion programs, and *The Healing Promise of Qi*, which became an instant classic of mind-body practice and energy medicine. He, along with his colleagues have recently published the most comprehensive review of the Qigong and Tai Chi research literature in the *American Journal of Health Promotion* (AJHP). The Integral Qigong and Tai Chi Teacher Training program at the IIQTC is considered by many to be among the most credible Teacher Training programs outside of China. Please contact: DrJahnke@HealthAction.net <http://IIQTC.org> <http://FeeltheQi.com>

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The Purpose of Medical Qigong is to Balance Yin & Yang

by George Xavier Love, OMD

Yin and Yang - Diagnosis

The Chinese system of diagnosis and treatment is a commonsense approach to healing with over 5000 years of proven efficacy. The general concepts of balance are similar to those used throughout the Orient, in East Indian Ayurvedic medicine, and even by native Americans.

The most important concept to understand about the system involves the ability to diagnose imbalances using the theory of Yin and Yang.

The Yin/Yang theory is a teaching method and does not define anything absolute. It shows the way to develop and intuitive approach to diagnoses and treatment. Thus it is important to avoid getting too attached to the symbols Yin and Yang for they are only tools.

Yin and Yang represent the two essential opposites that make up all opposites. They find their physiological roots in the complementary action of the adrenal glands. The adrenal cortex controls the more Yin, parasympathetic nervous system dealing with body maintenance, including digestion, circulation, elimination, anti-inflammation and reproduction. The adrenal-medulla controls the sympathetic nervous system which is involved in the anti-stress or "fight or flight" response, the immune system, protection and stimulation of primary bodily response. Thus, the Ancient Chinese texts say that the root of Yin and Yang in our bodies is in the kidneys, meaning the small adrenal glands, which are attached to the kidneys.

Treatment is based upon counterbalancing Yin-cold-deficient-chronic diseases with Yang-warm-full foods and herbs and Yang-hot-excess-acute disease with Yin-cool-empty foods and herbs.

Theories of Yin & Yang

1. Infinity divides itself into Yin & Yang.
2. Yin & Yang result from the infinite movement of the universe.
3. Yin is centripetal and Yang is centrifugal; together they produce all energy and phenomena
4. Yin attracts Yang and Yang attracts Yin
5. Yin repels Yin and Yang repels Yang
6. The force of attraction and repulsion between the two phenomena is proportional to the difference in their Yin- Yang constitution.
7. All Phenomena are ephemeral and are constantly changing their Yin and Yang constitution.
8. Nothing is solely Yin or Yang; everything involves polarity.
9. Nothing is neutral; either Yin or Yang is always more abundant.
10. Yin and Yang are relative; large Yin attracts small Yin; Large Yang attracts small Yang.
11. At the extremity of their manifestation, Yin produces Yang and Yang produces Yin.
12. All physical forms are Yin at the center and Yang at the surface.

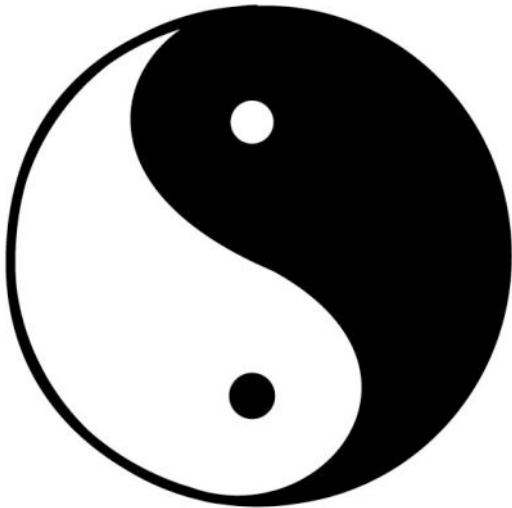
To illustrate these opposites, the chart of Qualities of Yin and Yang shows examples of the differing attributes. The most important pairs of opposites to evaluate are as follows:

| Yin | Yang |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| chills | inflammation |
| internal imbalance | external imbalance |
| | Bacteria, virus, fungus, parasite |
| chronic | acute |
| damp | dry |
| weak | excess |

In the process of diagnosis, one looks for Yin-like or Yang-like conditions in both the basic constitution of the person and in the nature of the ailment. The chart of Yin conditions and Yang conditions shows examples of characteristics you might find present.

Laws Governing Yin and Yang

- 1. The ten thousand things come from one unified field called infinity
- 2. All things must changes.
- 3. All antagonisms are complementary.
- 4. No two things are identical
- 5. Every condition has an opposite.
- 6. The extreme of any condition will produce signs of the opposite
- 7. Whatever has a beginning has an end.



| Yin Conditions | |
|-------------------|--|
| Chills | poor circulation; desire for warmth cold hands and feet; subnormal fevers; muscle cramps and spasms; |
| Deficiency/Weak | anemia; underweight; clear urine; vitamin, mineral or protein deficiencies; paleness; low vitality; timidity; shallow, weak breath; fatigue and tiredness |
| Damp | history of eating raw fruits and vegetables; frequent urination; thin, clear mucous watery stools containing undigested foods; |
| Yang Conditions | |
| Heat/Inflammation | inflammatory; high fevers; burning sensation; hot hands and feet irritability; desire for cool things; |
| Excess | rapid breathing; loud, coarse speech; forceful; high blood pressure; insomnia; overweight; red face; cloudy urine |
| Dry | constipation, dry mouth; mucous is thick (white, yellow or tinged with blood); history of eating meat |

Since one rarely ever sees purely Yin or Yang conditions but rather a combination of both Yin and Yang, with Medical Qigong, a combination of exercises should be performed to create balance.

QUALITIES OF YIN AND YANG

| Quality | Yin | Yang |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tendency | to condense | to develop |
| Position | inward | outward |
| Structure | space | time |
| Direction | descending to earth | rising to heaven |
| Color | dark, blue | bright, red |
| Temperature | cold | hot |
| Weight | heavy | light |
| Catalyst | water | fire |
| Light | dark | light |
| Construction (surface) | interior | exterior |
| Work | psychological | physical |
| Attitude | gentle, negative | active, positive |
| Introspective | outgoing, intuitive | aggressive |
| Biological Classification | vegetable | animal |
| Energy | feminine | masculine |
| Nerves | parasympathetic | sympathetic |
| Taste | sour, bitter | acrid, pungent, sweet, mild |



George Love Jr. is a primary care physician licensed in the state of Florida since 1986. As a Doctor of Oriental Medicine DOM and licensed Acupuncture Physician, he is qualified to prescribe herbs (herbalist) and therapeutic diets (food therapist). He is the former Dean of Acupuncture Studies at Barna College of Health Science in Ft. Lauderdale, and the author of six health books including S.H.I.E.L.D. Your Immune System in Just 12 Weeks, Meridian Chi Gong, You Won't find Love in the Refrigerator and Ear Reflexology Massage Your Ears to Health. He has been involved in the Alternative Health industry for 30 years both as an educator and health care provider. He teaches Self Healing workshops across the country on Ear Reflexology, Meridian Chi Gong, 4 Doors to Healthy Happiness and 21 Days to Wellness.



The Results are in from the Rhine Center Experiment.
These results may shock energy field workers with their implications.

by Sifu Don Brown, MSIS

Qigong, Pranic, Reiki, Yoga and other types of energy practices tap into a source from the bioenergy field. In this article, Instructor Don Brown reveals what every energy professional practitioner needs to know about bioenergy as it relates to biophotons.

“Recently, Sifu Cindy Cicero did which many of us engaged in chi training would love to do: Sifu Cicero was able to have her bio electromagnetic energy [chi] measured via a well-documented and innovative technique. With an open mind and lighthearted spirit, Sifu Cicero allowed the scientists at the Rhine Research Center, located on the beautiful campus of Duke University, to measure her electromagnetic output.

The text that follows introduces the Rhine Research Center and serves as a backdrop to the experiment in which Sifu Cicero participated and; provides multiple layers of detail describing electromagnetic energy and the biophotonic nature of the human being.

The Rhine Research Center

Established in 1927, the Rhine Research Center was Duke University’s laboratory focused on the investigation of psychic phenomena. In fact, the Rhine Research Center gave birth to the well-known Zener [ESP] cards, and helped pave the way for the rigorous field of scientific study we now call parapsychology.

Although their mission statement has broadened somewhat over the years, the Rhine center, now a standalone complex, is better poised to investigate the study of “human consciousness - its reach, its reality, its durability, its healing capacity, and its spiritual dimension”. This mission statement dovetails perfectly into the practice and charter of The International Online School of Bio-Energy Training.

Bio-Emissions Lab Experiment

As previously mentioned, Sifu Cindy Cicero had the unique and privileged opportunity to have her bio electromagnetic energy measured by the scientists at the Rhine Research Center. In truth, the privilege is ours, as Sifu Cicero provided us with a video of the experiment as well as a first person account of her experience. for more info see: Bio-Emissions Lab Experiment.

Momentarily, we will turn our attention away from the experiment and the term “biophoton”, and look to the more widely understood term “photon”. After gaining an understanding of the nature and behavior of the photon, we will return to Sifu Cicero’s experience at the Rhine Research Center.

The Electromagnetic Spectrum

Maxwell introduced the concept of electromagnetic waves in 1865 via his groundbreaking paper “*A Dynamical Theory of the Electromagnetic Field*”. It was here that Maxwell established that electric and magnetic fields travel through space in the form of waves, and that light is an electromagnetic phenomenon as well.

Light waves, identified through their wavelengths and frequency, come in many flavors.

According to How Stuff Works: “The size of a wave is measured as its wavelength, which is the distance between any two corresponding points on successive waves, usually peak to peak or trough to trough. The wavelengths of the light we can see range from 400 to 700 nanometers (or billionths of a meter). But the full range of wavelengths included in the definition of electromagnetic radiation extends from 0.1 nanometers, as in gamma rays, to centimeters and meters, as in radio waves.”

Furthermore: “The frequency is the number of waves that pass a point in space during any time interval, usually one second. We measure it in units of cycles (waves) per second, or hertz. The frequency of visible light is referred to as color, and ranges from 430 trillion hertz, seen as red, to 750 trillion hertz, seen as violet.”

Please take special note of the information regarding “wavelength” and “frequency”; these concepts play an integral part in the Rhine Research Center. This is important because, energy - especially electromagnetic energy, is measurable.

The relationship between the energy in an electromagnetic wave is proportional to its frequency:

High frequency electromagnetic waves have high energy

Low frequency electromagnetic waves have low energy

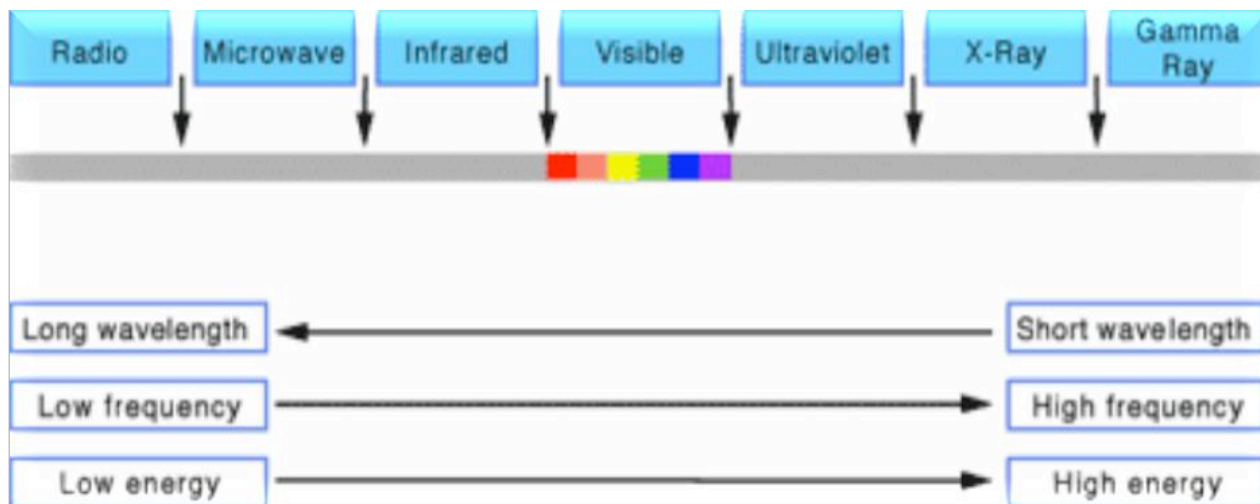


Figure 1: [Light Frequencies](#)

In Figure 1, we can see that the shorter the wavelength, the higher the frequency, and thus, the higher the energy of the electromagnetic wave. Unfortunately, scaling in Figure 1 is inaccurate. In fact, “visible light occupies only one-thousandth of a percent of the spectrum”.

In Figure 2, “The Electromagnetic Spectrum” we see a better visualization between the length of an electromagnetic wave in comparison to objects with which we are generally familiar.

Also worthy of note in Figure 2 is the inclusion of “temperature” in relation to wavelength. This too is very important to the Rhine Research Center experiment for reasons discussed later in this discourse; furthermore, the concept of temperature, including sensitivity and control of, is a foundational cornerstone of The International Online School of Bio-Energy Training. The article “Chi Energy and Temperature of Light” provides well documented research into this abstract concept.

