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QI and QIGONG

THE CONCEPT OF "CHI"

BUQI INSTITUTE

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Foreword

The word *qi* has entered Western consciousness because of increased familiarity with Traditional Chinese Medicine, Acupuncture, Herbs and *Qigong*. Nearly everybody now knows or has heard of the word *qi*, but its actual meaning remains a mystery for most Westerners.

Students often ask me this question: "What is *qi*?" Sometimes my answer is: "*qi* = x or *qi* = ?", because in Chinese *qi* means 'invisible' or 'the indication of something unknown'. The Chinese distinguish different kinds of *qi*, each having a different meaning, therefore in books the meaning of *qi* can vary from page to page or even from line to line.

Today the tendency is for people to contract *qi* into one concept and thus mix a lot of different ideas, resulting in the loss of accurate meaning.

For those who really wish to study the meaning of *qi*, I would suggest the research of Chinese books that write about *qi*. However for most people this is impossible.

To save you time I am offering you this text which contains the most important concepts of *qi* and an overview of the evolution of *Qigong* during the last fifteen years.

Shen Hongxun, September 1994

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Part one *QI, CHI, KI*: THE CONCEPT OF *QI*

1. The word '*Qi*'

1.1 *Qi, Chi, Ki*

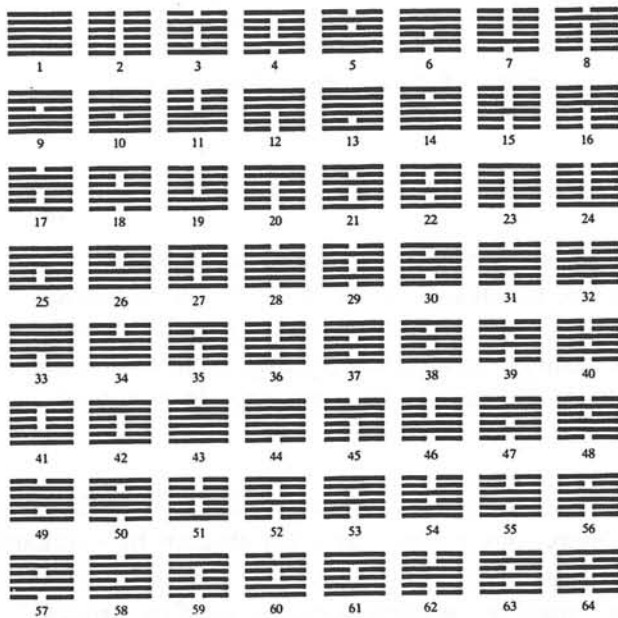
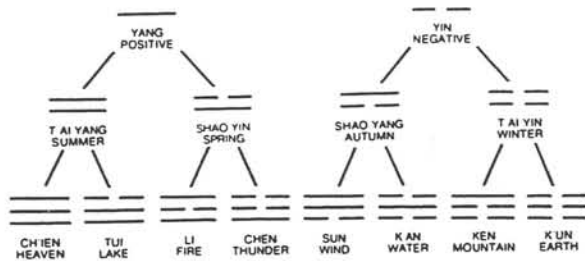
The Chinese word 氣 is expressed in the West by '*Qi*', '*Chi*', or '*Ki*'. The first version is based on the Chinese alphabet, the second is the way it is pronounced in Chinese, and the third is the Japanese pronunciation. We will use '*qi*'. With the increasing popularity in the West of acupuncture, massage, herbal medicine and *Taijiquan*, the word has come into common use, normally with the sense 'vital energy'. But in fact '*qi*' has many meanings in Chinese, because China is a vast country with an immensely long history. As a current Chinese-English dictionary says, 'the concept of *qi* can be found in different scientific disciplines such as meteorology, medicine, philosophy and others'. We hope that this text will provide the means to an understanding of the Chinese concept of *qi*.

1.2. *Qi*: the most ancient written evidence

It is possible that some of the texts that refer to *qi* are more than four thousand years old, but this is difficult to prove and the debate is far from closed. However, there is a general consensus that *Guoyu, Zhouyu*, a historical work dealing with the *Zhou* Dynasty, is the most ancient book that refers to *qi*. It dates from 2,600 years ago. In this book we find the following:

'During the second year of the reign of King *Yie* of the Western *Zhou* dynasty, this region was often stricken by earthquakes. Concerning the earthquakes Yangfu (the uncle of King *Yie*) said: 'They are caused by an imbalance of the *qi* of the cosmos'.'

It is interesting that 780 years before Christ the concept of *qi* was used to explain the mechanism of an earthquake.



Different Gua

Since the concept is so ancient, and because, as we have said, China is so big, with many different regions and cultural influences, the meaning of *qi* varies from book to book, depending on the period in which each book was written, the region where it comes from, and the scientific discipline from which it originated. Even different chapters in the same book can differ in their concept of *qi*. Moreover, it is not necessarily correct to attempt to reduce all of these different versions to one system: this would be like taking a number of beautiful pictures and crumpling them up together into a ball. Any deep study of the concept must keep this very much in mind.

