



INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

Chinese Medical Qigong is the third edition of the only official textbook of medical Qigong, *Qigong Study in Chinese Medicine* (Zhong Yi Qi Gong Xue 中医气功学) in Chinese, used in colleges and universities of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in China. This book is the result of the collaborative efforts of more than 30 faculty members in a dozen colleges and universities of TCM in China and represents the highest level of academic research and the broadest compilation of clinical applications on medical Qigong today. This unique book is a systematic survey of the history, methods, transformation, and development of ancient Chinese mind–body cultivating skills, or what is currently known as Qigong. This text focuses on medical Qigong as a study discipline in the twenty-first century, and on cultivating Qi for health and healing. It offers concepts, examples, background, techniques, and historic and contemporary methods for refining and implementing mind–body cultivation within life nurturing and healing.

THE CONTEXT OF MEDICAL QIGONG

Since it encompasses numerous individualized internal cultivation skills and processes, Qigong has meant many different things throughout its history. If you ask 100 Qigong practitioners what Qigong is, you may get 101 different answers. Historically what we now call Qigong has had many different names that reflect the various aspects of mind–body cultivation. These terms give us a more complete picture of the long, diverse, and rich history of Qigong. For example, names such as Tu Na (吐纳 – exhalation and inhalation), Dao Yin (导引 – guiding and conducting exercises), An Qiao (按跷 – massaging/stepping on the body), Lian Yang (练养 – refining and nourishing), Xiu Lian (修炼 – cultivating and refining), Xiu Xing (修行 – cultivating the virtue), Xiu Zhen (修真 – cultivating the truth), Jing Zuo (静坐 – tranquil sitting, or sitting

meditation), Ming Xiang (冥想 – meditation), Yang Sheng (养生 – life-nurturing), Cun Si (存思 – mind-visualization), Guan Xiang (观想 – observing-imagination), and Xing Qi (行气 – circulating Qi) are themselves explanatory and are indicative of Qigong's origins in internalized self-care exercises and life-nurturing activities. With such a historical perspective, it is not hard to realize that all meditations are called “Qigong” in China, and many mind–body practices in the West, such as deep breathing, guided imagery, and Reiki, have all been an important part of Qigong. Many people have been practicing Qigong skills without knowing it.

When did these ancient cultivation and refinement methods (修炼法门) become “Qigong”? Scholars agree that Mr. Liu Guizhen (1920–83) and his Tangshan Qigong Sanitarium (唐山气功疗养院) in the 1950s renamed this long and revered tradition in modern China. The term “Qigong” reflects the fact that the form promoted by Liu – Internal Nourishing Qigong – was based on breathing with an emphasis on cultivating Qi. While the term emphasizes the aspect of “cultivating Qi” and breathing (Qi also means “air” or “breathing” in Chinese), somehow it downplays the components of “adjusting mind” (or “cultivating Shen or spirit”). However, in the process of integrating the Three Adjustments (adjusting body, breath, and mind) into one, any one of the three can dominate the cultivating process. “Qigong” is really an all-inclusive contemporary term that applies to all traditional mind–body–breathing integration exercises and techniques. The practices and implications of Qigong encompass much more than simple breath work, mind–body exercise, or life nurturing. Our definition of Qigong, “the skill of body–mind exercise that integrates body, breath and mind adjustments into one” (see p.15), is the result of long-term academic debate, signaling a significant contribution of this book to the field of Qigong study.

Some people may not agree with this definition, but it is better than most existing ones. For example, some may not understand deep breathing or guided imagery as variants of Qigong. Explanations in this book should help clarify such issues. Historically, both of these, deep breathing (Tu Na) and guided imagery (Guan Xiang), have been operational skills of Qigong practice. The key to differentiate them from Qigong is to examine whether the breathing and the imaging skill is part of a process leading to a oneness state. Deep breathing performed to reduce tension is a simple relaxation technique. When performed to reach mind–body integration or achieve tranquility deep breathing becomes Qigong or a Qigong-related skill. The same is true for guided imagery. Visualizing oneself in an imaginary landscape in order to relax may not be Qigong. However, using visualization to achieve tranquility or reach mind–body integration, also known as “using a single idea to replace a thousand random thoughts” in Qigong cultivation, is definitely a Qigong technique.

As you will see in this book medical Qigong represents only a small portion of the general Qigong traditions. The high level of medical Qigong practice, such as the “oneness” status discussed in this book, may just be the beginning of true Qi cultivation and Dao illumination. This book puts these ancient arts and techniques into the

context of TCM and modern scientific research to help practitioners understand medical applications of Qigong more completely and cultivate Qi more effectively.