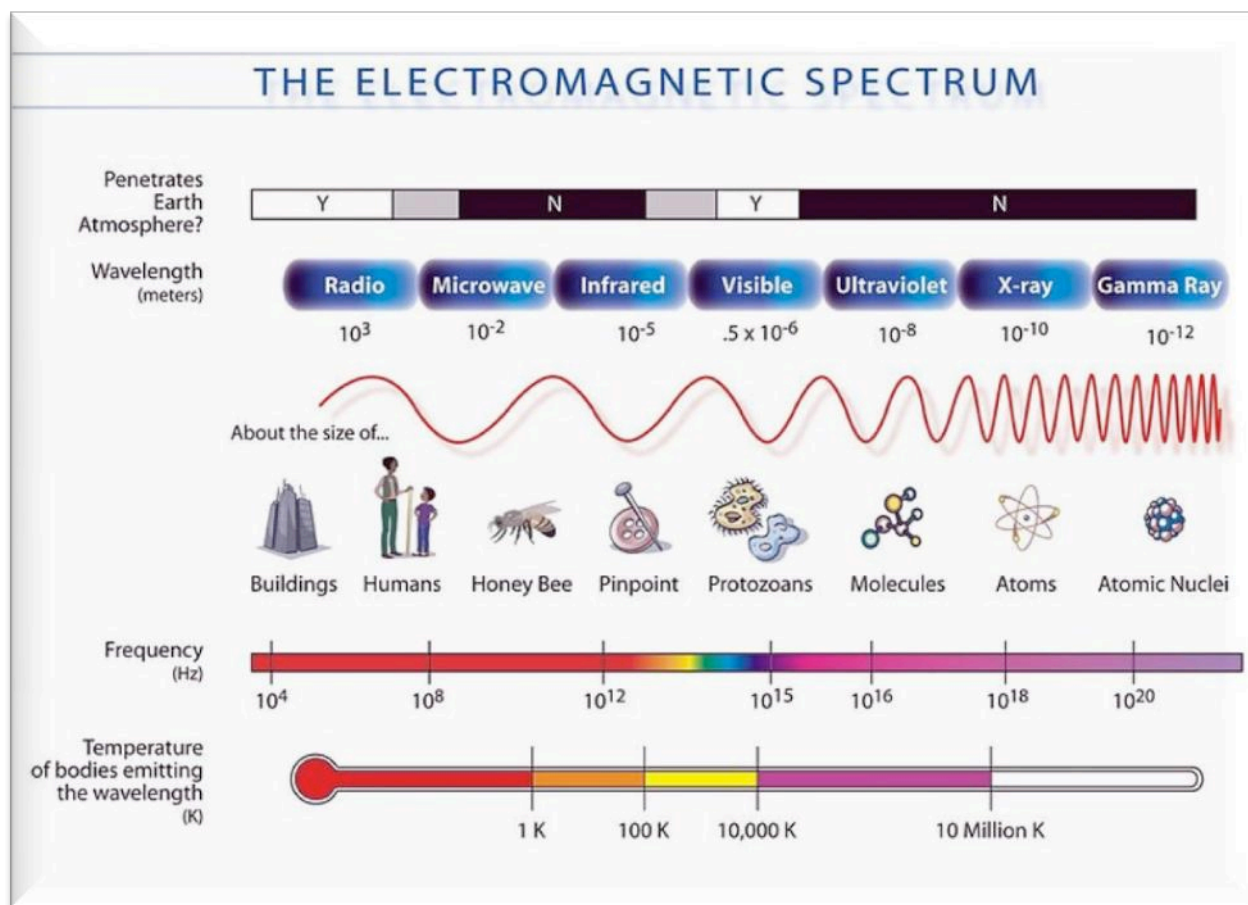


Figure 2: [The Electromagnetic Spectrum](#)

Here we can see as we did in Figure 1, Gamma rays have the highest levels of electromagnetic energy. Generally speaking, Gamma rays are extremely dangerous to humans, and most animal life forms; however, when focused, Gamma rays have the ability to save lives. Gamma-knife radio-surgery is a noninvasive type of surgery used to treat brain tumors. According to the Mayo Clinic:

“The precision of gamma-knife radio-surgery results in minimal damage to healthy tissues surrounding the target and, in some cases, a lower risk of side effects compared with other types of radiation therapy. Also, gamma-knife radio-surgery is often a safer option than traditional brain surgery. Gamma-knife radio-surgery is usually a one-time therapy completed in a single day.”

Awareness of the gamma knife is very important. Although many people training in traditional Qigong programs never reach this level of energy development and projection, Sifu Cicero’s experience at the Rhine Research Center makes it clear that it is not only within reason, but expected that practitioners following the training curriculum of The International Online School of Bio-Energy will find themselves at this echelon of energy cultivation. [For students already engaged in this methodology, you should get a better appreciation for the safeguards built into the system, designed to keep you from causing harm to yourself and to others while developing your burgeoning abilities.]

Although it may not be readily apparent, everything presented above forms a building block for understanding the topics to follow; leading to the apex of this discourse: human beings not only give off light in the form of biophotons, but are, in fact, at the most rudimentary level, made up of light itself.

Atomic Structure

The term “atomic” is synonymous with immense power and the potential of danger: from nuclear power plants to atomic weapons, harvesting the energetic properties of the atom has been a scientific goal since the discovery of the atom.

Returning to Figure 2, we see that atoms are small, very small, and reside in the range of the X-ray wavelength. Just to the right of the atom is the “atomic nuclei”, which is even smaller, and has a higher level of [potential] energy.

We all know that atoms are the key building blocks of all matter in the Universe, but let's take a moment to refresh our memories regarding the atom's internal structure, as this plays directly into the topic at hand.

The American Nuclear Society provides a great amount of information regarding the properties and behavior of atoms. According to the ANS, atoms consist of "protons (with a positive electrical charge), electrons (with a negative electrical charge), and neutrons (with no electrical charge)". Protons and neutrons gather in a dense cluster, called the nucleus, while electrons orbit the nucleus much like weather satellites orbit the Earth. Here is where things get interesting.

Electrons are quirky characters. Contrary to popular belief, electrons do not float about as if a mist or cloud around the nucleus. Like many of us who have a favorite chair or a preferred cereal bowl, electrons have a preferred orbit; a lane, so to speak, where each electron travels in groupings: two; six; 10 and; 14.

The nature of, or simply the fact of the electron orbit, is the critical component in this discourse. Although there are many ways to produce photons, each mechanism revolves around the same concept: an electron, when energized, leaves its natural orbit and occupies a higher than normal orbital sub shell. The electron, seeking normalcy, sheds the extra energy, falling back to its normal, lower orbit. The shed energy is a photon. Figure 3 is a graphic image describing this process.

Furthermore, according to the atom/element, each photon emitted has the characteristic of the specific wavelength of electromagnetic energy; this is to say that the photon has the corresponding color and frequency that matches the distance the electron falls.

Figure 3: Birth of a Photon

The website How Stuff Works provides an easily recognizable example of photon emission in everyday life: fluorescent lamps.

"These forms of lighting pass an electric current through a gas to make the gas emit light. The colors of gas-discharge lamps vary widely depending on the identity of the gas and the construction of the lamp."

This is to say, the photon produced by the energized electron falling back to its regular orbit coincides with a specific wavelength. The photon's color is a direct correlation to its energy; this is the photon's wavelength in the EM spectrum [Figures 1 & 2] and thus, the color of visible light.

What is truly remarkable is this: it turns out that humans also produce light. This intercellular luminescence is termed: biophotons.

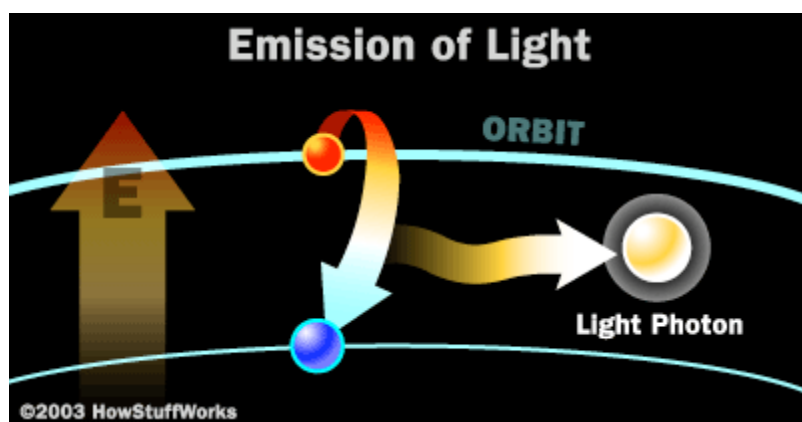
Biophotons

While studying chemicals in an attempt to gain a better understanding of causes of cancer, a German theoretical biophysicist by the name of Fritz-Albert Popp, stumbled upon something so groundbreaking that over 300 years later, scientists are still trying to uncover the depth and potential of its meaning.

Fritz-Albert Popp discovered that the human body emits light.

He coined the phrase "biophoton" to describe this phenomenon: Biophotons are weaklight emitted by photons within the cells of our bodies.

The role the biophoton plays is multifaceted. Experimental data confirms that biophotons transmit information. Popp's research and initial speculations on biophotons is the focus of rigorous scientific studies. Today, multiple journals and many institutes have a mission to demonstrate that biophotons are integral to health, and to the absence [or healing] of illness. Jule Klotter's article "Light Cancer and Popp" offers details regarding Popp's initial research and findings in this field.



The Biophotonics Research Institute provides an excellent article shedding light on this emerging science. In accordance with Popp's research, Elizabeth Bauer writes: "The biophoton phenomenon is not confined to "thermal" radiation in the infrared range. It is well known that biophotons are emitted also in the range from visible up to the UV ranges of the electromagnetic spectrum. The intensity of biophotons can be registered from a few photons per second in a square centimeter surface area to several hundred photons per second in a square centimeter from every living system."

This ties directly into Sifu Cicero's experience at the Rhine Research Center. Using very sensitive equipment in a controlled environment, including a photo multiplier tube and an EMI Shielded Room, the scientists at the Rhine Research Center counted the numbers of biophotons emitted by Sifu Cicero as well as their wavelength/frequency.

As per the "Bio-emissions Lab Experiment" video and Sifu Cicero's first person account, the scientists performing the experiment were markedly impressed with Sifu Cicero's ability to raise, lower, and raise again her energy projections. In fact, Sifu Cicero is now the fifth person in 30 years with over thousands of men and women performing this experiment, to reach the energy levels of the Ultraviolet frequencies.

Looking back to Figure 2, it is clear why the scientists were so very impressed. The Ultraviolet frequency/wavelength is not only very high in energy, but also incredibly hot. Sifu Cicero's ability to raise her energy, at will, on demand and on command, to such a high level is impressive in and of itself. What raises the bar, is that at the same time, Sifu Cicero was able keep herself physically cool while projecting her energy within the Ultraviolet range; mindboggling indeed. The International Online School of Bio-Energy Training methodology and curriculum are architected in such a way that Sifu Cicero's results are the norm, not the exception.

Human beings: Beings of Light

In his epic masterpiece "Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back", visionary George Lucas' character Master Yoda spoke these words not to a young Luke Skywalker, but to all of us the world over: "Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter." Fritz-Albert Popp's research, presented herein, confirms this startling truth. Yes, we are children born of light.

As you continue your journey, take time to reflect on the concepts highlighted in this discourse, as well as the various articles referenced. Decide for yourself what this means to you and for you. We are no longer bound to the mundane. We are so much more than we ever knew – and we are discovering more each and every day.

Enjoy the journey; be well; be mindful.



Research and Development - Certified Instructor Sifu Don Brown, MSIS

Don Brown began his training with Sifu Jones in 1997. His background is an amalgam of intellectual curiosity, stemming from his introduction to the concept of chi in traditional martial arts [tai chi and kenjutsu] and similarities between the two. Don's scientific curiosity, background in Engineering (Masters of Science in Information Sciences) and [admitted] skeptical nature make him a perfect research assistant for the SifuDon's interviews focus on quantum physics and how the latest scientific data correlate to chi, and more specifically, the School of Chi Energy method. The information conveyed therein is backed with hours upon hours of research, and is explained in layman terms; Don takes great strides in not "dumbing it down", but more importantly, step by step, educating you on the nuances of each topic, so that a complete and thorough understanding of the information can be shared by the practitioners, and incorporated into our daily lives.

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Transforming Sexual Energy with Water-and-Fire Alchemy

by Michael Winn

(excerpt of book chapter from "Daoist Body Cultivation")

My contribution to the book, "Daoist Body Cultivation" is a 30-page chapter on transforming sexual energy that I consider the most comprehensive essay on the topic I've yet written. I have excerpted it below, including my personal experience of "soul sex" or the "valley orgasm"; what Lao Tzu would describe as the opening and closing of the gates of the Mysterious Female.

Most spiritual paths dislike getting into the topic of sex, as it is invariably messy. However, 99 times out of 100, religious efforts to "transcend" sex mean avoiding or suppressing the true essence of the sexual experience. Cutting to the essence of sex is tricky due to its literally "sticky" nature. We tend to embroil our emotional and body-as-self identity in the labyrinth of attachments that sex can create.

My chapter summarizes the principles within three major Daoist approaches to sex:

- 1) medical sexology, to improve body health
- 2) "bedroom arts" skill, to improve love relationships
- 3) inner alchemy for self-realization, by resolving inner-male vs. inner-female soul level sexual tension.

Excerpts from my chapter:

"The life-force of the valley never dies -
This is called the dark female.
The gateway of the dark female -
This is called the root of the world.

Wispy and delicate,
it only seems to be there,
Yet its productivity is bottomless.

Verse 6, Daodejing

"The sexual fertility expressed in this image of a cosmic female vagina highlights the connection between cosmology and sexuality found in this famous Daoist classic (460 BCE). Nature is experienced by the sage who is in touch with the Dao as a continuous cosmic orgasm. Dao sexually births physical creation through the pulsating yin-yang process arising from original breath (yuanqi).



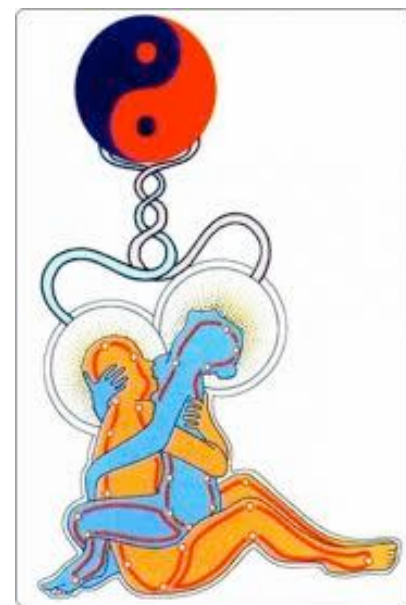
"Sexual love is one of the most powerful human experiences. Since ancient times, Daoists have sought to tap the power of sexuality to heal the body, deepen love relationships, and achieve elevated states of enlightenment. The Chinese texts on sexology are the oldest in the world, dating back about twenty-three hundred years (see Ruan 1991). Amongst the five major

sexology texts are question and answer dialogues between the Yellow Emperor and his celestial advisors or sexual consorts on how to best cultivate sexual Qi for long life and immortality.

"The body-centered cosmology of these early sexology texts, and the oral traditions of different Daoist groups have led over time to a wide spectrum of sexual practices. These range from ritualized physical sexual intercourse, through celibate contemplation of sexual essences copulating within the body, to conscious subtle-body love making with a partner at a distance. Inner sexual alchemy goes one-step further - it immerses the adept in cosmic love-making, the sexually coupled polarities of nature—sun and moon, of humans sexually merging their essence with planetary and star beings.