1.3. *Qi* in the Chinese written language

One Chinese tradition tells us that Chong Ji, who lived during the *Huanti* period (4700 years ago), composed the Chinese characters which are now known in English as the seal characters. These characters were called *zhuan*. The Chinese written language evolved for more than 2000 years, and was subject to a number of changes. Various notations arose. King *Xuan* of the *Zhou* dynasty and the first Emperor of the *Qin* dynasty each united the Chinese characters into a coherent system, the first called big *zhuan*, the second small *zhuan*. Nowadays when making seals Chinese often use *zhuan* characters. Therefore the usual translation of *zhuan* is 'seal characters'.

Knots and *gua*

Another -more plausible- theory says that the characters of the Chinese written language underwent many changes during their long history and that almost 7,000 years ago, the Chinese began to use knots in string as a means of recording the weather.

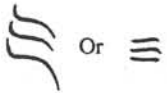
The knots evolved into the *gua*: full or broken lines (as in the famous hexagrams of the *I Ching*), which were used not only to describe the weather, but also to express historical, philosophical, or simple scientific ideas. Some *gua* represent the earliest expression of the *qi* phenomenon because they deal with *qi* as we understand it nowadays, but there is no *gua* that of itself forms a written expression of *qi*.

After the knot period, Chinese inscriptions were made on bones or tortoise shells, after which engraved copper and inscribed stone, were used for writing.

From that time there started to appear the Chinese character that indicates *qi*. In these periods the basic elements of the *qi* character varied, but one symbol never changed: the symbol whose trace can be found in every calligraphic expression of the *qi* concept, namely the symbol for "vapour".

The shell period

These inscriptions were like small paintings. The character *qi* was depicted as shown here on the left. This character was made up of only three lines, and these were in that period the symbol for 'vapour'. At that time the same three-line symbol not only meant *qi* but had also other meanings, for instance 'to beg', 'to reach', and 'to end' (see page 8).



The character *qi* in the shells period

The copper and stone period

There is an antique copper tea-cup, the *Qihe Hu* (the tea-cup of the marquis *Qi*), made in the Spring and Autumn Period of the *Zhou* Dynasty. This has on it the character that signifies '*qi*' in this period. This version of the '*qi*' haracter also uses the symbol for vapour.



The character *qi* from *Qihe Hu*



The character *qi* from *Xingqi Ming*

Another way of writing *qi* is found on a twelve-sided ornament of stone, which was worn as a pendant at the waist, probably during the *Zhou* Dynasty, about 2,350 years ago. When this ornament was found in the earth, 70 years ago, it was given the name '*Xingqi Ming*': '*Ming*' means 'text inscribed on a stone' and '*Xingqi*', which means 'movement', is the first character of the inscription. It was kept in the Museum of Ancient Cultures in Tianjin.

On the '*Xingqi Ming*' 36 characters are engraved, with a symbol under the ninth indicating that all the preceding characters should be repeated. The inscription is therefore 45 characters long, and consists of a poem about the movement of *qi* in the body, describing the results of deep breathing exercises.



Xingqi Ming

Lishu

Lishu was an ancient style of calligraphy, the official script used in the *Han* Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD). The *qi* character in *Lishu* evolved from another character which combined the symbol for vapour and the symbol for fire, as was the case with the *qi* character on the *Xingqi Ming*.



The character for *qi* in *Lishu*

Taoist books often use this Chinese character for *qi* because Taoism began in the *Han* Dynasty when the *Lishu* way of writing was used. In Taoism *qi* refers to 'the internal energy of the body'. Therefore nowadays people think that this *qi* character specifically refers to internal energy, but this is not correct as in *Lishu* script *qi* does not have this specific meaning.

Songti and Zhengkai

氣

The character for *qi*
in *Songti*

During the *Song* Dynasty (960-1127 AD) the technique of printing with woodblocks was discovered. A new version of the Chinese writing system was designed that was more suited for carving in wood. This was called *Songti*. By the time of the *Song* Dynasty, Traditional Chinese Medicine was well-developed, so the importance of food energy for the body was understood. This perhaps accounts for the fact that during the *Song* Dynasty the way of writing *qi* changed: the *qi* character in *Songti* is composed of the symbol for 'vapour' and the symbol for 'rice'.

氣

The character for *qi*
in *Zhengkai*

Zhengkai is the hand-written version of *Songti*, and dates from the *Ming* Dynasty. Its characters do not differ very much from those of *Songti*.

Nowadays *Zhengkai* is used in Taiwan and Hongkong.

气

The character for *qi*
in simplified characters

China Today

The left character is the simplified character for *qi* that has been in use in the People's Republic of China since 1952.

Japanese script

気

The character for *qi*
in Japanese

The Japanese writing system borrowed a large number of characters from Chinese. One of this is the symbol for *qi*. The lower part of the character has changed into 気.