QIGONG AS MEDICINE

Most people understand that Qigong is a good exercise for health; however, many, even those who practice Qigong regularly, are not ready to include it as a branch of medicine. Can the practice really be used in diagnosing, treating, and preventing illness? This book, a standard textbook in Chinese medical schools for years, and the ancient texts it is in part based on, may well help resolve any such doubts from the perspective of history.

Readers may be surprised to see so many Chinese medical classics focus on Qigong therapy. For example, the *General Treatise on the Etiology and Symptomology of Various Diseases* (诸病源候论),¹ completed in 610 CE by the royal physician Chao Yuan Fang (巢元方), is a fifty-volume monograph on etiological factors and pathogenesis. It may be the oldest specialized medical text to explore such diagnostic factors. It includes 67 subjects and 1739 items and records 213 various “life-nurturing Dao Yin movements” (Qigong) for 110 different symptoms. So many Qigong forms for varied diseases and symptoms packed into one medical classic are unprecedented in medical history. This and other historical classics and the practices they describe constitute the origin and medical aspects of Qigong study as a discipline, and are the theoretical basis and core of this book.

This book focuses on the medical aspects of Qigong, not on Qigong as a general life-nurturing or spirit-cultivating practice. Qigong has always been more than mere medicine, although it precedes all other modalities of TCM and its health benefits have popularized Qigong around the world. Qigong and TCM are both rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy, which emphasizes the correspondence between nature and humanity (天人相应) and the theory of Yin–Yang interaction and balance.

Where is the evidence for Qigong healing? Testing and replicating the therapeutic effects of Qigong are methodologically challenging. Using conventional randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trials to find clinical evidence of Qigong effects may result in disappointment. Most research scientists have little knowledge of Qigong, few of its practitioners are trained in clinical research, and there is a general lack of resources and support for high-quality clinical research. But more importantly, randomized controlled trials with their short timeframes are unlikely to reveal or to verify the true therapeutic effects of Qigong. Nevertheless, a simple but interesting study, published in *China Qigong Science*,² may help us understand the healing potential of Qigong.

1 Chao Yuan Fang (巢元方). *On Etiology and Symptomology of Various Diseases* (诸病源候论). Beijing: People’s Medical Publishing House, 1985.

2 Xiang-Tan City Bureau of Senior Cadres, “An investigation on the effects of Qigong practice on the strengthening body: preventing and treating diseases.” *China Qigong Science*, 10, 29–30 (1996).

Xiang-Tan City Bureau of Senior Cadres and Health Department surveyed the health care spending between 1992 and 1995 of 500 government officials, mostly retirees between 50 and 70 years old, who practiced Qigong on a regular basis. Instead of the increased spending typically seen in this age group, their annual medical costs were decreased by 83% on average, and 232 (46%) reported no medical costs at all. Although this survey was not randomized or placebo-controlled, the results convincingly affirm the health benefits of Qigong. What other medicine or modern therapy can achieve such a powerful healing effect? In many ways Qigong is more than just medicine. As a self-care and self-cultivation technique, Qigong is a precious gift from the ancient Chinese to all of mankind, especially considering the quality and costs of health care which are so troubling to our societies today.

Unfortunately, modern science is unable to detect or explain Qigong phenomena yet, which may reflect the weaknesses and limitations of science itself. This is regrettable, not only for the development of TCM and Qigong, but also for science, medicine, and humanity. It is to be hoped that *Chinese Medical Qigong* and the emergence of vigorous ground-breaking scientific research on Qigong and energy medicine will remedy that situation.

THE BLENDING OF EAST–WEST PERSPECTIVES

Although Qigong as one of most important and most original modalities in TCM practice has gained increased attention around the world, no single book on the subject has covered both its academic dimensions and clinical applications. Thus *Chinese Medical Qigong* has the potential to become a classic, not only in the fields of Qigong and TCM, but also in the fields of mind–body practice and integrative medicine. This unique book will serve students, health care professionals, and those who aspire to a more systematic knowledge of Qigong in order to advance their own well-being and spiritual cultivation. Translation of such a book has been a challenging and complicated task, since even the Chinese professionals cannot agree among themselves on modern Chinese explanations for many ancient Qigong and medical terms.

Imagine the difficulties for the scholars on our editing team whose second language is Chinese. More than 20 professionals in Qigong study spent four years on this task. First a group of Beijing University of TCM professionals translated the modern and ancient Chinese into English, focusing on respecting the original Chinese meanings. Then a group of bilingual American Chinese with TCM training double-checked the accuracy of the English translations against the Chinese texts and smoothed out the English as best they could. Finally, a group of native English-speaking Qigong scholars and professionals edited and finalized the text for English language readers. It is a great honor and privilege for me to have worked with so many professionals and to have participated in organizing such a rewarding project.