"The notion that sexual energy is linked to eternal life at first glance seems counter-intuitive. The cycle of sexual birth and death defines human mortality. The idea that ephemeral sexual desires hold a hidden key to immortal life was codified by later Daoist schools of water-and-fire internal alchemy. Sexual essence or jingqi, is seen by them as the extremely fine spiritual substance of the soul that can be refined into the “elixir” (dan) of eternal life. Cultivating sexual essence is the human secret to realizing the workings of the impersonal Dao, the opening and closing of its “mysterious gate.”

"The most spiritual Daoist sexual practice is internal cultivation (neidan gong), literally “inner elixir skill,” popularly translated as inner alchemy. This is usually done as a solo meditative practice. The adept sexually couples his or her yin and yang essences internally as part of a lengthy process of defining energetic channels and opening up an inner body space or “cauldron.” The adept’s inner male and inner female are united within this cauldron, causing a process of spiritual rebirth. This practice is often not seen by outsiders as a sexual practice, since there is no physical sexual partner visible.



"The more rare “dual internal cultivation” practice, on the other hand, involves a pair of high-level cultivators having energetic sex (without touching) as part of their meditative practice...Here is my own experience of "soul sex": "Joyce and I removed our clothes. We sat cross-legged on the bed facing each other, naked. It was our intent to meditate before making love. We both did testicle or ovarian breathing and circulated the sexual energy in the orbit to harmonize our sexual feelings in our three dantian. We each smiled to our inner heart, deep in the body’s core. There was no visualization or attempt to create any experience – we were simply in a state of naked surrender to each other. In deep silence, we noticed that a new and unusual pulsation began to envelop us.

"It felt to me like a simultaneous yin and yang orgasm. The yang orgasm was my energy body pulsing with Joyce’s, expanding out in waves, which became inconceivably vast. We zoomed faster than the speed of

light past planets and galaxies and then ecstatically merged into formless swirls of light and sound. The yang orgasm kept exploding out beyond our bodies.

"The yin orgasm was an equal and opposite implosion deep within our bodies. Some powerful gravitational vortex kept sucking us into a tiny point that was incredibly heavy. I could feel that Joyce was inside that point as well. I felt deeply embodied and centered within my personal self.

"The yin and yang orgasm was a marriage of sexual counter-forces. They held the space for a neutral observer in us to perfectly experience both orgasmic feelings at once. We sat in this state for half an hour, amazed and dumbfounded. It finally subsided. We fell into each other's arms, knowing that a great and sacred mystery had been revealed to us. Our love-making was lovely and tender, but somehow anti-climatic. The shared yin-yang orgasm is what we remember; it was forever seared into our souls, and is what impelled us to marry.

"This valley orgasm permanently shifted the nature of our sexual relationship. Our subtle bodies would quickly attune and later we found we could exchange deep sexual energy for hours, lying beside each other, naked or clothed, without any physical stimulation or intercourse. It was a direct exchange of our sexed subtle bodies. As our energy bodies mingled and coupled, we were infused with loving spiritual qualities. This led to long periods of spontaneous abstention from physical intercourse that could last for many months, but with exquisitely sublime daily subtle body coitus. As our subtle bodies crystallized and became more "real", we eventually graduated to astral sex – the ability to intentionally exchange orgasmic subtle energy at great distances.

Excerpt from: Chapter 6: Transforming Sexual Energy with Water and Fire Alchemy
from the book: Daoist Body Cultivation edited by Livia Kohn, Three Pines Press (May 2006)
SBN-13: 978-1931483056

For more information on this book, please visit: <http://www.healingtaousa.com/blk1.html>



Amber Sculpture



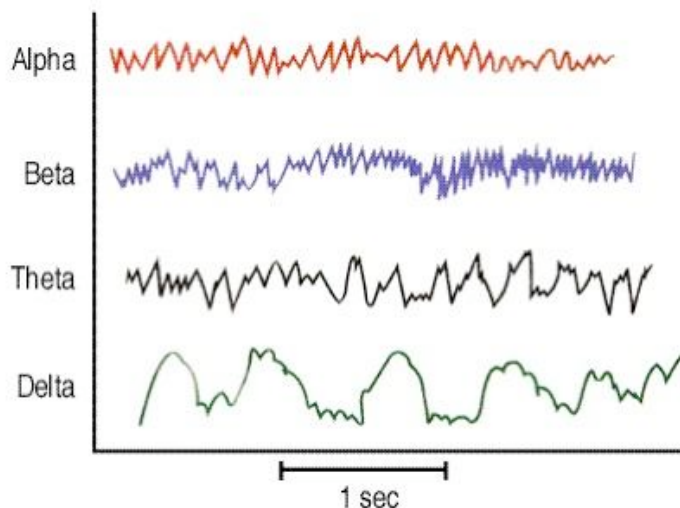
Michael Winn is the founder of Healing Tao University with 30 Tao summer retreats in Asheville, N.C. and is the past President of the National Qigong Association. Michael has over 30 years experience in Taoist arts and leads an annual China Dream Trip. He has co-authored 7 books with Mantak Chia, and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

The Benefits of Getting More Alpha Waves!

by Niraj Naik, M.Pharm.

Our brain produces different brainwaves based on our mood and state of mind during the day. They can be measured using an EEG machine.

Is this what your typical morning feels like?



You wake up suddenly out of deep sleep (Delta brainwaves) with a loud alarm. Almost immediately, you feel a sense of stress from the pressure of getting to work on time and facing the day ahead (Beta brainwaves)

Then, you jumpstart your day by grabbing a caffeine-rich cup of coffee or tea. Caffeine actually suppresses alpha and theta brainwave activity, keeping you in beta for most of the day.

The heavy work load, constant stimulation of the day job and managing the household, means most people are forced into a beta state from the time they wake up in the morning right until they get to bed and fall into a deep sleep (Delta brainwaves) exhausted from the day.

Beta waves tend to be produced when you are forced to do a task you would not normally choose to do and do just out of the need to survive or that requires a lot of intense problem solving, i.e most people's day jobs and career choices.

So, unfortunately, this unnatural and hectic lifestyle means people are forced from delta into beta, then back into delta with little room for alpha and theta brainwave activity.

The Alpha brainwave state is actually considered the brain's most normal functioning state. But, we seem to spend less and less time functioning in alpha. One consequence of this is the brain actually forgets how to produce alpha waves. This means we tend to feel more stressed and less able to cope with the strain stress induces on your health. So, the result is a greater chance of getting stress-related disorders and diseases. Anxiety and stress have a dramatic impact on lowering the strength of your immune system.

Generating more alpha waves makes you feel less anxious and more relaxed as the harmony between your mind and body is restored. Scientists have shown that highly creativity people like artists, actors and even entrepreneurs tend spend more of their time in alpha brainwave states. This is because creativity requires a surge of alpha brainwave activity.

Alpha states happen whenever you get that “aha” or “eureka” moment of a compelling new idea, which gives you the inspiration necessary to literally create something out of nothing. The brains of creative people tend get a burst of alpha activity when faced with a problem to solve. However, this does not happen for most people who are not creative. So, to become a more effective problem solver and creative thinker, you need to increase your alpha waves.

Scientists have also shown that this surge of alpha activity happens during peak performance. After studying the minds of professional basketball players, they found that an increased alpha brainwave activity occurs usually in the left side of the brain just before making a winning shot. Beginner basketball players on the other hand, did not show any alpha

activity. More long-term studies showed that as players improved their game they started to produce more alpha waves, suggesting they are necessary for high-level, peak performance.

The Benefits Of Increasing Alpha Brain Waves

Deep Relaxation of Body and Mind – Your stresses and worries drift away when you enter the alpha brainwave state. Tension and nervousness disappear as your brain's thought process is calmed down; your mind becomes clearer.

Higher Levels of Creativity – Alpha brainwave levels are found to be much higher in artists, musicians and creative thinkers. Creative thinkers also tend to be those who go on to become world famous entrepreneurs, as they are better equipped at solving life's problems and helping others. Right now, employers are looking for new and innovative ideas to help them survive in this economy. Those who have the entrepreneurial edge over others are making vast fortunes from the wealth of opportunities that exist to the creative alpha-minders!

Improved Problem Solving Abilities – When you have too much beta activity in your brain, your ability to problem solve shuts right down. Stress causes clutter in your thought process. The solution is to produce more alpha waves. If you ever get writer's block or get stuck on an important task, then getting that “aha” moment of creative inspiration is possible when you learn how to switch on your alpha mind and get back into your state of “flow.”

Improved Mood and Stability of Emotions – Having more alpha brainwaves usually indicates more positive, stable and balanced emotions. This means you can cope better with stress and keep calm in tough situations. Irritable, anxious and over sensitive people tend to spend most of their time in a beta state, and can usually greatly improve their minds by increasing their alpha brainwaves without resorting to taking drugs, excessive alcohol and other bad habits.

Peak Performance and Getting In the “Zone” – the alpha brainwave state is associated with “peak performance” and players who get “in the zone” perform best when they have less beta brainwaves interfering with their peak, alpha state of mind. Studies on professional sports players have shown they have a surge in alpha brainwaves in the left side of their brain just before making a successful shot or playing decision. Those who failed tend to have a flood of beta brainwaves in their left side of their brains instead. It has been shown by experiments like these that “over thinking” (beta) or “under thinking” (theta) have a negative effect on game play, but being in an alpha brainwave state is the perfect state for high performance.

“Super learning” and “Genius states” – learning new skills, enhanced memory and genius-like abilities are found in those who spend their time mostly in an alpha brainwave state. This is because the tasks associated with those abilities require less overall effort to accomplish and the ability to retain large amounts of information is enhanced.

Enhanced Immune System – Long-term stress and tension have a negative impact on your immune system and can even shut it down completely in extreme cases, due to the excessive production of cortisol and adrenaline. When you are in an alpha brainwave state, you are in a relaxed state where your immune system is allowed to work at its best. The “feel good” effect of alpha brainwaves leads to the production of happy and well-functioning cells in your body, which provides a healthy and efficient immune system ready to protect you from any disease.

Increased levels of “Serotonin” – Serotonin is released more during alpha brainwave states. Serotonin levels are associated with your moods and low serotonin levels are linked to depression and other neurological disorders, such as anxiety and panic attacks.

Different Methods Of Producing Alpha Waves:

1. Meditation

There are many, many studies now confirming the boost in alpha waves experienced by regular meditators and the Alpha Mind System is designed to give you that natural boost, too.

In a study, 50 Chinese students were given only 5 days of 20 minute training with the integrative body mind training method. The participants had significant improvements in the scores of Attention Network Test, as well as lower anxiety,

depression, anger, and fatigue; higher vigor on the Profile of Mood States scale; a significant decrease in stress-related cortisol and an increase in immunoreactivity.

In 2005, researcher Sarah Lazer and others of the Massachusetts General Hospital found meditation actually changed the physical structure of the brain. They also found the pre-frontal cortex and the right anterior insula, regions of the brain associated with attention, are thicker in those who meditate in comparison to those who don't and the longer one meditates, the greater the density of these regions. Their research and other research studies also suggest that meditation may offset the thinning of these regions with age.

In another study, researcher Lutz and other researchers showed that regular meditation practice helps to keep emotional balance and well-being by improving attention and memory.

In addition, there is extensive evidence that meditation leads to an increase in alpha waves in the brain, particularly in the frontal regions, which leads to increased internalized attention.

2. Yoga

Yoga is becoming a widely popular method of not only staying fit, but also unwinding and relaxing both the mind and body. Many studies have shown how the positive benefits of yoga are associated with alpha brainwave production. Decrease in serum cortisol during yoga exercise is correlated with alpha wave activation. Kamei T, Toriumi Y, Kimura H, Ohno S, Kumano H, Kimura K.

3. L-Theanine



Green tea is a widely enjoyed drink and has found a replacement for coffee and normal tea due to its higher nutrient content and mood lifting effects. The mood enhancing benefits of green tea are actually related to an amino acid known as L-Theanine.

Many studies have shown this substance can now be isolated and made into a supplement. It is a great natural booster of your natural alpha brain waves. Users experience a much more focused and alert mind, finding it easier to manage stress and get things done.

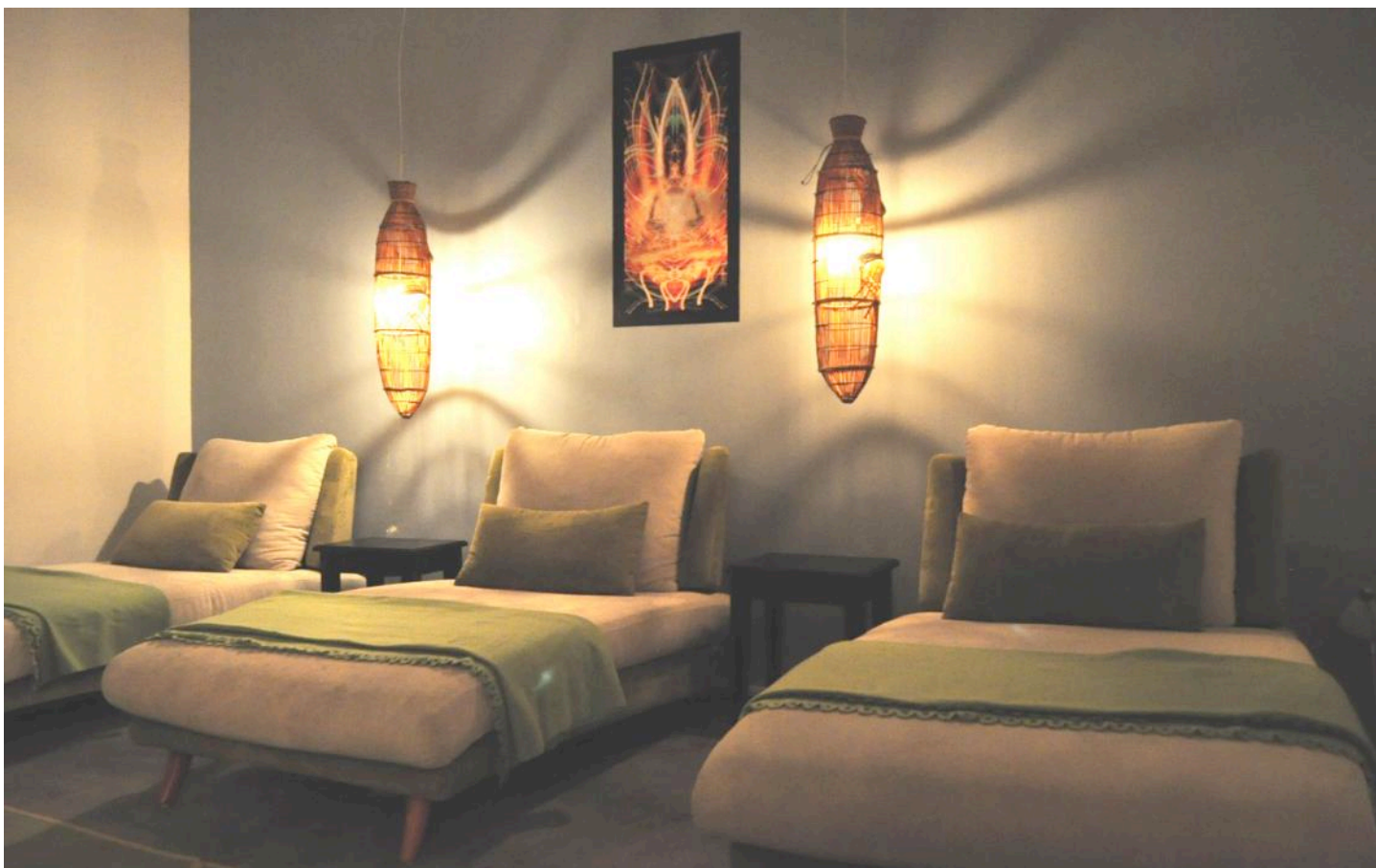
L-Theanine has this effect by boosting your natural production of the mood-enhancing neurotransmitter dopamine. I personally take L-Theanine and

have to say it is a very effective remedy for my fairly scattered mind! It is also a natural antidote to the harmful side effects of caffeine. Green tea still has high caffeine content, but you never feel its side effects, unlike coffee, coke or energy drinks. More research is being done and in the future L-Theanine may be used as an alternative to Ritalin, a treatment for pre-menstrual tension and even a way to control high blood pressure.