2. *Qi* and Meteorology

The word *qi* derives from the classical meteorology. In the *Neijing*, the ancient Chinese medical text known in English as The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor, is written:

'The *qi* of the earth that rises, changes into a cloud. *Tianqi* of the heaven that descends changes into rain. The rain comes from the *qi* of the earth. The cloud comes from the *qi* of the heaven.' (*Neijing: Yin yang ying xian da run*)

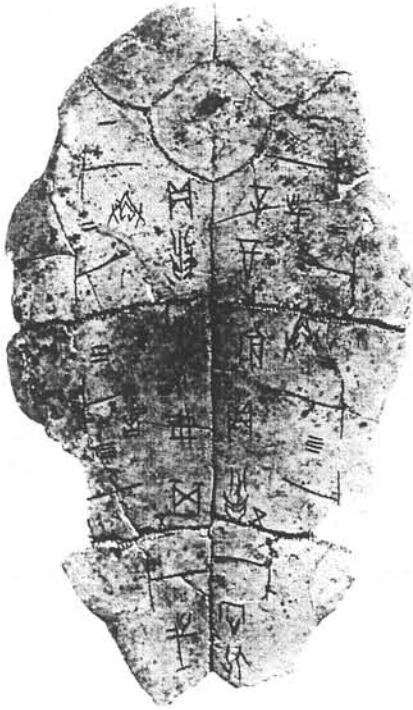
Elsewhere in the same chapter is written:

'The sun transforms into *qi*, cold transforms into solid substance.'

This means that heat transforms water into vapour. The water can be seen, while vapour is usually invisible. The second part means that cold transforms the vapour into water, which is visible and tangible.

People observed the phenomenon of water vapour. This led to the development of the concept of a gas phase. From this they deduced that gas was at the origin of everything. 'When gas was compressed, the visible world arose.' (*Neijing: Lieji zhangxian.*)

This gave rise to a theory of the transformation of the visible into gas and vice versa.



The earliest inscriptions on a tortoise shell

Qi in the field of philosophy

What is the origin of the cosmos? The ancient Chinese were perennially interested in this philosophical question. They used the words *qi* or *yuanqi* to denote the origin of the cosmos. In Zhuang Zhue's book several chapters deal with the beginning of the cosmos. In one, we read:

'The whole cosmos arose from one thing only; this is called *qi*'
(*Zhuangzi: Zibeiyi*).

In another chapter it says:

'Analysis shows that in the beginning the Cosmos had no living beings. Not only were there no living beings, nothing was visible. Not only was nothing visible, there was not even *qi*. Suddenly there was a change in the cosmos, and *qi* came into being. From *qi* there evolved the visible world, and from the visible world there evolved living beings.' (*Zhuangzi: Zhihe*)

Zhuang Zhi thought that everything in the cosmos has its basis in *qi*: the entire visible world and all living beings.

Zhuang Zhi had a famous saying:

'If you split a foot-long piece of bamboo into two, and you continue to split it, again and again, you can continue for ten thousand years and will still not be finished'.

This shows that he was aware of the fact that matter is composed of immensely small particles, thus prefiguring modern atomic theory.

In ancient times there were debates about the development of the human body, and the concept of *qi* was central to these debates. They thought that *qi* was a very important element of human physiology, entering the body at birth, and functioning as a nutrient essential for the body's existence and development.

Zhuang Zhi said:

'At the exact time of birth of a human being, *qi* enters. So the moment *qi* enters the body, life begins. If *qi* leaves the body, then death is the result' (*Zhuangzi: Zibeiyue*).

Guan Chong (?-645 BC) said:

'*Qi* gives food to the whole body.' (*Guanzi: Xingxiasu*).

Wang Qinghe said:

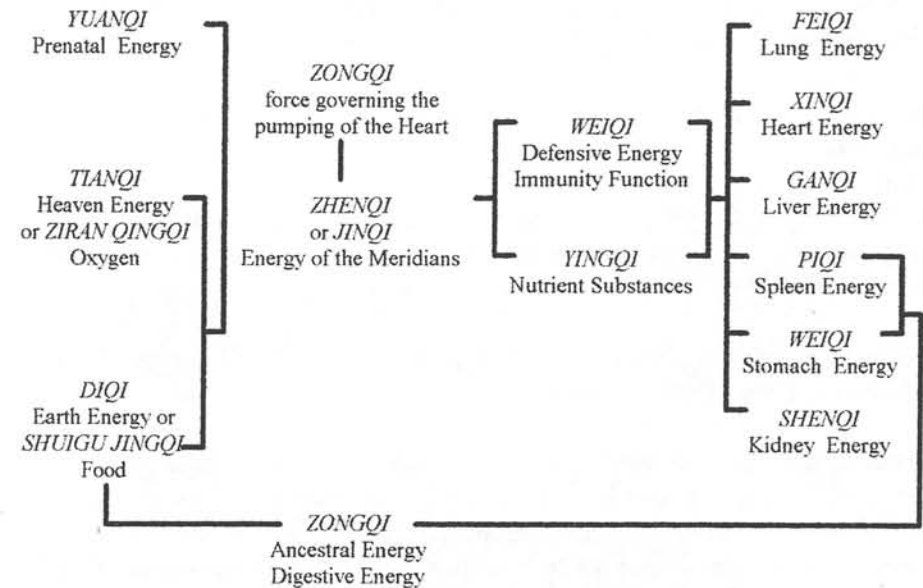
'If one has sufficient *yuanqi* the body is strong; if one has insufficient *yuanqi* the body is weak; if there is no *yuanqi* the body dies.'

In this sense the word *qi* or *yuanqi* corresponds with the common Western translation 'vital energy'.