Even when accurately translated into the English language, Chinese philosophical and medical concepts derive from an intellectual and social context that is unique

relative to that of English-speaking readers. In the process of the translating and recreating of the English edition, the East–West differences in language, culture, and health practices resulted in quite a few clashes and integrations. It has been truly a learning and constructive process for all of us. Fortunately, with modern technology, we could easily debate in emails with an occasional telephone call to ask questions or discuss an issue interactively. In some cases the English-speaking scholars have helped to correct miscommunications or mistakes in the original Chinese text. But most of the time the original text contained a truth that simply needed to be expressed through an appropriate English term or explanation. For example, the English-speaking scholar who is also a long-term Qigong instructor could not understand why the text suggests that the patient stop practicing the prescribed Qigong when the diseases have been cured, since most Qigong instructors encourage students to continue Qigong practice even after an initial problem has been resolved. The key here is the difference between medical Qigong and health Qigong (a.k.a. Jian-Shen Qigong). In health Qigong, daily practice is highly recommended even when no disease is present. However, in medical Qigong, as in other TCM modalities, a prescription may have both benefits and side effects. Over-practice or long-term practice may no longer be beneficial, and sometimes even complicate the physical condition. After discussing this difference, we decided to add a discussion on the distinction between medical and health Qigong to point out the fact that this book concerns Qigong’s medical applications, not general life nurturing and health preservation. The latter is the subject of a different TCM discipline – life-nurturing science.

Finding appropriate English terminology to reflect the true meaning of the Qigong terms was one of the greatest challenges in the translation and editing. Understanding of original Chinese terms, the degree of personal Qigong practice, and mastery of the English language all played important roles in these processes. The scholars from different backgrounds and cultures made some significant progress on this front. As a result of cultural exchange and mutual improvement, we developed a large glossary as an addition to the field of TCM Qigong study. For example, Wù or Wù Xing (悟 or 悟性), an important concept in Qigong cultivation, previously has been translated as “sudden understanding,” “instinct,” or “comprehending.” However, Wù (悟) is used as both a noun and a verb in Qigong literature and has more meanings than comprehending or understanding. Should we find a better word for this subtle concept? After intensive discussion, our final translation of Wù (悟) is sagacity, or illuminative understanding, further explained as “the instinct of comprehending the ineffable; an indirect way to comprehend things, referring to knowledge inferred from metaphors, symbols, etc.” In Qigong practice Wù may also imply the ability to integrate the comprehended knowledge or the ineffable into one’s Qigong practice so as to eventually be united with the Dao (合道).

In Western cultures there is a tendency to find a single comprehensive answer to any scientific or social challenge. However, in Eastern and Chinese cultures it is common for a wide array of correct answers to be embraced within ancient bodies of knowledge

and wisdom. This is especially true in Qigong study, since Qigong practice is such an individualized internal experience, and its knowledge system is heavily influenced by the individuals who contributed more to the literature than others during a specific period of history. In other words, the literature reflects the inner experiences of the most influential Qigong practitioners of the time. What is true for one person at a specific time or stage of practice may not be applicable to all practitioners at all times. Therefore, it is important for all of us, the editors and readers, to keep an open mind to this category of knowledge, and process them accordingly.

Some revisions in content are also the result of blending East–West perspectives. For example, in the section “Qigong in other countries,” the original text was written from the perspective of Chinese scholars within China since it was a Chinese textbook. But readers of the English edition will mostly be non-Chinese living outside of China. We had to make many adjustments in this section. For example, the original text stated that the massive spread of Qigong throughout the world started in the 1980s. However, some of our consulting editors started learning and teaching Qigong in the US as early as the 1970s. We allow the editors to add footnotes reflecting their own perspectives or historical truths in order to offer readers a more comprehensive view of these matters.

IMPORTANT NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

To coordinate the complicated multi-level translation and editing, we used the following guidelines. We include them here to help readers understand the contents better.

TCM terminology

Many special terms in Chinese medicine have been given various English translations. After comparison and discussion, we decided to use the following text as the standard for TCM terms: Li Zhen-Ji (ed.) for World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) (2008) *International Standard Chinese-English Basic Nomenclature of Chinese Medicine* (Beijing: People’s Medical Publishing House). For example, Jing Luo (经络), an important concept in TCM, has been translated as channels and collaterals or as meridian vessels. Following the WFCMS standard, we use “meridian” when referring to the system of all channels and collaterals, “channel vessel” when referring to Jing Mai (经脉), and “collateral vessel” when referring to Luo Mai (络脉).