4. Saunas, Steam Rooms, Massages

Not only do these things cause your entire body to feel completely relaxed, they cause your mind to quiet and drowsiness to kick in. The deep relaxation you receive is associated with alpha brain wave production.

Inside this ground breaking new program you can find a simple solution for producing more Alpha waves through meditation audio technology designed to make meditation easier to fit in to a hectic daily schedule for the busy individual



To find out more and to download a free sample please visit: <http://www.AlphaMindSystem.com>

Trypnaural Meditation technology used in the Alpha Mind System is enjoyed by users all around the world, from yoga teachers, reiki masters, corporate executives, actors, musicians and even by USA Army officers as a way for them to combat stress and reach peak alpha brainwave states. You will also be able to read and watch videos of the many testimonials from the users of Trypnaural meditation technology



Niraj Naik, M.Pharm., is a pharmacist and health and wellness consultant to several businesses based in the UK. Having a musical background he has focused his attention on using sound and music as a "side effect" free tool for relieving stress, depression and tension, that he believes are the main culprits for chronic disease. Niraj Naik also runs two successful websites and produces music and sounds with consultant psychiatrist Dr. Mrigank Mishra, under the alias amAya, some of which is infused with their novel Trypnaural Brainwave Entrainment Technology designed to increase the natural production of tryptamines, DMT, serotonin and melatonin that can lead to deeper sleep, relaxation and better health.

Diagnosing Heart-Sickness

by Felice Dunas, Ph.D.

Sonya fell in love again. She is in her late 30s now and her body clock is ticking so loudly she mistakes the sound for tinnitus. While she hopes that this relationship will be the one to work out, it is doomed from the start just like the last several romances she has pushed herself to have in the name of finding the "right one". Sonya is frightened. If she blows this opportunity, it will be another feather in the cap of failure for her. Her self-esteem will be even lower as a result. If she figures out how to do this one right, she just might have a chance at the future she wants. Her life could finally contradict the loneliness that motivates her to overfill her days with work. No pressure in that scenario!

However, she came to you because she has menstrual problems. Cramps while bleeding, headaches while ovulating. You work diligently taking a full history and treating the energetic syndromes that are a sure bet, etiologically.

While you are tireless in your efforts, Sonya continues to pour energy into her fledgling relationship. It is hard for her to handle the romantic situation that you do not even know about. She is struggling through the thick goo of energetic phlegm and emotional stagnation. Being a vegetarian with a soggy spleen makes it hard for her body to metabolize all the loving that is coming to her. She does not see his affection clearly. Her inability to integrate new information or to process old data differently will make it impossible for her to believe her new lover is unique from all the others. Ultimately his behavior will become less unique as her patterns force him to reflect what she believes is true. The soft sound of his voice will sharpen into harsh accusations. He may wonder what has caused him to behave so poorly and will not like hearing who she perceives him to be. She will miss the man she has begun to love because he has changed so.

(continued on page 45)



Sonya's organs are working to maintain equilibrium while confronted with the emotional highs and lows of her new affair. Joyous beyond joyous, her heart feels full to overflowing. As a result, she cannot sleep. The heart's child organ on the five element shen cycle is the spleen. It is getting some much-needed juice by all of this. Nevertheless, as it becomes over stimulated, Sonya loses her appetite for anything other than her man. She can't think straight and loses a few pounds. Not that she minds of course. Her liver is processing all the chemicals that rush into the bloodstream as a result of new love. Sonya's endocrine system is producing hormones specific to the first few months of romance, and endorphins alter her mental state. Her kidneys, adjusting to changes in control by the spleen and having no luck regulating the heart at this point, are urging her to be sexual. The lungs, the child organ to the spleen on the shen cycle and controller of the liver on the ko cycle, are utilizing the chi flooding into the spleen by the heart. Lungs transform this into the bonding ability, the intimacy factor.

And when it all ends, the lungs mourn, the heart breaks, the liver is forced to contend with the wild fluctuations of emotion and control from both the kidneys and lungs on the five element ko cycle. Hormone levels shift, sexual play vanishes and the kidneys generate fear that no new love will ever come into her life. Sonya's skin aches for her lover's touch. With chronic dampness in her system, how can any of this heal quickly? The swamp of pain will be larger or smaller depending upon the season of Sonya's life and the season of the year. However, there is a swamp to be trudged through none the less.

You see patients like Sonya frequently. Though you may never hear about this side of her life, or at least the underlying patterns associated with it, she needs your support here just as she needs her menses regulated or her headaches alleviated. The complexity of her symptoms and syndrome profile include her underlying psychological pressures and the poor relationship skills that leave her life riddled with pain and longing. When her body is flooded with new chemicals as a result of her affair, you may not even know it. While you may see some changes on the tongue or fullness in the pulse, it takes careful questioning of all aspects of the patient to discern the control of love or lack thereof.

I am not suggesting that you become a psychologist, though good training in TCM does introduce you to theories that expose patterns of emotional expression. Our professional ancestors discovered a relationship between psychology, cognitive function and physiology that appears simplistic on face value but interprets awareness or facets of consciousness brilliantly. Consider viewing a patient's life experience as important factors diagnostically. Rather than utilizing other paradigms, such as those based upon contemporary psychology, integrate what you already know about TCM interpretations of the workings of the mind and emotions.

One of my key diagnostic questions is "Which emotion do you spend the most time in?" Obviously, this sends you in the direction of a specific internal organ if you work with zang fu or five element theory. However, the question sets the stage for a discussion of emotions as symptoms. Patients need to know that their perception of themselves and their attitudes may be symptomatic. While most people believe that they have a body, they also believe that they are their mind and emotions. Ego feels like who we are. Personality feels like self. In addition, with the guilt and shame of everything stemming from these dysfunctional childhoods, the weight of the self seems almost immovable. By the way, have you met any one who did not have one of those miserable upbringings? If Sonya understood that her repetitive relationship cycle could be traced to syndromes rather than self-hatred, she would not only be relieved, she could better participate in her own healing. If you know Sonya as an integrated whole, her body's patterns, her romantic patterns, her overwork patterns, her emotional patterns, your diagnosis and treatment protocols will only increase in effectiveness.



Born in Los Angeles and raised in a medical family, Felice Dunas, Ph.D., is an acupuncture industry founder, international lecturer, published author and executive coach. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Sociology/International Health Care from UCLA, and her Doctorate degree in Clinical Chinese Medicine and Pharmacology from Samra University. She uses ancient principles of the body and human behavior to enhance the lives of individuals, couples and corporate executives. Having lectured in over 60 countries, she addresses health, vitality, interpersonal intimacy and sexuality. Dr. Dunas is the author of the best-selling book from Penguin -Putnam, "PASSION PLAY: Ancient Secrets for a Lifetime of Health and Happiness Through Sensational Sex". For more info, go to: <http://www.felicedunas.com>

Seasonal Harmony with Natural Whole Foods

by Ellasara Kling

*"The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well.
Our food should be our medicine. Our medicine should be our food."*

Hippocrates: Greek physician (circa -- 460 BCE - 377 BCE)

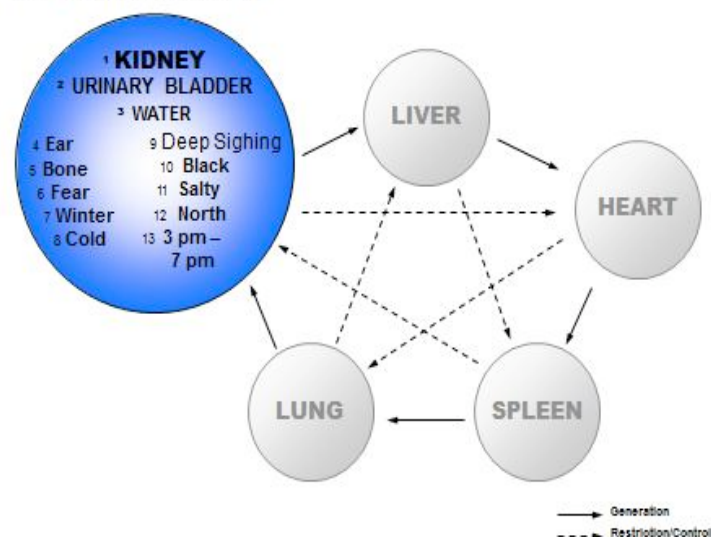
Last month this article discussed the importance of eating with attention to the season and Five Element Theory. Since how we eat is often as important as what we eat, I thought that this month we would discuss some basic eating guidelines.

Traditional Chinese medicine recommends that we make breakfast the most nutritious meal of the day. Lunch is the meal with quantity. It is recommended that dinner is light and that we do not eat dinner after 7-8 p.m. This way, our bodies are not digesting a heavy meal while we are sleeping. This is backwards to the common western lifestyle which is often eating an “empty” sweet or overly processed grain or bread for breakfast; a quick, small lunch often at our desk or while rushing around (nomadic eating); and then a large meal at the end of the day when our bodies are tired. This order of eating doesn’t even sound very appealing. An eating plan more in line with TCM principles might be: breakfast could be a congee with nuts or vegetables or eggs and vegetables. Lunch could be a variety of vegetables, grains, some fruit or a hearty soup or stew. A light dinner might include some lightly cooked vegetables or a light soup such as miso broth with vegetables.

“It looks delicious.” It smells wonderful.” Before we eat something, we see it and smell it. These two senses are important to our appreciation of our food and inform us of what to expect. When food is appealing to the eyes and the sense of smell, our bodies are already beginning the digestive process. Then, when we have our first taste, we want a good flavor. If the food looks good and smells inviting, we certainly expect it to also taste this way. Therefore, our food should have good appearance, good aroma and good flavor. A relaxed atmosphere and good company whenever possible is also a good idea and precludes listening to or watching the nightly news or an overly exciting TV show or movie. Mostly, appreciate the food you are eating and yourself. Take your time and eat slowly. No meal is too humble to be appreciated. In fact, simplicity is often better than too much complexity.

It is important to eat fresh foods as they have the most available Qi. An easy way to do this is to eat foods that are truly natural to the season and locality where you are. They travel less and are picked when ripe rather than being forced to ripen away from their natural growing environment. Additionally, the more food is processed, the more of its innate energy value is lost. Nonetheless, eating raw foods is not a solution. Raw foods are hard on the digestive process and are too “cold”. The stomach values warm foods that have been fully chewed most of all. The stomach in TCM is viewed as a cauldron that “cooks” the foods and beverages we give it. Therefore, our foods should be cooked even if they are just lightly steamed.

Five Element Theory



Just as you would not over fill a cauldron, do not over fill your stomach at any time. Eat until you are 70-80% full. How do you know what that is? Fair question and here is a suggestion. Instead of eating until you feel full, eat until you are no longer hungry. This is often clearer to most people when eating at home, as I am often asked how to do this at a restaurant. When out to eat, order less dishes or smaller dishes. After all, the kitchen will make more food for you should you want it.

Our bodies like regularity when it comes to meal times. Do your best to have your meals at regular intervals on a consistent basis. Try to have all five basic tastes: salty, bitter, sweet, pungent, and sour throughout the day; if not at each meal. Oft times recipes will contain a variety of flavors within them (see below).

Most chefs will tell you that the love a person has while cooking is part of the “taste” of the food. A carefully prepared dish, an apple cut with positive intention, tea that is given its few minutes to steep properly will add much to your enjoyment and health.

I hope the above ideas resonate with you and that you find ways to integrate these ideas into your life.

Mostly, I feel it is important to listen to your body, understand what it is telling you, use your self-awareness and always follow your intuition.

Some Foods That Are Particularly Good For the Winter Season:

Black Beans, Black Mushrooms, Blackberry, Black sesame seeds and oil, Black soybeans, Blueberry, Bone marrow, Cabbages, Celery, Chard, 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.

Health Topic: And now a few words about the upcoming Holiday Season. For many people the year ends with parties, get-togethers with family and friends, and an abundance of rich foods and drinks. How wonderful! Along with the feasting and enjoyment of being with others there is often an emphasis on rushing about and trying to cram 30 hours into 24. All of this occurs in Winter whose hallmark is rest and restoration. Winter is a time to be quieter, go to bed earlier, be calmer, more introspective and allow ourselves to rest. It is important in the Winter season to honor this quieter more inward movement so that we are ready for the burst of energy that Spring asks of us. Find time in this season to rest deeply and fully. Eat, drink and live moderately so as not to over tax your energy systems. Follow your own innate wisdom and guidance on what truly works for you. Have a wonderful and healthy holiday season over the next six weeks or so.