4. The *Qi* theory in Traditional Chinese Medicine

4.1. Biochemical theory (Shen Hua Run)

The theory of the mutual influence and transformation of different kinds of *qi* is more than 2,300 years old. This theory shows us that even in those ancient times they had a correct understanding of some of the physiological processes of the human body. The theory prefigured modern theories of the biochemistry of breathing and digestion, and included concepts of heredity and immunity.



Scheme of ancient 'biochemistry'

- (1) Some books translate this *ZHENQI* as 'true energy'.
- (2) Actually, *piqi* denotes the digestive function of the stomach, and the spleen is not involved.
- (3) *Weiqi* often means the peristaltic force of the stomach.
- (4) *Shenqi*, apart from 'kidney energy', also includes the hormonal function.

When one is born, one inherits the *yuanqi* (原氣) of one's parents. In Traditional Chinese Medicine *yuanqi* had the meaning of 'prenatal *qi*'. One can translate it as 'the original motive force of life'. This is not to be confused with another word, also pronounced *yuanqi* (元氣) which has a different meaning.

When one is born one needs two kinds of *qi*. One is *tianqi*, the other one is *diqu*. *Tianqi* means literally 'Heaven *qi*'. In the *Neijing* it is also called *zhe lan qing qi*, what literally means 'natural, pure *qi*'. This is what we now call 'oxygen'.

Diqu means literally 'earth *qi*'. In the *Neijing* it is also called '*shui gu jing qi*'. The literal translation of this is: 'the elementary substance of grains and water' It corresponds with the current concept of 'nutrient substances'.

This theory proposes that *tianqi*, *diqu* and *yuanqi* are combined and transformed into *zhenqi*. In the West *zhenqi* is often translated into 'true *qi*', because one meaning of the character *zhen* is 'true'. In fact *zhenqi* refers to the flow of *qi* in the meridians. Another word for *zhenqi* is *jingqi*, meaning the *qi* of the meridians. In ancient times *zhenqi* and *jingqi* were used interchangeably.

Zhenqi includes *yingqi* and *weiqi*. *Yingqi* denotes the nutrient substances, and *weiqi* indicates the immunitive function.

Zhenqi extends into all the organs. In the heart it is called heart *qi*, in the lungs lung *qi*. There is also liver *qi*, spleen *qi*, stomach *qi*, kidney *qi*, and so on. The *qi* of the different organs can be subdivided into *yin* and *yang*, e.g. kidney *yin* and kidney *yang*. Here '*yin*' primarily refers to the organ of the body and its liquid aspect. '*Yang*' mostly refers to the function of the organ.

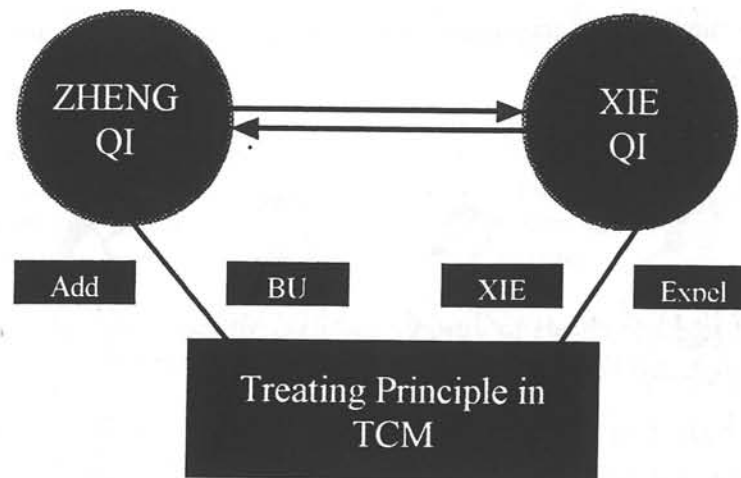
In Chinese Medicine stomach *qi* mostly refers to the stomach body and the peristaltic force. Spleen *qi* mostly refers to digestive substances. These two *qi* together are called *zhongqi*. The function of *zhongqi* is to digest *diqu*. Thus the biochemistry becomes an integrated system.

4.2. The theory of healthy *Qi* and sick *Qi* (Zheng Xie Run)

Zheng, also called *zhengqi* means healthy *qi*. *Xie*, also called *xieqi* means sick *qi*. Ancient Chinese texts write that the function of *zhengqi* is to fight against diseases and to restore what is damaged in the body. It resembles what we call nowadays the immune system and the regenerative functions of the body.

The *Zheng Xie Run* theory envisages a continuous struggle between *zhengqi* and *xieqi*. When *zhengqi* is stronger than *xieqi*, one is in good health. When the *xieqi* is stronger than *zhengqi*, one becomes ill.

In a human being resistance to illness, the immune system, and the capacity for physical regeneration increases if the *zhengqi* is reinforced. Strengthening the *zhengqi* and eliminating the *xieqi* are the two fundamental principles of Chinese Medicine. One is called *bu*, one is called *xie*.



Zheng Xie Run theory

In the *Neijin* six different kind of *xieqi* are described: wind, cold, damp, summer, dryness and fire. They are called *liu yin*, the external causes of disease.