Qigong terminology in general

We have added a glossary and an index of ancient Chinese Qigong works. This has allowed the editors to be consistent in their use of the terms and classical texts and provides a useful tool for those just starting to read Qigong literature in English. The glossary gives us the opportunity to explain some specific terms without interrupting the original flow of the text. It also serves as a mini Qigong dictionary and as such is an important contribution to the field. For example, translating *Dà Yào* (大药) as “grand medicine” or “fundamental medicine” is literally accurate but does not reflect the Qigong

meaning. In the glossary we explain the two meanings of the phrase. One refers to internal medicine (Nèi Yào), i.e. the three treasures of life: essence, Qi, and Shen, which are the objects of internal elixir training. The other refers to the special Qi that results from cultivating bodily essence. Other examples are Jīng (精), bodily essence, and Shen (神), spirit, vitality, and mental activities. These are important TCM and Qigong concepts that most Chinese readers understand, but their meanings may not be obvious to many English readers. Moreover, when used together, Jīng Shen (精神) has a slightly different meaning. We use the glossary to add detailed explanations of such important concepts.

Special Chinese Qigong terms

Many special Chinese terms in Qigong, such as Qi, Shen, Yi, Qigong and Taiji, etc., plus some major acupuncture points, are transliterated according to the pinyin system used in modern China rather than the traditional Wade-Giles system to aid readers of modern Chinese TCM literature. For example, “Taiji Quan,” instead of “T’ai Chi Chuan,” and “Qigong” instead of “Ch’i Kung.” Such terms are also capitalized to differentiate them from regular English words to indicate that these are not ordinary Chinese words, but special Qigong or acupuncture terms. Although English translations generally use lower case and italics for Chinese terms, we use capitalization so that readers will pay more attention to them.

Order of Chinese names

Many English readers realize that, unlike the order of English names, in Chinese the family name comes before the given name. It sounds strange to reverse the order of Chinese names to fit English custom, for example to call Hua Tuo (华佗) Tuo Hua, or call Guan Zhong (管仲), Zhong Guan. In the case of Lao Zi (老子) or Zhuang Zi (庄子), “Zi” is not even the family name but was a respectful way to address scholars in ancient China. Therefore we decide to keep the original Chinese order of family name first so that people familiar with Chinese literature will easily recognize well-known names.

To avoid possible confusion, we have added Chinese characters when the name first appears in the book. For example, the real name of Lao Zi (老子) was Li Er (李耳; Li is his family name). Zhuang Zhou (庄周; 369–286 BCE) is the author of *Zhuang Zi* (庄子 – the name of both a person and a book); Zhuang is his family name. Zhou is also a popular family name, but not in this case.

Ancient Chinese texts

Many Chinese texts are kept in the original in order to help editors and readers who know Chinese to understand the original meanings and context. This is important, as a Chinese term or text may have several translations. The original text may clarify possible misunderstandings or mistranslations. For example, Tián Dàn Xū Wú (恬淡虚无) may be translated as “tranquilized mind and empty thinking” or “remaining detached and empty-minded.” This famous text from the *Yellow Emperor’s Internal Classic*

may have different meanings to different people. By adding the original Chinese text in the English edition as well as in the glossary, we offer readers the possibility of understanding its meaning from different perspectives.

Footnotes

Where different viewpoints exist regarding an ancient Chinese text, explanatory footnotes have been added. All footnotes were added by the bilingual or English editors to help readers understand the context or disagreements in the field. They represent the perspective of English editors and reflect the creative nature of translation work. For example, in the case of the Jade Pendant Inscription of Circulating Qi (Xing Qi Yu Pei Ming, 行气玉佩铭; Xin Qi Ming, 行气铭), a precious cultural relic of 500 BCE, the 36 ancient Chinese characters are variously translated and explained. The Chinese edition uses the translation by Mr. Guo Moruo, the president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a renowned scholar of ancient literature and archeology. However, many Qigong masters and scholars disagree with his translation. Although an authoritative figure in the field of ancient Chinese literature, he was not an experienced Qigong practitioner and might have misinterpreted the specific Qigong terms on the pendant. A footnote gives this background so that readers may be made aware of other possible explanations of this ancient text. All footnotes have been approved by the original Chinese editor-in-chief.

References

Following historical Chinese intellectual custom, which assumes readers (mostly scholars) recognize a quotation, the original Chinese textbook does not include references. To meet Western academic standards and help readers in their studies, the Chinese translation team and the bilingual editing team collaborated to add hundreds of references to the book. Needless to say, most of the references are published in Chinese and not yet available in English.

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