RECIPES FOR WINTER

Wood Ear Mushrooms with Tomato

Ingredients:

¼ cup dried wood ear mushroom (soak in hot water for a few minutes and when re-hydrated, slice into ¼” ribbons)

1 medium tomato cut in 8 wedges

¼ cup grapeseed oil

mince: 1/2 clove garlic, 3 green onions- whites only, 1 inch piece of ginger,

4-5 dried small red hot peppers

salt to taste

1 TB sugar

1 tsp. black vinegar (*balsamic vinegar may be used - optional*)



(Recipes for Winter continued on page 48)

RECIPES FOR WINTER

Wood Ear Mushrooms with Tomato (continued)

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

Wood ear mushrooms are one of the foods that harmonize with Winter/Kidney season and Tomatoes are a Summer/Heart fruit that also nourishes the Liver and Spleen meridians with its sweet and tart flavor.

Moroccan Stew

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 TB diced fresh ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 1 pound 1” cubed lamb*
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 2 cups carrots, diced
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 (29 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 8 cups water
- 1/4 cup finely minced fresh cilantro
- 1 cup lentils
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tsp finely minced mint



Directions:

Place the oil, in a large soup pot that has been heated on low. Add the turmeric, black pepper, cinnamon, ginger and cayenne pepper. Stir into the oil and heat for 2 minutes.

Add the lamb and toss frequently till lamb is covered in the spices and lightly browned on all sides.

Add tomatoes (reserve the liquid from the can), Stir and simmer for 15 minutes.

Add the tomato water and 8 cups cold water and stir in.

Add the celery, carrots, onion and cilantro - stir

Add the lentils. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to simmer, cover -- about 2 hours check liquid occasionally -- do not let “dry out”.

Add the thoroughly drained and rinsed black beans and simmer another 5-10 minutes so that they are heated through.

Mix salt into lemon juice and stir into stew at very end. Garnish w/ finely minced mint on each bowl.

**This hearty, dish can also be prepared without the meat. Because of the blend of spices with root vegetables and legumes, it is just as flavorful, and warming.*

Basic Bone Marrow Soup

Ingredients:

Part 1:

- 1 lb marrow bones
- 3 quarts water
- 2 inch piece of fresh ginger root, sliced
- 6 scallion whites
- 1 bay leaf

Part 2:

- 3 diced carrots
- 2 diced stalks of celery (include the leaves if on the stalk)
- 2 quartered plum tomatoes
- 3 cups chopped Kale leaves*
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped



Directions:

Part 1:

Put all the Part 1 ingredients in the water and bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for at least 3 hours. Let cool--Poke marrow out of bones and leave in the "bone water" and discard everything except water. You should now have about 6-8 cups of broth with marrow in it.

Part 2

Add veggies, cover and simmer covered till veggies are done. add salt and pepper to taste..serve and sprinkle with parsley **Rinse and do not soak Kales leaves. Cut your Kale leaves first allowing them to rest and breathe for at least 5 minutes. This will enhance the flavor.*

Bone marrow soup is considered to be a strengthening soup that is good for prevention and also if someone has been ill. According to Five Element Theory, Bone Marrow Soup is an excellent support for the Kidney Function.

Carrot, Ginger and Sweet Potato Soup

Ingredients:

- 5 quarts water
- 3 inch piece of chopped fresh ginger
- 6 medium carrots – cut into 2" pieces
- 2 medium sweet potatoes - cubed
- 1 large sweet apple – peeled, cored and chopped or sliced
- 2 TB dried tangerine rind
- Salt/pepper

Directions

Place all the ingredients in a large soup pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 2 hours covered. Remove from heat, let cool. In small batches puree through your blender or food processor until smooth. If too thick, just add a little water. Adjust salt and pepper to taste. This is a bright, naturally sweet soup that is filling, warming and kind to your stomach.



DIY Five Minute Soup

This handy soup is quick and easy to make, can use leftover vegetables, a little crumbled seaweed, or what pleases you. It makes a good soup for any time of day. Easy to take to work for lunch by putting all the ingredients together in a cup, excepting, of course, the boiling water which you add at work.

Ingredients:

Miso
Boiling water
Cooked vegetables
Rice
Scallions
Seaweed



Directions:

2 TB miso (or to taste) to each cup boiling water
Add cooked vegetables, rice, scallions, seaweed, or your own assortment of what pleases you.

Winter Snack:

A tasty easy to do and easy to have an on-hand snack that is especially in tune with the winter season is to toast/roast nuts and seeds. Placing a layer of walnuts, for example, on a baking dish in a heated oven (325°F) for about 5-7 minutes. Black sesame seeds can be toasted in a pan on top of the stove in just a few minutes. These nuts and seeds can be a snack or something that you sprinkle on your soups, congees, side dishes, main dish or desserts.

Seasonal Tea:

Where I live, this past weekend heralded the coming end of Fall and start of Winter with an unexpected “Nor’easter” storm leaving 6-15 inches of snow on the ground and was a severe event for trees that hadn’t even lost their leaves. This event highlighted the need to be ready for the unexpected by looking towards that which is preventive. In that spirit, I offer the easiest of cold prevention teas, accessible to virtually everyone.

Basic Ginger Tea

1 inch piece fresh ginger – sliced or chopped
4-5 scallions – whites only
Rind of one dried tangerine
4 cups of water
Rock or brown sugar or honey to taste

Add all the ingredients together and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for no more than 5 minutes as it will get bitter. Remove the foods. Drink hot. Drink some every day. Enjoy the warming feeling and knowledge that you are supporting your day-to-day good health!



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



Following the threads of her personal tapestry, Ellasara, a long-time student of Master Nan Lu, weaves her life around the exploration and sharing of self-healing through a variety of modalities, primarily focusing on food, common herbal plants, Qigong Meridian Therapy and Qigong for Women’s Health. For comments, questions, consultations, ellasara00@gmail.com

Standing Meditation

Why Your Slow-Motion Movement Practice is Not Slow Enough

by Dan Kleiman

We are drawn to the calming effects of taiji movements intuitively, because we can sense that slowing down the body will slow down the mind. Even approximating the correct patterns at the right speed will begin to soften our racing minds, but are you moving slow enough to really uncover the deep benefits of your taiji practice?

Imagine being on a hike, when you are just about to cross the tree line and you get a glimpse of the trail leading just a little higher. Before you arrive at the summit of a mountain, you catch glimpses of what lies waiting at the top. As you come closer to the top, a panorama spreads out before you. You breathe in the crisp air at the summit and see other distant peaks out on the horizon.

When you do your taiji form, you also catch glimpses of deeper layers of stillness inside your movements. But here's the problem, without a standing qigong practice, your taiji form will never give you complete access to the summit. Just like that feeling of being there at the summit, breathing in different air, and gazing out onto the unfolding landscape of still, distant peaks all around you; standing qigong lets you soak in layers and layers of stillness that slow-motion movement can never quite reach.

If you really want to explore the deeper layers of your mind and how it connects to your body, you have to stand.

How Standing Qigong Takes You Deeper

By eliminating voluntary, conscious movement and holding a single posture, the only thing left to do is observe the movements of your mind, your energy, and experience pre-conscious, postural shifts in the body. As you settle into longer periods of standing, you uncover deeper layers. Standing takes you deeper because it shifts your sense of internal space and time. You build up a different set of internal reference points, ones that you would otherwise miss if all you did was moving form practice.

In New Hampshire, there used to be the Old Man in the Mountain, an outcropping of rock that looked like a face when viewed from the side. In 2003, the face fell off. Imagine being there when the outcropping sheered away from the side of the mountain. One minute it was there and the next minute it wasn't. This is just like doing a moving practice. One minute you are here, the next minute you're there.

In standing practice, though, it's different. Imagine, instead, that you were up on the mountain with the Old Man. Imagine being able to have seen every little micro degree of loosening that went on in those rocks before they sheered apart and fell off. Imagine sensing small shifts in your footing in the moments before an entire cliff face slipped free. This is the kind of awareness that only standing qigong will develop.

When you hold a posture, you will be like the Old Man and the mountain simultaneously, holding tension in your



photo of Dan Kleiman by Naphtali Visser

shoulder, for example, and struggling to let it go. You feel every little micro degree of it starting to loosen and relax, and then it slides away from your neck and opens up and it's released. If you were moving all the time, you would stretch it and pull on it, and it would not quite let go and you don't know where the right switch is. But when you stand, you start to feel into that space and you start to explore it and release it in a way that completely lets it go.

Standing practice tunes you in to deeper and deeper layers of release and also the underlying speed of relaxation. What does it feel like to watch something shift and change its quality in your body over a half an hour? That's an incredible way to train the mind and it's an incredible way to fuse the mind and the body in an engaged, yet passive way.



photo of Dan Kleiman by Naphtali Visser

Taking on a standing practice can seem like a grueling task. In fact, I often hear students explain that the reason they came to taiji in the first place was because "I couldn't sit still long enough to meditate". We have a desire to slow down and connect with our deeper inner senses, but we have so many external pulls and distractions, that it can be hard to figure out how to do this.

How to Integrate Standing into Your Regular Taiji Practice

The key to integrating standing in your taiji practice is to look for internal stability and avoid internal resistance.

You have to gauge your own level of comfort and resistance at the beginning of this process and then gradually add to the length of time that you hold any basic posture. It is easy to think, "okay, I'm going to hold this posture for thirty minutes", and then start your countdown timer. What happens, though, is that you fixate on an external reference point (the clock) instead of internal ones. You will add mental and physical tension, and give up some internal clarity, to reach the external goal. Is standing always comfortable? Not at all. However, if you always train only by the clock, then you begin to build internal resistance, which will make it harder and harder to practice over time.

Instead of the "by the clock" approach, you should look for internal stability points. An internal stability point is the place where everything opens up inside the posture and you feel connected and whole in a way you never do just standing around. If you are holding postures drawn from the taiji form, this is the place where they take on their unique flavor – opening up particular energy lines or manifesting sinking, rising, expanding or condensing in the way they are done in the form.

Once everything clicks in a stability point, you want to maintain this state for as long as possible. When you lose it or you shrink out of it or you start to collapse a little bit, the moment is over. Your standing practice then becomes a process of returning to these stability points, becoming more and more familiar with how to get there. What are the right physical alignments? How do you hold your awareness? Think of these early indicators as sign posts on the road to greater internal stability.

How to Get Started with a Standing Practice

The standing practice that I've learned from Taoist Master Bruce Frantzis always begins with a downward body scan. This method works well because you learn to connect your mind to your physical body at whatever internal speed feels comfortable for you. You start by feeling the crown of your head and work downward until you reach your feet.

Naturally, as this process becomes more familiar, you find more and more space to explore inside the body. If you follow this approach, you never have to worry about the clock, but you will stand for longer and longer as you refine your internal awareness.

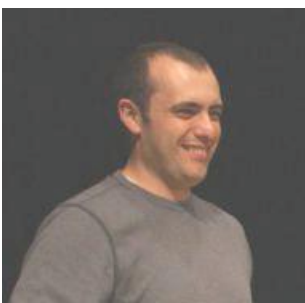
To help you begin this process, I've created three different guided practice mp3s that will take you through the initial stages of this practice. Each one takes you through different things to feel: 5 minutes of "settling in", 10 minutes of "softening the body", and 20 minutes of "sinking chi". You can download each one here:

<http://www.dankleiman.com/exercises/guide-to-standing-qigong/>

I recommend that you flow from the end of each standing session into your moving practice, so that you can begin to play with the deeper connections you will develop in standing practice. Use the standing practice as a warm-up for moving practices.


If you do not do a taiji form, but you want to develop a complete practice set around standing qigong, I recommend Bruce Frantzis's book, Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body, which details not only standing practice, but also what movements you should do to complete the energetic patterns you develop in standing work. To read about how to use this book as a guide to your practice follow this link:

<http://www.dankleiman.com/2011/10/31/opening-the-energy-gates-by-bruce-frantzis-is-the-most-important-qigong-book-to-have-in-your-library/>



Dan Kleiman is the Program Director at Brookline Tai Chi in Brookline, MA, near Boston. Brookline Tai Chi is one of the largest health-oriented Tai Chi schools in the country and has been a center for teaching the Chinese movement arts of

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Scientific Qi Exploration: Part 16 - Qigong and the Lymphatic System

by Martin Eisen, Ph.D.

1. Lymph

The tissues of the body are supplied by minute arterial capillaries, bringing oxygen-rich blood and nutrients to cells by means of fluid, similar to blood plasma, called **interstitial fluid**, leaking from these vessels into the surrounding tissue. In turn, the cells expel cell metabolites and secretions, including hormones and metabolites, into the interstitial fluid. In addition to solutes, the interstitial fluid can contain particulate matter escaping from the capillaries and also material from the extravascular connective tissue through which it diffuses.

Venous capillaries remove carbon dioxide-rich blood and cell secretions from the tissues. Ordinarily, about 30 liters of interstitial fluid will leave the arterial capillaries every day, but only 27 liters of fluid will return to the venous capillaries. Lymphatic vessels function to drain this excess fluid from the tissues as **lymph** and return it to the blood.

Since lymph is the interstitial fluid that flows into the lymphatics, it has a similar composition to the tissue fluid in the body from which the lymph flows, as indicated in Table 1.

| Region of Body | Gm. Per Cent |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Peripheral tissues | 1.8 |
| Liver | 6 |
| Intestines | 3 - 4 |
| Thoracic | 3 -5 |

Table 1. Lymph Protein Concentration

Before a meal, lymph is transparent, usually slightly yellow, because of the presence of red cells. After a meal it appears milky from the presence of minute fat globules. The lymphatics in the intestines appear as fine white lines passing from the mucosa to the mesentery. These are called **lacteals** and their contents **chyle**.

Only a small fraction of dietary fats contain short chain fatty acids which can be absorbed directly into the portal blood and so enter the bloodstream. Most common dietary fats are **triglycerides**, consisting of molecules formed by the condensation of three molecules of fatty acids and a molecule of glycerol. In digestion, a reaction involving cellular enzymes, produces three molecules of the fatty acid and a molecule of glycerol. Then, on passing through the intestinal cells, they are re-synthesized into new molecules of triglycerides. These enter the lacteals as minute droplets called **chylomicrons**. The chyle flows up to the **thoracic duct**, a lymphatic vessel, which empties into the venous blood at the juncture of the subclavian and jugular veins. Then, the chylomicrons are transported in the blood to be utilized by cells (1, 2).