4.3. The *qi* theory in Acupuncture

Especially in acupuncture, which, it should be remembered, is only a subsection of the entire edifice of Traditional Chinese Medicine, there is a concept of *qi* which refers to the sensation patients have after they have been needled. In Chinese this is called *deqi*, meaning '*qi* reaction'. In the *Neijin* we read:

'The purpose of acupuncture is to create a *qi* reaction.'

In the *Nanjin* it is written:

'When *qi* is coming one can feel a movement in the meridians.'

The usual reactions after needling are stiffness, expansion, pain, sleep, electricity, contraction, coldness, or heat.

In ancient times some acupuncture techniques are called 'techniques for moving *qi*'.



New qigong (Kuo Lin, 1979)

1. 'The spring of *Qigong*'

Nowadays many books claim that the first use of the word *Qigong* was in the book *Qigong Chanwei* (The Explanation of *Qigong*) written about 1700 years ago in the Jin Dynasty by Xu Sheng (239-274 AD). However, since this book no longer exists, the claim cannot be proved.

The first use of the word *Qigong* in a scientific text was in 1934, when the book *The Procedure for Treating Lung Tuberculosis with Qigong*, by Dr. Dong Hao of the hospital Xiang Ling in Hanzou, was published. In this book *Qigong* is introduced as a breathing exercise.

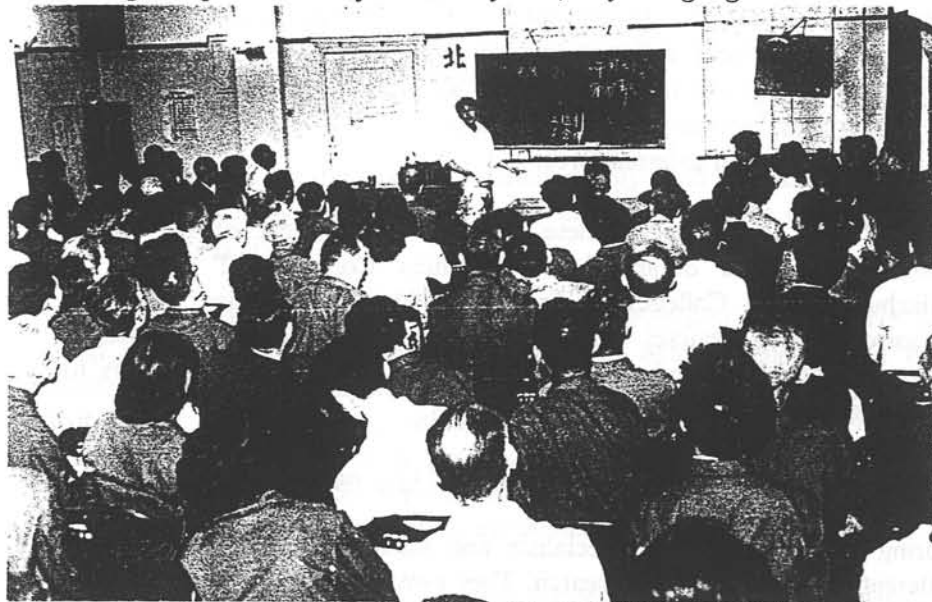
In fact the word *Qigong* was in common use, but it only referred to the use of *qi* as a physical force in street demonstrations. So Dr. Dong Hao was the first to introduce the word *Qigong* in the medical field.

In 1952 research began in China into the use of breathing and relaxation exercises in the treatment of certain diseases. After 1958 different reports and articles that arose from this research were published, in which it was demonstrated that these exercises could help to treat tuberculosis, asthma, hypertension, gastric and duodenal ulcers, and gastritis.

In 1979 the Director of the National Ministry of Health of China began to organise experts in these matters to investigate this kind of knowledge.

In 1979 a Chinese calligrapher, Kuo Lin, was the first to introduce a new *Qigong* system called New *Qigong*. She claimed that practising her method could cure cancer. Sports Councils and Labour Councils throughout the whole of China organised workers in the regular performance of these exercises. This New *Qigong* combined breathing in with the twisting of the torso while walking.

At the same time the Shanghai Institute of Gerontology invited me to develop and teach this kind of exercise. The Health Council and Sports Council of Luan, a district of Shanghai, organised a major project to encourage the practice of my exercise system, *Taijiwuxigong*.



Dr Shen teaching at the Shanghai Institute of Gerontology

The *Taijiwuxigong* system is based on 'spontaneous movement' for the purpose of opening the central channel, and uses five kind of *daoyin* exercises to expel sick *qi* and to bring about certain emotional changes. The Health Council of Luan engaged ten leading medical practitioners to examine the effects of practising *Taijiwuxigong*. This research demonstrated that *Taijiwuxigong* had a beneficial effect on hypertension, some kinds of heart disease, asthma, chronic bronchitis, gastric and duodenal ulcers, chronic hepatitis, and other illnesses (for a complete table of this information, see page 14).

A year later, different *Qigong* systems began to be taught in a number of cities in China, for instance: *Kongjing Qigong* in Shanghai, *Dayian Qigong* in Beijing, *Zifa Wuqingshi* in Guanze, and so on.

