

Between Heaven and Earth

by Inge ter Beek

How could I have foreseen that I would need a wheelchair one day? That I would be unable to care for my year and a half old son and be a partner to the love of my life? That I would be a shadow of the vital person I had always been? How could I have known that?

But that is exactly what happened. A body that had been physically and mentally strong went into decline.

It started at the end of September in 1997. I was thirty-two years old. Things had not been going smoothly; I had just come out of a five-year relationship and there was also an atmosphere of tension at work. I had been caught in a -20°C snowstorm on a glacier whilst on holiday, three months pregnant. Then the pregnancy was complicated with an almost fatal ending. On top of this all were new parents-in-law who had not accepted me initially, acute nervous and renal infections and the passing of my grandparents. This was a lot to cope with in two years, but I kept on believing that it would stop and that life would allow me some respite. To stay on my feet I had to be strong and this took a lot of energy. Fortunately I had a loving man next to me almost all of the time.

During autumn 1997 at a presentation in the office I nearly fainted. My left hand tingled and my legs turned to rubber. I was taken to hospital but they found nothing. Afterwards I started feeling as though my left hand had stopped functioning. My left arm, foot and leg followed. This time I was admitted and they turned me inside out for two weeks.

I was not impressed by the arrogance they displayed when they gave me the outcome of their tests: 'It must be psychological madam, because we can't find anything'. There was just a deficiency in vitamins B1 and B12 but the neurologist would do nothing about it as it was 'not his job'! Secretly I visited a psychotherapist. He sent me home after 8 sessions. According to him there was no problem. There I was with a neurologist who said 'psychological' and a psychotherapist who said 'not psychological'. And a heart that said 'Help'. Every day I got worse as energy seemed to leak out of me. By the end of December I needed a wheelchair. I didn't have the strength to walk fifty yards.

I stayed indoors for most of the time, or at most went from door to door by car. By now I was also losing strength in my right arm and hand. When in January of 1998 I felt pains down one side of my face this was the point when I began despairing. Already I was partially unable to take care of my son. He stayed with my family for a few days each week. I could still accept it, although my heart broke a little bit more each time. But with those facial pains that lasted days, twenty-four hours a day, and heavy painkillers that helped partly or not at all, I had just about had it.

At this point I go back in time to 1988 or '89, I don't remember which. I was introduced to Dr Shen Hongxun and his Taijiwuxigong (qigong) system when I was about twenty-three and

studying at the Catholic University in Nijmegen, in Holland. I really enjoyed the classes and they suited me well. First and foremost I was impressed with the force that Dr Shen seemed to possess. I had never seen people being moved without touching before. I didn't know how he did it but found it completely fascinating. I remember thinking that I would visit him if I ever was in real need of help. I liked too the fact that he had studied Western medicine. I had kept his business card carefully.

Seven addresses and ten years later, I was in a wheelchair with pains in my face and partial paralysis. Given up on by Western medicine, 'Multiple sclerosis?' written in several medical files on me. By now I had sickness benefit forms. It was the end for my professional, social and private life. 'That's it. Next patient please.'

I phoned Dr Shen who immediately made time for me. We talked for half an hour and I told him of the paralysis and the energy that left my body progressively each day. To my surprise he asked why I had come to him. 'Because you are the master', I answered simply. Although terrified, I needed to believe that he could help me to heal.

The treatment lasted for about an hour. First of all he cleaned up my energy system. There was an audible crackling as things were released which I never thought could make sound. Binqi, sick energy. The second important thing occurred when Dr Shen noticed a cervical vertebra out of place, inhibiting blood supply to my brain. This he corrected by turning my head softly to left and right. The same thing with my left foot. No force and nothing forced. Just with friendly, controlled movements.

The news about the vertebra was no surprise. I had once been knocked down by a car and another time fallen causing a hernia. The sort of things which could affect the neck very badly. Perhaps the evening of bowling just before the first serious problems had pushed things in the wrong direction.

An hour and a half later the visit was over. Even before leaving I had more strength in my left arm and hand and was no longer limping. My energy supply seemed to be on the mend and I was even able to return the wheelchair to the hospital once home.

Dr Shen Hongxun had warned me it would take a few weeks to improve further. This turned out to be true. I ran a fever of 39.2° and an abnormal amount of green mucus came from my nose and throat for that time. All the cavities in my head were inflamed. In the end I got better. Leaving my sickbed half way through February I felt fitter and stronger than I had in years. None of the complaints have ever returned. I feel good, stronger and above all wiser. Buqi has meant a lot to me, to my health and to Rob and Tim. I cannot say how grateful I am that it crossed my path. I am very lucky, considering that my life had been becoming a disaster.

Buqi is nothing more and nothing less than a method. But it is one that goes further than our conventional health care system. Many more people could be helped with it. It has given me back my life.