2. Lymphatic vessels

Nearly all bodily tissues have lymphatic channels draining excess fluid from the interstitial spaces. Exceptions include superficial portions of the skin, the central nervous system, deeper parts of the peripheral nerves, endomysium of muscles, and bones. Nevertheless, these tissues have tiny interstitial vessels through which interstitial fluid can flow. Eventually, this fluid reaches the lymphatic channels running next to the boundary of these tissues. In the brain, these minute vessels empty into the cerebrospinal fluid and thence directly into the blood.

Lymphatic vessels originate as tiny hair-like capillaries in the interstitial spaces between cells. In order to leave the tissues, the lymph must enter the lymphatic system through specialized lymphatic capillaries. Approximately 70 percent of these are **superficial capillaries**, located near or just under the skin. The remaining 30 percent, known as deep lymphatic capillaries, surround most of the body's organs.

Lymphatic capillaries begin as blind-ended tubes that are only a single cell in thickness (Fig. 1). These cells are arranged in a slightly overlapping pattern, like the shingles on a roof. Each individual cell is fastened to nearby connective tissues by an anchoring filament. This helps the tiny capillaries from collapsing under outside pressure, preventing lymph flow.

As illustrated in Fig. 1, pressure from the fluid surrounding the capillary will separate the cells allowing lymph to enter the capillary. Then, the cells of the wall are forced together, because of the inside pressure preventing lymph from leaving the capillary end bulb. Instead, lymph is forced to move through the valve on the right as shown in Fig. 1.

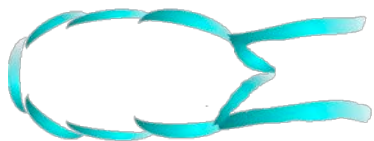


Figure 1.

The lymphatic capillaries gradually merge to form a mesh-like network of tubes that are located deeper in the body. As they become larger, these structures are known as lymphatic vessels.

Deeper within the body the lymphatic vessels become progressively larger and are located near major veins. Like veins, lymphatic vessels, which are known as **lymphangions**, have one-way valves to prevent any backward flow (Fig. 2). Each angion is a segment created by the space between two sets of valves.

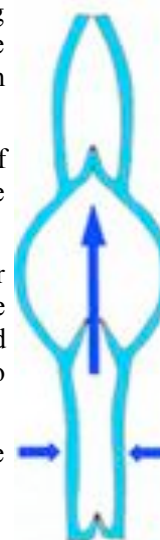


Figure 2.
Lymphangions

Smooth muscles in the walls of the lymphatic vessels cause the angions to contract sequentially to aid the flow of lymph toward the thoracic region.

All of the lymphatic vessels, see Fig. 3, eventually converge into either the *thoracic duct* or the *right lymphatic duct*. The thoracic duct is about 45 cm long and forms the largest confluence of lymphatic vessels in the body. It receives lymph from the left side of the body as well as the lower right side. It

originates at the *cisterna chyli*, a small pouch that lies on the surface of L2. From here the thoracic duct ascends the thorax, lying to the left of the vertebral column. It then joins with vessels from the neck and empties into the left subclavian vein at its junction with the left internal jugular vein.

The *right lymphatic duct* is much shorter than the thoracic duct and may only be 1 cm long. It is formed by the confluence of several lymphatic vessels, which drain the right side of the head and thorax, and the right arm. It drains into the junction of the right subclavian and right internal jugular veins.

Lymphatic drainage is organized into two separate and very unequal drainage areas. These are the right and left drainage areas, as shown in Fig. 4. Normally lymph does not drain across the invisible lines that separate these areas.

The right drainage area drains lymph from the right side of the head and neck, the right arm, and the upper right quadrant of the body. Lymph from this area flows into the right lymphatic duct and empties the lymph into the right subclavian vein.

The left drainage area drains lymph from the left side of the head and neck, the left arm, the left upper quadrant, the lower trunk and both legs. The cisterna chyli temporarily stores lymph as it moves upward from the lower areas of the body. The thoracic duct transports lymph upward to the left lymphatic duct, where it empties the lymph into the left subclavian vein.

If lymphatic tissues or lymph nodes have been damaged or removed, lymph cannot drain normally from the affected area. Then excess lymph accumulates, resulting in the swelling that is characteristic of lymphedema. If bacteria enter this stagnant fluid through a break in the skin, they can thrive on this protein-rich fluid. This is the reason that lymphedema frequently results in infections.

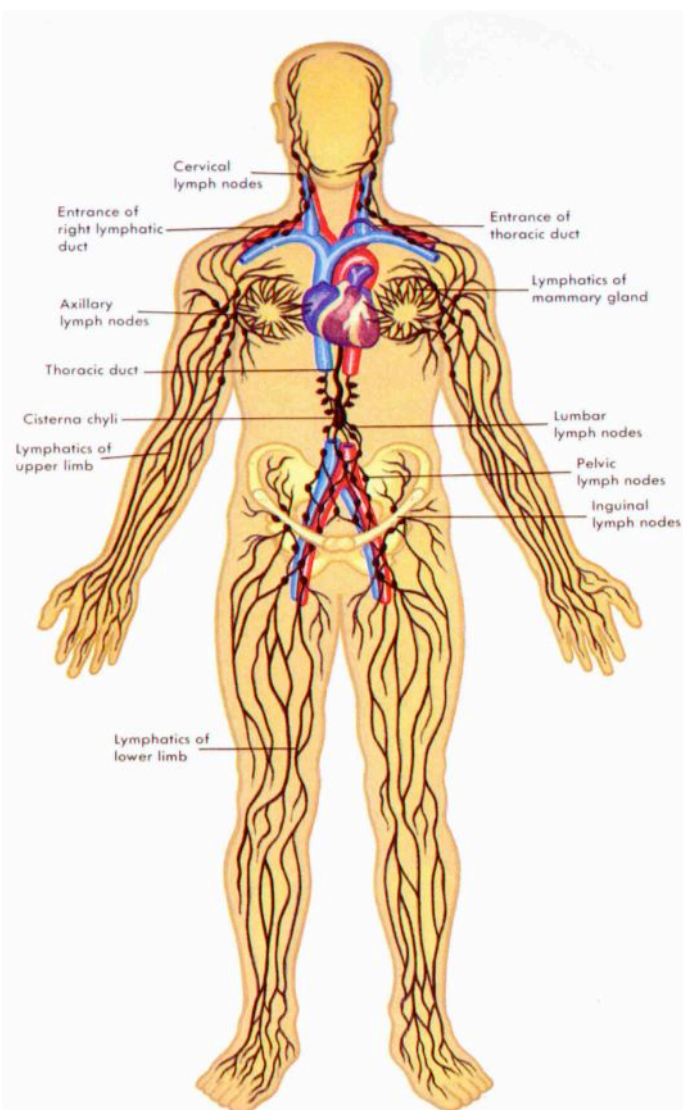


Figure 3. Lymphatic vessels

Treatment of lymphedema is based on the natural structures and the flow of lymph. The affected drainage area determines the pattern of the special manual lymph drainage (MLD) and for self-massage. Although lymph does not normally cross from one area to another, MLD stimulates the flow from one area to another. It also encourages the formation of new lymph drainage pathways.

MLD treatment and self-massage begin by stimulating the area near the terminus of the larger lymphatic vessels (5), because any accumulated fluid would block the one-way flow. The rhythmic, light strokes of MLD provide just the right pressure to encourage this excess lymph to flow into the lymph capillaries.

Compression bandages are worn between treatments to help control swelling by providing needed pressure, which encourages the flow of lymph into the capillaries. Exercise is important in the treatment of lymph since muscle movements stimulate the flow of the lymph into the capillaries. Wearing a compression garment during exercise also helps to further stimulate the flow.

3. Functions of the lymphatic system

The lymphatic system has four main functions, to maintain fluid balance, to defend the body against disease by producing lymphocytes, to absorb fats from the intestine and transport them to the blood and to transport proteins.

(i) Fluid balance has been described above.

(ii) Defense

Lymphatic vessels empty the tissue fluid into the lymph nodes before returning it back to the blood stream. It is here that any foreign cells, e.g.: viruses, bacteria, dead blood cells, cancer cells, fungi or chemicals which are harmful to the body (pathogens), are detected and removed by lymphocytes (white blood cells) which congregate in the lymph nodes. Once a foreign microorganism has been detected, an immune response is triggered and the lymphocytes in the lymph node multiply.

(iii) Digestion of fats

Some fats are too large to pass through the capillary walls of the small intestine and therefore cannot be absorbed (1, 2). Lymphatic vessels known as lacteals can absorb these large fats and transports them into the venous circulation via the thoracic duct. When the lymph contains fat it becomes milky and is known as chyle.

(iv) The lymphatic system also works with the circulatory system to deliver nutrients, oxygen, and hormones from the blood to the cells that make up the tissues of the body.

(v) Transportation of Proteins

Proteins leak continuously from the capillaries into the interstitial fluid spaces. It must be removed continually to prevent the tissue colloid osmotic pressure from becoming so high that the capillaries would collapse and normal flow through the capillaries would be blocked. You would die in a few hours!

However, only a small proportion of the leaked proteins can diffuse back into the capillaries, since there is about four times the amount of protein in the plasma than in the interstitial fluid. Fortunately, the leaked protein is removed by the lymphatic system as follows:

Small quantities of proteins are carried by the fluid which leaks from the arterial ends of the capillaries into the interstitial spaces. As fluid is reabsorbed at the venous ends of the capillaries most of the protein is left behind. Consequently, protein accumulates progressively in the interstitial fluid. This increases the tissue colloid osmotic pressure. The higher osmotic pressure decreases the reabsorption of fluid by the capillaries. Therefore, tissue fluid will be increased, which increases tissue pressure. The increased pressure will then force fluid containing the excess proteins into the lymphatic channels. This washes the proteins out of the tissues spaces, returning the protein concentration to its normal low level (1).

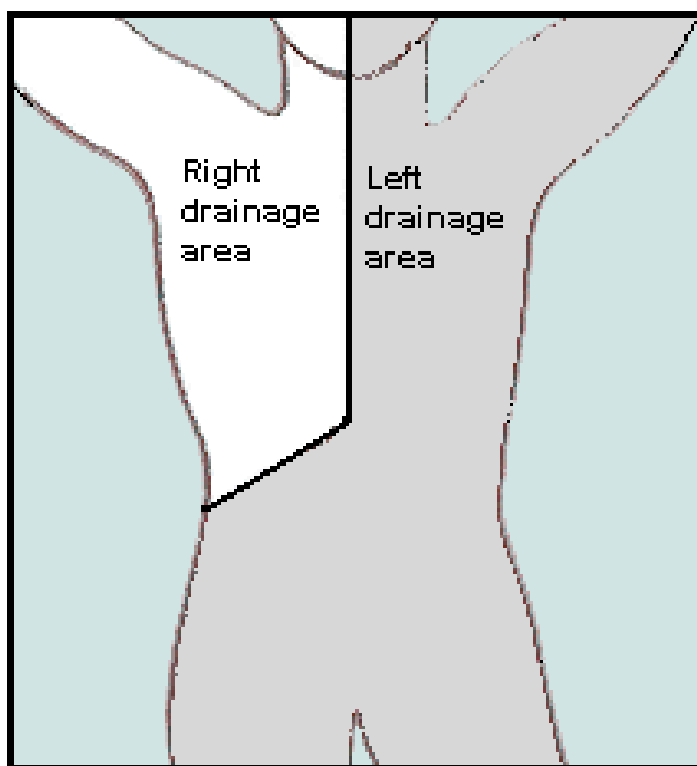


Figure 4. Lymphatic Drainage Areas.

4. Lymphatic Cells

Lymphatic cells consist of T and B cells, macrophages (1, 3, 4) and reticular cells. Reticular cells and their reticular fibers made from Type III collagen and glycoproteins provide a network within which the lymphocytes and other cells reside.

5. Lymphatic Tissue

Lymphatic cells are organized into tissues, which are classified by how tightly the lymphatic cells are arranged. Organs are formed when the tissue is encapsulated by a layer of connective tissue and will be discussed in Section 6.

(i) Diffuse bundles of lymphatic cells

This kind of lymphatic tissue consists of lymphocytes and macrophages associated with a reticular fiber network. It occurs in the lamina propria (middle layer) of the mucus membranes (mucosae) that line the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts.

(ii) Discrete bundles of lymphatic cells.

These bundles are called **lymphatic nodules (follicles)**. They have clear boundaries which separate them from neighboring cells. Nodules occur within the lamina propria of the mucus membranes that line the gastrointestinal, respiratory, reproductive, and urinary tracts and are referred to as **mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue (MALT)**. The nodules contain lymphocytes and macrophages for protection against bacteria and other pathogens that may enter these passages with air, food, or urine.

Nodules can occur as solitary nodules or cluster as patches or aggregates. **Peyer's patches** are clusters of lymphatic nodules that occur in the mucosa that lines the ileum of the small intestine.

The **tonsils** are aggregates of lymphatic nodules that occur in the mucosa that lines the pharynx (throat). Each of the seven tonsils that form a ring around the pharynx are named for their specific region: A single pharyngeal tonsil (adenoid) in the rear wall of the nasopharynx, two palatine tonsils on each side wall of the oral cavity at its entrance in the throat, two lingual tonsils at the base of the tongue, and two small tubal tonsils in the pharynx at the entrance to the auditory tubes.

The **appendix**, a small attachment at the beginning of the large intestine, is lined with aggregates of nodules. Encapsulated organs contain lymphatic nodules and diffuse lymphatic cells surrounded by a capsule of dense connective tissue. The three lymphatic organs are discussed in the following sections.

6. Lymphatic Organs

Encapsulated lymphatic tissue form several types of organs.

(i) Lymph nodes

Lymph nodes are small, bean-shaped bodies that occur along lymphatic vessels. They are abundant where lymphatic vessels merge to form trunks, especially in the inguinal (groin), axillary (armpit), and mammary gland areas. There are between 600 to 700 nodes present in humans. Damaged or destroyed lymph nodes do not regenerate.

Lymph flows into a node through afferent lymphatic vessels that enter the convex side of a node. It exits the node at the hilum, the indented region on the opposite, concave side of the node, through efferent lymphatic vessels. Efferent vessels contain valves that restrict lymph to move only out of the lymph node. Fewer efferent vessels leave the lymph node than the number of entering, afferent vessels. This slows the flow of lymph through the node and so allows more time for the nodes to do their work. Lymph nodes perform three functions:

- (a) They filter the lymph, preventing the spread of microorganisms and toxins that enter interstitial fluids.
- (b) They destroy bacteria, toxins, and particulate matter through the phagocytic action of macrophages.
- (c) They produce antibodies through the activity of B cells.