EFFECTS OF TAIJIWUXIGONG ON CHRONIC DISEASES

| Disease | number of cases | | | age | duration of disease | cured / strong improved | improved | not improved | total | percentage % |
|---|------------------|-----|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | total | men | women | | | | | | | |
| High bloodpressure QIGONG QIGONG and medicaments | 243 87 156 | | | 38-79 | 7 months - 21 years | 79 131 | 8 23 | 0 2 | 87 154 | 100 98.7 |
| Hemiplegia | 8 | 6 | 2 | 48-73 | 1-8 years | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 87.5 |
| Asthma bronchialis | 9 | 6 | 3 | 27-46 | 25-42 years | 3 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 88.9 |
| Chronic bronchitis | 29 | 21 | 8 | 46-80 | 5-22 years | 17 | 8 | 4 | 25 | 86.2 |
| Stomach and duodenum ulcer | 28 | | | 16-63 | 1-6 years | 3 | 19 | 6 | 22 | 78.6 |
| Chronic hepatitis | 26 | 21 | 5 | 28-51 | 1.5-14 years | 5 | 19 | 2 | 24 | 92.5 |
| Chronic gastritis | 38 | 24 | 14 | 21-73 | 6 months 4 years | 18 | 9 | 11 | 27 | 71 |
| Rheumatism | 188 | 103 | 85 | 24-81 | 2 months 18 years | 142 | 42 | 4 | 184 | 97.8 |

Scheme is a quote of the article 'Mechanism study of effects of TAIJIWUXIGONG on chronic diseases, and its functions'. Published at the '2nd All China QIGONG science congress' in WUXI.

In 1980 the publishers of *Zhijiang Traditional Medicine Magazine* brought out a new magazine called *Qigong*, and, at the same time, the Kantong *Qigong* Association published another new magazine called *Qigong and Science*. They both contained articles on the different body and mind exercises. From then on the concept of *Qigong* became a general concept covering all of these different systems: breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, mental concentration exercises, body movement exercises, internal force exercises, spontaneous movement exercises, and the treatment of patients by the use of external force.

In 1981 the Traditional Chinese Medicine Department of the Health Ministry of China organised an All-China Congress of *Qigong* in Sijiazhuang. Some Colleges of Traditional Chinese Medicine started to organise *Qigong* courses for T.C.M. students studying Acupuncture, Massage, and Herbs and some Universities invited *Qigong* instructors to teach *Qigong* to their professors and students.

In China this period was called 'the Spring of *Qigong*'.

During these years many specialists and scientific researchers in these different fields did a lot of research. They proved that these exercises, and the treatment of sick people with external force, could have beneficial effects on health, ageing, intelligence, artistic and athletic performance, the growth of plants, and so on. Their research was influential not only in China but throughout the whole world.

In 1988 the First World Congress on Medical *Qigong* took place in Beijing. This Congress proposed to organise an exchange of knowledge amongst *Qigong* researchers from all over the world and the Health Ministry of China proposed to the adoption of ten *Qigong* systems, including *Taijiwuxigong*. Last year, in 1993, the Second Congress took place.

2. The research concerning 'waiqi'

Of all the theories developed concerning *Qigong*, only the *waiqi* theory is authentically new and interesting.

In the theory of *Qigong* the concept of *waiqi* is obscure, because the word can have a number of different meanings. Usually *waiqi* is translated as 'external energy'. But it also refers sometimes to the external energy of nature, sometimes to the body's external energy, and sometimes to the ability to transmit energy outside the body. In research reports on *waiqi* the latter meaning is always used.

There has been a great deal of scientific research into *waiqi*. This research is based on the supposition that the emission of external energy can be registered on physical instruments such as the infrared recorder, the electrometer, the ultra-sonic recorder, or the magnetic recorder. Some research reports also mention the detection of the presence of a microparticle beam. However, none of these results has been satisfactorily replicated, and the reports of the microparticle beam are completely false.

Some researchers report the use of *waiqi* for destroying bacteria, viruses or cancer cells. Others claim that *waiqi* can help to restore the vibration force of heart cells of rats or mice that were isolated in a tissue-culture.

In 1988, together with Dr. Qian Shusen, I took part in a research project on the curative effects of *waiqi* on mice which had been given MO₄ tumours by injection with cancer cells. Each day they were treated with *waiqi* for 30 minutes. When the external energy was directed at them, one could see the mice vibrate.

Three experiments were done. One with male mice, and two with female mice. The mice of the first two groups were injected intraperitoneally with MO₄ cells. The third (female) group was injected subcutaneously in the right axilla with MO₄ cells. Significant differences were found between the treatment groups and the control groups. Statistical analysis showed that in experiments 1 and 2 the volume of the intra-abdominal tumours differed significantly between the treatment group and the control group, but that



The experiment with mice

there was no significant difference in the survival period and the volume of the blood ascites. In experiment 3 the survival period and the average tumour volume per day differed significantly between the treatment group and the control group, but the end volume of the tumour did not have any significant difference.

The quality and the function of different *Qigong* practitioners emitting *waiqi* is different.

In the West I have taught since 1991 a *waiqi* therapy called *Buqi*. *Buqi* is a healing method based on the application of different Vital Forces. *Buqi* students develop these forces by means of special exercises. During treatment these forces are sent via particular points to the patient's nervous system, hormonal system, or directly to the organs themselves. As a result, the patient has various reactions, including a feeling of warmth, vibration, and spontaneous movement. In the *Buqi* method, *qi* is also used for diagnostic purposes.

3. The Spontaneous Movement of the human body

In China there are different attitudes to spontaneous movement. Because of problems with the *He Xang Zuang* method (see below) some practitioners are not interested in spontaneous movement. But in fact spontaneous movement is a very important and natural self-regulating function of the body.

To begin with, spontaneous movement is normal. Every second, without thinking about it, our body has natural spontaneous movements: the beating of the heart, breathing, the peristaltic movement of the digestive system all of these are examples of spontaneous movement.

In fact, we can distinguish two modes of physical motion: one is voluntary and under the control of consciousness, and the other is involuntary and independent of our conscious control. These natural spontaneous movements are examples of the second category.

There are also two kinds of muscles in the human body: the striped or skeletal muscle that is normally controlled by our will, and the smooth or visceral muscle (like the heart), which is not. Normally it requires an act of conscious volition to cause movement in the voluntary muscle. The involuntary muscles are controlled by the autonomic nervous system and perform involuntary motion. However, it is possible for the voluntary muscles to act involuntarily, and for involuntary muscles to act voluntarily.

In *Qigong* exercises we can distinguish two kind of spontaneous movement: one is what is called 'complete spontaneous movement', the other, 'semi-spontaneous movement'. In what follows the *wuxi*-stance is used as an example of complete spontaneous movement.

In the *wuxi*-stance, when people drop their centre of gravity into the lower abdomen and quieten their mind as much as possible, voluntary muscles may start working independently of their concentration or will.

In general five different reactions are possible during spontaneous movement:

* A change in breathing. When one doesn't think about the breathing five different types of respiration may occur. The highest level is reached when one hardly breathes at all, as if one were in a state of hibernation.

* In the consecutive stages of the practice of *Taijiwuxigong* one can feel the energy move in different channels, and the energy will circulate along various specific pathways.

* Different body movements are possible. One might start to vibrate, or move the upper part of the body forwards and backwards, or have the tendency to bend to the ground and/or kneel. One might start jumping, dancing or moving in a way that resembles gymnastics or martial arts. In a later stage the spontaneous movement stops and people will sit or lie down.

* Emotional reactions also occur. Any reaction, from the entire range of human emotions, may take place. It is usual for people to cry, laugh, scream, sing, or sigh. A few have very strong emotional reactions. After this release, a state of well-being is achieved.

* During spontaneous movement sick *qi* leaves the body. The indications that this is happening are belching, yawning, perspiring, or breaking wind. The pathogenic factors known as Damp and Wind leave the body, the latter through the fingers and toes. Some practitioners who have felt pain or stiffness in the body will notice that together with the expelling of the sick *qi*, these complaints also disappear.

Taiji 37, or spontaneous movement within the practice of 37 *Taijiquan* postures, is an example of semi-spontaneous movement. During the practice of the different standing postures the mind concentrates on different points of focus. Then the body naturally produces spontaneous movement.

The difference between semi-spontaneous movement and complete spontaneous movement is that in the former, mental concentration is an important aspect of the practice. In complete spontaneous movement, the mind is not involved.

However semi-spontaneous and complete spontaneous movement exercises are both examples of standing meditation.

4. The development of *Qigong*: an evolution with some problems

It is because the practice of *Qigong* spread too rapidly that people who did not have correct understanding of *Qigong* set up as teachers and started, as the Chinese expression puts it, to sell fish eyes for pearls.

The book "*Qigong Masters of today*" shows that China counts very few professional *Qigong* Masters. In the period that China was economically more open to the West, many of them left China and went to Europe, America, Japan, Canada and Australia.

This situation created three kind of problems:

1. *Qigong* exhibitions were organised in which charlatans used tricks, claiming to be demonstrating the effects of external *qi*.

2. Suddenly many publications came on the market about *Qigong*, often with false theories of the subject. Many writers wanted to integrate ancient theories of *qi* into the theory of *Qigong*, because the literal translation of the word '*Qigong*' is '*qi* exercises' or '*qi* exercises for the development of special functions'. Writers searched in ancient books to find explanations and theories of *qi*, and compiled extracts from different books into articles on *Qigong*. This habit has created a great deal of confusion and caused false ideas of the nature of *qi* to circulate, because the extracts came from books that were written in different periods, during different dynasties; they refer to different concepts of *qi* and by mixing them all together, though the results may superficially seem to make sense, any real knowledge of the subject reveals them to be contradictory and completely confused.

3. As a result of this, people started to teach false *Qigong*, and this frequently created many problems for their students. In 1983 in particular more than forty thousand practitioners in China of the *He Xang Zuang* method were afflicted by serious mental problems.

These problems were the consequence of an incorrect theory of the concept of *qi*. *Qi* was entirely equated with beneficial energy or, as Western people

call it 'vital energy', ignoring the existence of sick *qi*, which is pathogenic. It was thought that this purely beneficial *qi* would help people to maintain good health. From this idea *He Xiang Zuang* designed an exercise system in which each exercise was meant to bring 'heaven energy' into the body.