Lymph nodes have the following structural features. A capsule of dense connective tissue surrounds the lymph node. Projections of the capsule, called **trabeculae**, extend into the node forming compartments. The trabeculae support reticular fibers forming a network that supports lymphocytes. The **cortex** is the dense, outer region of the node. It contains lymphatic nodules where B cells and macrophages proliferate. The medulla, the center of the node, is less dense than the surrounding cortex, and contains mostly T cells. Medullary cords are strands of reticular fibers with lymphocytes and macrophages that extend from the cortex toward the hilum. Sinuses are passageways through the cortex and medulla through which lymph moves toward the hilum.

(ii) Thymus

The thymus has two lobes and is located in the upper chest between the lungs. It grows during childhood and reaches its maximum size of 40 grams at puberty. Then, its size slowly decreases as it is replaced by adipose and areolar connective tissue. Around age 65, it only weighs about 6 grams. Each lobe of the thymus is surrounded by a capsule of connective tissue. Lobules produced by trabeculae (inward extensions of the capsule) are characterized by an outer cortex and inner medulla. It is composed of the following types of cells:

- (a) Lymphocytes, which are almost all T cells.
- (b) Epithelial-reticular cells resembling reticular cells, but they do not form reticular fibers. Instead, these star-shaped cells form a reticular network by interlocking their slender cellular processes forming extensions. These extensions are held together by desmosomes, cell junctions formed by protein fibers. Epithelial-reticular cells produce thymosin and other hormones believed to promote the maturation of T cells.
- (c) Thymic (Hassall's) corpuscles are dense, concentric layers of epithelial-reticular cells. Their function is unknown.

The function of the thymus is to promote the maturation of T lymphocytes. Mature T cells leave the thymus by way of blood vessels or efferent lymphatic vessels, migrating to other lymphatic tissues and organs where they become active immune responses (3).

The thymus does not provide a filtering function similar to lymph nodes (there are no afferent lymphatic vessels leading into the thymus), and unlike all other centers of lymphatic tissues, the thymus does not play a direct role in immune responses.

Blood vessels that permeate the thymus are surrounded by epithelial-reticular cells. These cells establish a protective blood-thymus barrier that prevents the entrance of antigens from the blood and into the thymus where T cells are maturing. Thus, an antigen-free environment is maintained for the development of T cells.

(iii) Spleen

The spleen is about 12 cm (5 in) in length and is the largest lymphatic organ. It is located on the left side of the body between the diaphragm and stomach. Its surrounding capsule extends into the spleen forming trabeculae. The splenic artery, splenic vein, nerves, and efferent lymphatic vessels pass through the hilum of the spleen located on its slightly concave, upper surface.

The spleen is composed of two distinct areas. The white pulp consists of reticular fibers and lymphocytes in nodules that resemble the nodules of lymph nodes. The red pulp consists of venous sinuses filled with blood. Splenic cords consisting of reticular connective tissue, macrophages, and lymphocytes form a mesh between the venous sinuses and act as a filter as blood passes between arterial vessels and the sinuses.

Some functions of the spleen are:

- (a) It filters the blood. Macrophages in the spleen remove bacteria and other pathogens, cellular debris, and aged blood cells. There are no afferent lymphatic vessels and, unlike lymph nodes, the spleen does not filter lymph.
- (b) It destroys old red blood cells and recycles their parts by removing the iron from heme groups and binding the iron to the storage protein.
- (c) The red pulp retains large quantities of blood, which can be directed to the circulation when necessary. One third of the blood platelets are stored in the spleen.
- (d) The spleen is active in immune responses. T cells proliferate in the white pulp before returning to the blood to attack foreign cells. B cells proliferate in the white pulp, producing plasma cells and antibodies that return to the blood to inactivate antigens.
- (e) Red and white blood cells are produced in the spleen during fetal development.

5. Diseases of the Lymphatic System

(a) Lymphedema

The most prevalent lymphatic disorder is lymphedema. This is an accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the interstitial tissue causing swelling. This can lead to cellulitis (deep skin infections) and if untreated, can spread systemically or require surgical intervention. It is a lifelong functional problem requiring daily treatment. Eventually the skin becomes fibrotic (thickening of the skin and subcutaneous tissues) with loss of normal architecture, function and mobility.

Primary Lymphedema is an inherited condition in approximately 0.6% of live births. The lymphatic vessels are either missing or impaired and can affect all parts of the body. It can be present at birth, develop at the onset of puberty or present in adulthood, with no apparent causes. Other lymphatic diseases include lipedema, cystic hygromas, lymphangiomas, lymphangiectasias, lymphangiomatosis and other mixed vascular/lymphatic malformation syndromes and conditions, such as Turner-Weber and Klippel Trenauney Syndrome.

Secondary Lymphedema (acquired regional lymphatic insufficiency) is a common problem among adults and children in the United States. It can occur following any trauma, infection or surgery that disrupts the lymphatic channels or results in the loss of lymph nodes. Secondary lymphedema occurs in approximately 30% of breast cancer survivors. Lymphedema can also result from prostate, uterine, cervical, abdominal, orthopedic cosmetic (liposuction) and other surgeries, malignant melanoma, and treatments used for both Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Radiation, sports injuries, tattooing, and any physical insult to the lymphatic pathways can also cause lymphedema. Even though lymphatic insufficiency may not immediately present at the time any of these events occur, individuals are at risk for lymphedema throughout their life.

Filariasis is a world health problem resulting from a parasitic-caused infection causing lymphatic insufficiency, and can result in elephantiasis.

(b) Lymphoma

Lymphoma is a general term for cancers originating in the lymphatic system. Lymphomas are classified as Hodgkin lymphoma and non-Hodgkin lymphomas. Lymphomas result from an acquired injury to the DNA of a lymphocyte occurring after birth and so is acquired rather than inherited.

(c) Cancer and the Lymphatic System

The lymphatic system is critical to the body's surveillance against cancer. However, the lymphatic system is also one of the most common avenues for the spread of cancer cells throughout the body. Cancer cells influence the development of new lymphatic vessels and pathways, establishing the route for these cells to spread to other parts of the body. This mechanism of this process, known as lymphangiogenesis, remains to be discovered.

(d) Infection/HIV and the Lymphatic System

HIV and AIDS are directly connected to the lymphatic system. The ability to effectively control HIV requires more knowledge of the lymphatics in order to understand how infectious organisms invade the lymphatic system and overcome its normal protective role. Understanding the pathways and physiology of the lymphatics, will also increase the ability to deliver antibiotic and anti-viral medication to infected tissues and organs.

(e) Inflammation, Auto-immunity and the Lymphatic System

Inflammatory and auto-immune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), scleroderma, Wegener's granulomatosis, and others are impacted by the lymphatic system. All of these diseases are believed to be connected to an inflammatory process initiated by the body's immune response. The lymphatic system governs the body's immune system that normally makes the proteins, called antibodies, to protect the body against viruses, bacteria, and other foreign materials. These foreign materials are called antigens. In an autoimmune disorder such as lupus, or arthritis the immune system loses its ability to tell the difference between foreign substances (antigens) and its own cells and tissues. The immune system then makes antibodies directed against "self". These antibodies, called "auto-antibodies", react with the "self" antigens to form immune complexes. The immune complexes build up in the tissues and can cause inflammation, injury to tissues, and pain. A better understanding of how the system works will greatly increase the possibility of discovering treatments and cures for these diseases as well.

(f) Digestive, Pulmonary Function, and Other Disorders

Lymphatic insufficiency of the internal organs often occurs in children born with inherited or developmental disorders of the lymphatics. It can result in serious problems. For example, impairment of lymphatic development in the intestines leads to malabsorption, ascites (collections of fat-laden lymph within the abdominal cavity), underdevelopment from malnutrition, immune malfunction, and premature death. Some examples of disorders occurring in other parts of the body are: pulmonary lymphangiectasia, cystic hygromas and lymphangiomas. Breathing and swallowing difficulties and impaired vision, are often complications resulting from these disorders.

7. Effects of Qigong on Lymph Flow

The following are five ways that Qigong can affect lymph flow.

(a) Aerobic Energy Production

A major component of lymph is water. Movement and breathing oxygen requires cells to produce energy in the form of ATP (1). Energy is produced and hydrogen atoms are released by the metabolism of glucose by the glycolytic and phosphogluconate pathways. The hydrogen atoms are converted to water by oxidative phosphorylation which also releases energy. Since the capacity of the tissues spaces is limited, the produced water increases the lymph volume and so forces the excess into the lymphatic vessels.

The first step in the glycolytic pathway is glycolysis, a series of 10 chemical reactions, which can be summarized by the following reaction: a Glucose molecule plus 2ADP plus two phosphate ions are converted into 2 molecules of Pyruvic acid and ATP plus 4 hydrogen atoms. The next step is the conversion of the 2 Pyruvic acid molecules by Coenzyme A into 2 Acetyl Co-A and 2 carbon dioxide molecules plus 4 hydrogen atoms. The final step in this process is called the citric acid or Krebs or tricarboxylic acid cycle.

It is summarized by: $2\text{Acetyl Co-A} + 6\text{H}_2\text{O} + 2\text{ADP} \rightarrow 4\text{CO}_2 + 16\text{H} + 2\text{Co-A} + 2\text{ATP}$

The phosphogluconate pathway is a cyclic pathway and after several stages of cyclic conversion the net reaction is that glucose plus 6 molecules of water is converted into 6 carbon dioxide molecules and 24 hydrogen atoms. This pathway is not the major method of the breakdown of glucose in most cells. It is responsible for as much as 30% of the breakdown in liver cells and even more if fat cells. It barely occurs in muscles cells.

Finally, water is produced by oxidative phosphorylation using the hydrogen atoms.

It is summarized by: $2\text{H} + 1/2\text{O}_2 + 3\text{ADP} \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{O} + 3\text{ATP}$

In a moderately active 70Kg man 2100 to 2800 cc of lymph enter the blood stream daily. Calculations based upon the above pathways show that about 950 cc of interstitial water are produced daily by the cells. Exercise such as walking or Qigong can produce up to 1400 cc of aerobically generated interstitial water (6).

(b) Breathing

The thoracic duct, which is a very large lymph vessel, lies above the diaphragm. The cisterna chyli, a broad expansive vessel from which the thoracic duct originates, lies below the diaphragm. The lymphatic tissues above and below the diaphragm contain a greater volume of lymph than other regions.

On inspiration, the diaphragm descends which increases the volume of the thoracic space and so decreases its pressure and air rushes in to fill the lungs. The expansion of the lungs slightly compresses the thoracic duct while the downward movement of the diaphragm compresses the cisterna chyli. The lymph is forced to move upward into the subclavian vein, because of the one-way valves in the lymphatic vessels.

On expiration, the diaphragm move upward decreasing the volume of the thoracic cavity and so increasing its pressure. Both of these effects compress the thoracic duct forcing the lymph to move upwards.

Dr. Shields (7) used moving X-ray films to study breathing patterns for various activities. He concluded that deep inspiration pumps lymph at a much greater rate than resting respiration and other activities.

(c) Body Position and Gravity

Inversion of the limbs or even lying down can help lymph flow because of gravitational forces coupled with the one-way valves of the lymphatic vessels. In fact, elevation of the lower limbs and lower body is recommended for pooling of interstitial fluid in these regions.

Qigong has many different postures and movements that enable gravity to propel the lymph.

(d) Voluntary Movement of Striated Muscles

The slightest muscular movement propels lymph because it compresses the one-way lymphatic vessels. In Qigong, there are many different styles having movements that require contraction and relaxation of the skeletal muscles. Various breathing methods in Qigong also increase lymph flow as explained in (b).

(e) Involuntary Movement of Smooth Muscles

The smooth muscles in the peripheral lymphatic vessels have the autonomic response to contract if filled and stretched to a certain limit (8). This moves the lymph along the vessels with the aid of the one-way valves.

Qigong triggers this mechanism as described in (a) through (d). This mechanism may also be activated by the change in autonomic function caused by the relaxation response induced by Qigong.

Many articles and books state that Qigong has beneficial effects on the lymphatic system. However, there is usually no justification. Dr. Jahnke (9) gives a detailed explanation and references as well as the effects of Yoga.

8. Qigong and Diseases of the Lymphatic System

Qigong techniques such as breathing are recommended for filariasis in (9). Filariasis and other immunological stressors may lead to Aids (10). Qigong is recommended as a prevention and treatment of Aids in the same paper.

The Qigong treatment of lymphedema and cancers of the lymphatic system can be found in (11) and (12).

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Taiji: Qigong, Quan, and Dao-De

by Jacob Newell (*Daoshi Gu Shen Yu*)

Taiji (太極) is a Chinese fitness system based on relaxed body alignment and smooth flow of energy. It is also a moving meditation based on the philosophy of Laozi, a legendary ancient sage who taught about the virtues of remaining calm, yielding, and returning to simplicity. Traditionally it is said that Taiji is three things: Qigong, Quan, and Dao-De.

Qigong (氣功) means energy practice. It is a system of circulating energy through the body to promote health and well-being. The basic theory is that if we relax everything into a stable base, and move and breathe naturally, our energy will flow well and gradually improve in quality.

Quan (拳) means fist, which represents martial art. Taiji is not only for promoting health but also for preventing harm, a system of self-defense. The theory of Taiji martial art is that soft overcomes hard – by remaining calm and relaxed, yielding to oncoming force, we can respond spontaneously and remain unharmed.

Dao (道) means path – the way. The way of nature, the way of life, etc. De (德) means to encounter and embody the way. Taiji is not only for health and for self-defense, but as a meditation it also invites us to a direct experience of our original nature, which we come to see is no different than nature itself.

We all come to Taiji for our own unique reasons, but these reasons will likely fall into at least one of these three categories. Your teacher's job is to help you learn the theory and principles and to teach you the methods of practice. However, you have to actually practice in order to get results. In addition, you need to study and ponder the philosophy so that you come to understand the theory for yourself.

The fundamental theory of Taiji is that everything is one cosmic energy – qi. This energy naturally polarizes into yin and yang – the heavy sinks down and becomes earth and the light rises up and becomes heaven. Living beings, as a microcosm of the universe, contain both body (earth) and mind (heaven). Therefore, in Taiji we cultivate both – cultivating body and mind is cultivating the interplay of earth and heaven.