This involved exercises in which the palms of the hands were directed towards the top of the head for bringing the *qi* into the body in order to increase the energy in the body. The result was just the opposite to that intended. Sick *qi* normally leaves the body via the hands, but if one does exercises in which one directs the palms of the hands towards the head, there is a very high risk that the sick *qi* will simply come back in to the body via the head. If one does these exercises for a long time sick *qi* will concentrate in the head, influence the brain, and may result in serious mental problems. Similarly, if one does exercises in which the palms of the hands are directed towards the chest, chest pains may result, and exercises in which the palms of the hands are directed towards the lower abdomen can lead to abdominal pain and, in women, irregularities of the menstrual cycle.

Another cause of abreactions to *Qigong* is the fact that some versions of *Qigong* hold that relaxation is the most important element in *Qigong*. This is combined with an incorrect concept of relaxation. Practitioners influenced by this theory try to relax completely; as a result, the spinal column contracts too much, and this leads to incorrect spinal posture. The incorrect spinal posture causes an excessive pressure of the vertebral body on the nerves, and disturbs the transmission of information from the brain to the organs. If this goes on for a long time, one becomes ill.

It is because of problems like these that in 1983 the Shanghai Institute of Gerontology invited me to teach a course on the theory of spontaneous movement for chief medical doctors, senior engineers, and *Qigong* teachers. They also asked me to treat patients who suffered from abnormal reactions from the practice of *Qigong*, and to write a book entitled *Abreactions to Qigong and Therapeutic Counter-measures*. In 1984 this book was published by the Shanghai Institute of Gerontology.

5. A blossoming flower whose scent reaches far afield.

The Chinese have a saying that the smell of the blossoming flower reaches beyond the wall of the garden in which it is growing. *Qigong* originates from China but nowadays is undergoing much more development outside China.

In China today people are only interested in doing business. The *Qigong* spring is over but before its summer could even begin, winter had already come. The days when *Qigong* was in fashion are over. However *Qigong* has become very powerful in the West, but not only in the West, the waves of *Qigong* have spread throughout the world.

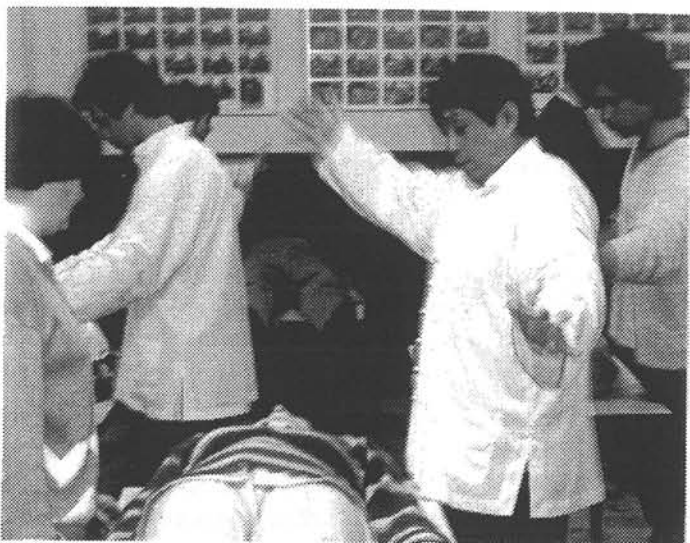
The professional *Qigong* Masters who left China, brought with them not only their theoretical knowledge, but also their years of experience in both practise and teaching. They have lived through the different phases in the development of *Qigong* in China and the problems that attended that development. Therefore they teach carefully, step by step, thus creating a healthy development in *Qigong*.

The Western approach to *Qigong* is also fundamentally different from that of the Chinese. Many Chinese consider *Qigong* as belonging to a bygone era and are therefore not very interested in it, do not want to practise very much and do not want to study it in depth.

For Westerners *Qigong* represents a new field of knowledge which is of great interest to many.

How to teach *Qigong*? This is a very interesting question. If, as in China, one continues teaching by using only the ancient terminology, this may only cause confusion and can fill the study of something unknown with new concepts which are unclear. If tricks continue to be offered to the public under the name of *Qigong*, Western people will feel more and more deceived and the Western Spring of *Qigong* might also quickly change into winter.

Qigong should be approached and taught in a scientific way.



Some pictures from the Buqi course

6. A bright future

From a scientific philosophical point of view I think that the development of science goes from simple to complex and from complex to simple. This course is continuously repeated and can be described as a tower of spirals.

The development of Western medicine has now reached a very advanced level, it has reached a stage which is characterised by a high degree of complexity and over-refinement. This evolution also has many negative side-effects with the result that many people are looking towards complementary medicine. This is an indication that they want a new development in medicine, which is from the complex to simplicity of a higher level, -a desire even shared by some highly qualified medical specialists.

This innovation cannot be avoided. But how to achieve it and find an effective shortcut?

From my research of over forty years of this kind of knowledge I think *Qigong* might provide this shortcut, because it is simple and effective. After (para)medical and psychological help, *Qigong* can become a third and important element in the rehabilitation of patients.

Here I would like to introduce a new *Qigong* system - the *Buqi* system. Through the practise of these exercises one can quickly develop different Vital Forces which can be used for self healing and for healing others.

I hope more and more people will become interested in *Buqi* and continue to study and research it. This will certainly contribute to the necessary breakthrough towards a more advanced level of simplicity in medicine.



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