In Taiji the body must relax and the mind must become empty, then the qi can naturally flow between the two poles. We connect to earth by opening up the bubbling-well in the foot and letting our body weight sink down. We connect to heaven by opening up the crown of the head and letting the mind be empty. We connect to living beings by – we're already a living being – but we reconnect with the basis of life by relaxing the torso, breathing naturally, and returning to the simplicity of a newborn baby.

When we maintain these principles, along with the myriad points of posture we learn in class, the qi will begin to flow more smoothly and naturally as we practice our Taiji fundamentals, form and partner practice. See you in class!

© Jacob Newell (*Daoshi Gu Shen Yu*)

Jacob Newell (Daoshi Gu Shen Yu) is an ordained Daoist priest and founder of Old Oak School of Dao. He practices and teaches Taijiquan and Daoist cultivation in Sonoma County, California. His book of poetry, These Daoist Bones, is available from his website, www.oldoakdao.org.

太極

Gu Shen Yu Taiji



Tai Chi in Your Life- 8 Principles That Can Change Your Life While Learning and Growing with Tai Chi by Dale Napier.

Softcover (179pp)2010. Mastersoft Press, Houston TX \$16.99

ISBN : 978-1439255803

Reviewed by Salvatore Casano, R.N., Ph.D.

While browsing in a local bookstore the title of the book caught my immediate attention, along with the simple elegance of the cover photo. While looking through the book I found the size of the font was very appealing and I knew this was going to be an enjoyable read. The author uses his experiences in tai chi, neigong and qigong to present a very informative book. A good deal of the content is based on the T'ai Chi Classics, which gives a strong foundation to the principles discussed.

The book is divided into ten chapters, eight of which reflect eight principles of tai chi.

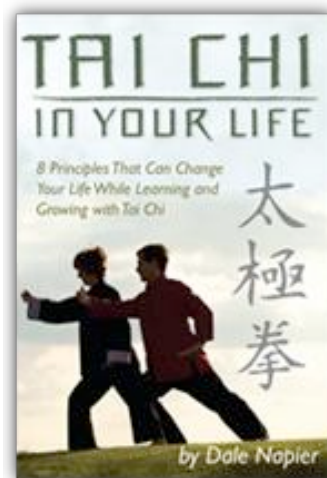
The last chapter titled **“Extra: Ninth Principle-Take It to the world”** basically invites the reader to share his or her experiences in tai chi with experiences and stories that reflect these eight principles. In the Introduction (first chapter) the author sets the goal of “making tai chi practice your own.” He states on p.xvi ***“Making it your own means interpreting the essence of a technique in such a way that you do not slavishly imitate the instructor. Instead you make the best use of your personal experience, physical stature, abilities, and attitudes to deliver an interpretation that is faithful to the original intent.”***

The eight principles discussed are relaxation, intention, awareness, continuity, focus, linking to your center, accepting/ yielding, and detaching the ego. Each principle is discussed in terms of martial effectiveness, how the principle can work in your daily life, and exercises for self practice which are based on cultivating the qi (chi). There are many photographs (black and white) to help the reader in performing the exercises and /or illustrating a concept.

In discussing each principle the reader is naturally brought to an understanding of how these principles are integrated into your practices. As an example, the fifth principle “Focus” is defined by the author to be ***“the continuous application of intention to a task at hand.”*** (p.96) As we practice tai chi (whatever style) it is vitally important to focus on the details of the individual form or posture. ***“ You cannot practice Tai Chi while you read a book or play on the Internet or watch TV; it just does not work that way.”*** Since Tai Chi is an internal art one needs to focus on what is occurring internally: inside your body, inside your mind, and inside your spirit. Our daily lives are filled with diversity, job, family, church, political or social activities, etc. All these activities are good and make life fun and enjoyable, however, all this diversity will cause a problem with focus, thus your tai chi will be adversely affected. The author provides exercises to help one improve focus. He ends the chapter with ***“Learning to turn all your attention and intention to a single topic, unceasingly, removes stress and tension from your life and improves productivity and quality.”*** (p. 106)

It is this approach that is used in discussing each of the remaining seven principles. My own personal experience with the book was to read it straight through. Afterwards, I would return to a certain principle re-read it and re-work the suggested exercises. This book is an asset to anyone practicing tai chi. It will encourage you to question and think, perhaps lead into the discovery of more principles. In a sense, this book is living opus with lots of good information.

In summary, the discussions in this book can help add much positivity to your tai chi practice and to your daily life. The author has a website which you may wish to check out to get more background information. www.TaiChiInYourLife.com Readers of the book are invited to visit the website and to share their own personal experiences and stories.



Salvatore Casano R.N., PhD – a registered nurse with a PhD in Holistic Health, and is an ATCQZ certified Tai Chi and Qigong instructor. His Tai Chi and Qigong journey began over 20 years ago while working as a chemistry instructor, when he felt the need for a more holistic approach to health care. Participating in many programs and projects relating to health, Dr. Casano educates the community on living a healthier lifestyle to avoid obesity and diabetes, and as a way to reduce stress. Over the years, he has learned from many masters including Bill Philips, Marc Issacs, Richard Chu, as well as two ATCQA advisors, Dr. Roger Jahnke, and Bill Douglas. Dr. Casano, along with his wife Veronica, often sojourn together on his healing path, as they use their skills in helping others connect the mind, body, and spirit. They have four adult children, seven grandchildren, and a cat, “Tiger.”

Taijiquan: The Art of Nurturing, The Science of Power

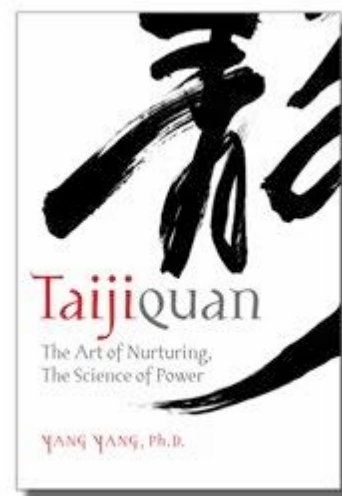
by Yang Yang, Ph.D.

Hardcover: 219 pages

Zhenwu Publications (February 28, 2005)

ISBN-10: 0974099007

reviewed by Rodney J. Owen



In preparation for Yang Yang's Summer Taiji Camp, I decided to re-read his book, *Taijiquan: The Art of Nurturing, The Science of Power*. It is a good read for someone interested in the complete art of Taiji. By complete art, I mean not just bits and pieces, as is often the case, at least in the West. According to Yang, Taiji is a martial art, a healing art, a spiritual practice, and a physical regimen. Yang, a disciple of Grandmaster Feng Zhiqiang, finds it odd that there is even a discussion in America as to whether Taiji is a healing or a martial art. The practice of Taijiquan, if one follows a complete curriculum, leads to martial skill and good health concurrently. Attempting to separate the two leads to something that is not balanced, and not Taijiquan.

For Yang, Taiji has three integral components: Qigong; Taiji Form; Push Hands. Of course, there is much to each of these individual categories, but they do form the basis of correct Taiji practice. In the Chen Hunyuan System, which Yang teaches, Qigong includes moving and static practices. Of these, the static practices are the most important in building gong, the foundation of Taiji. Static Qigong is basically sitting and standing Wuji meditation. Form of course varies depending on the school, or style one is practicing, but should be composed of the eight forces and five steps noted in the classics, and typical of all Taijiquan. The Taiji form is moving, choreographed Qigong, and it is key to combat applications. Finally, Yang covers push hands. For Yang, push hands is a training tool. It is a tool for learning to fight efficiently--among other things--but it is not fighting. Push hands is a very important partner exercise, and done correctly benefits each partner. Push hands was not intended to be a competitive venture. Yang does not broach this subject here, but the implication is clear.

For Yang, as with Grandmaster Feng, nurturing is primary in the art of Taijiquan. We begin by nurturing ourselves, through meditation and Qigong exercises, which builds gong and provides us with the foundation necessary to practice Taiji. In push hands practice we nurture ourselves and our training partners. There is much to this concept of nurture as an indispensable component of Taiji practice. To be able to function at our highest level, we must attend to our basic needs first. Everything else follows from there. Early in the book, Yang quotes the classical Song of Real Meaning to make his point: "With your whole being, develop your life"(1). That kind of says it all.

Most important for Western readers, Yang demystifies Taijiquan and presents hard solid scientific evidence for what is and is not possible. Yang has a Ph.D. in Kinesiology, and wrote his dissertation on the practical benefits of Taiji practice. There is no magic or superpowers implicit here, no throwing anyone across the room with intention only, or some mysterious Qi power. This is the art that we experience explained in a logical fashion that makes a lot of sense. He does not devote a lot of time to the martial application of Taijiquan, but he doesn't overlook it or disregard it either. All in all it is a balanced explication.

I realize this is a short summary of an excellent book. But better than reading my review, buy the book. I highly recommend it for any serious practitioner of Taijiquan, regardless of style. It presents a complete holistic view of this wonderful art in a sane no-nonsense manner.

Rodney Owen has had a life-long interest in the relationship between meditation and martial arts. Over the years he has followed and studied systems that emphasize that relationship: Aikido, Qigong, Taijiquan, I Liq Chuan, and Buddhism. He practices and teaches Taiji, Qigong, Kung Fu, and Meditation in High Point, NC. His primary interest is in the practical and functional aspects of these arts and in the concept that Kung Fu is a way of life, a methodology for improving and enjoying the content of life, of discovering and manifesting our higher selves. He maintains a blog on martial arts and mindfulness at <http://nagualtime.blogspot.com/> Samples of his writing and other interests can be found at <http://rodneyjowen.com>



Comedy Moment

Two men meet on the street. One asks the other: "Hi, how are you?"

The other replies: "I'm fine, thanks."

"And how's your son? Is he still unemployed?"

"Yes, he is. But he is meditating now."

"Meditating? What's that?"

"I don't know. But it's better than sitting around and doing nothing!"

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

A: He enters Nerdvana.

Q: What do Yoga meditation and an apple peeler have in common?

A: They both take you to the core.

The best vitamin to be a happy person is B1.

Meditation student: If I'm open minded, won't my brains fall out?

Teacher: No, just keep your mouth shut at the same time.

Change is inevitable, except from vending machines.

What do you get when you cross a Jehovah's Witness and a Zen Buddhist?

A person who knocks on your door for absolutely no reason at all.

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused his dentist's Novocain during root canal work?

He wanted to transcend dental medication!

BUMPER STICKERS:

No matter where you go, there you are.

So many ideas so little time.

Slow down, pay attention, question everything, start now

What if the Hokey Pokey really is what it's all about?

Only those who know when enough is enough, know when they have enough.

All generalizations are false, including this one.

Can we ever truly know when our philosophy assignment is due?

Diplomacy is the art of letting someone else get your way.

Snowmen fall from heaven unassembled.

Every time I find the meaning of life, they change it.

Things are not as they seem, nor are they otherwise.

What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

I'm an agnostic dyslexic insomniac that lies awake all night wondering if there really is a dog.

If reality wants to get in touch, it knows where I am.

If there were no hypothetical questions what would this say?

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

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!

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What is Yang-Sheng?

We are an international network, a website, Yang-Sheng.com, and an e-magazine featuring ancient wisdom, modern research, practical tips, articles written by over thirty columnists and other experts as well as daily inspiration for health, happiness and harmony.

Why advertise with us or become a sponsor of Yang-Sheng?

Although we are new in the field (initiated in February 2011), the precursor of Yang-Sheng, the *Qi Dao e-journal*, was founded in 2006, and has brought about 3,000 subscribers to the Yang-Sheng network. By the end of September, 2011 the Yang-Sheng website reached over 15,000 unique visitors per month. Our Facebook page has 2,100+ fans and 12,000+ users per month. In addition, around 2,500 subscribers download the PDF version of Yang-Sheng magazine each month to share with their friends and students. Approximately 70% of our visitors are from the USA, with the remainder primarily from Canada, Europe, East Asia, and Australia. Our audience consists predominately of practitioners of mind-body exercises (such as Qigong, Taiji, Yoga, reiki, mindfulness meditation, and other meditations) and people who are interested in taking care of themselves for health and happiness. **Yang-Sheng** offers a unique platform to reach a special health-conscious population. We offer a variety of advertising options to fit most budgets.

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We are actively seeking sponsors who share our philosophy and vision. Sponsors of Yang-Sheng are showcased on our website, Yang-Sheng.com, and our e-magazine and also in e-mail updates to our subscribers. Sponsorship levels begin at \$100 per month (*\$100 sponsor receives a 2 column-inch ad on the sidebar of every page of our website and a 1/4 page ad in the e-magazine*). Yang-Sheng functions under the umbrella of the non-profit World Institute for Self Healing (WISH), therefore your sponsorship is tax deductible.

Please contact us at editor@yang-sheng.com for more information on sponsorship opportunities.

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Website Sidebar and Footer Ads: We have limited display ad units available on the website main page (which appears on every page right now). They are located in the lower sidebar and footer of the page. These ads offer design flexibility and can include rich media (within specifications). The sidebar ad is available for \$35 per column-inch per month (CPM) (210 x 100 pixels), and the footer for \$30/CPM (180 x 200 pixels). Please contact us or refer to ad specifications listed on our website for additional size and technical details.

To add display ads on the PDF version of the magazine: add \$10 more per column inch. That is, \$45 CPM for both web site and magazine display. All advertising rates listed on our website are introductory rates and are subject to change. To take advantage of our introductory rate offer, you may purchase up to 12 months of display advertizing for the current rates; you will pay only the introductory rate, even if ad rates increase before your ads complete their run.

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As a 100% independently owned web site, we have the flexibility to create virtually any kind of campaign imaginable. If you wish to discuss a custom advertising campaign, please email admin@yang-sheng.com; or editor@yang-sheng.com.

We retain the right to refuse any advertising that we feel is inappropriate or we feel is in contrast to the positive image of the Yang-Shen network and web site.



Yang Sheng

Cultivating Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

Yang Sheng (Nurturing Life), is an E-magazine and a network for all practitioners of mind-body exercises, health/happiness seekers, and spiritual cultivators. It promotes philosophy and methods of self-healing, positive mind and health preservation, and shares knowledge and experiences with those who are interested in the subjects and their applications in everyday life. Your contribution, participation and suggestions are truly appreciated.

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

www.Yang-Sheng.com

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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.