

Medical Qi-Gong: Its history and effectiveness

By David Goldner

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QI-GONG, also spelled Qigong, Chi-Kung or Ch'i Kung, is an art believed to be 5000 years old, as old as Traditional Chinese Medicine ("TCM") itself. Based on Taoism, Qi-Gong was taught orally and by example within families. Few ancient books were written to describe its early use. Early texts were written and kept in secret in monasteries and maintained by the monks. During the Han Dynasty, Buddhism was imported from India. Buddhist meditations were integrated with Taoist Qi-Gong practices. Buddhist temples taught Qi-Gong to the monks, further developed the philosophy and practice and kept this knowledge exclusive, never teaching it to the rest of the populace. Today, there are 3000 varieties of Qi-Gong and five major Qi-Gong traditions, namely Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian, martial arts, and medical.

With the advent of Communism and the abolishment of religion, much knowledge was lost – exactly how much is not known. The Cultural Revolution resulted in the deaths of many Qi-Gong masters and the destruction of written literature. Fortunately for us, a few of the Qi-Gong masters escaped and moved to the West, and some of the texts and artifacts taken from the monasteries were stored in Government libraries.

After the dust of the Cultural Revolution had settled, Deng Ziao Ping, among others, set about rebuilding China's history and cultural heritage, even allowing limited religious freedom. This resulted in a rediscovery and resurgence of Traditional Chinese Medicine, including Medical Qi-Gong.

Numerous texts did survive, a few of these are mentioned here. The *I Ching* references Qi, though not Qi-Gong directly. Lao-tzu, in the *Dao De Jing*, mentions breathing techniques, and says the way to health is to concentrate on Qi and achieve softness. Tao Hong-Jing compiled *Yang Shen Yan Ming Lu*, which illustrated many Qi-Gong techniques. An exhaustive list of ways to increase Qi flow can be found in the *Zhu Bing Yuan Hou Lun*, by Chao Yuan-Fang.¹ References to Qi-Gong were often obscure, certainly without specific instructions. This enabled the secrecy and mystery surrounding Qi-Gong and the Qi-Gong masters.

Some of the Medical Qi-Gong masters who escaped Communist China began openly teaching in the West, and new books began appearing in bookstores. The first World Conference for Qi-Gong Medical Research was held in Beijing in 1988, followed by a series of conferences held in Tokyo, Berkeley and New York City. Medical researchers, including psychologists and physiologists, started to study Medical Qi-Gong as an alternative medicine.

HOW IS MEDICAL QI-GONG USED?

In China, Medical Qi-Gong is used as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine in preventive and therapeutic health care. In the United States, Qi-Gong is most commonly practiced

¹ Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, *Qi-Gong for Arthritis*, Jamaica Plain, MA: Yang's Martial Arts Association (1991).

for self-healing or martial arts. Medical Qi-Gong in the United States is beginning to gain recognition as an effective medical treatment.

WHAT IS MEDICAL QI-GONG?

The Qi is the vital energy of the body which maintains life. Medical Qi-Gong is the practice of controlling the Qi or the flow of energy within the body through breathing and mental intention to promote one's own health and, if one becomes an expert, to treat others.

Medical Qi-Gong involves Qi exercises along with meditation, focusing on acupuncture point Ren 4 *Guanyuan* which is identified in the text *Chinese Acupuncture and Moxibustion* as one of the most important points for tonification of the Qi.² Doing the Qi exercises brings one to a state of meditation, wherein distress and anxiety melt away. Positive thinking with great confidence is affirmed. Concentration is easily achieved. Through these exercises, one gains control of the body and affirms life. This in turn stimulates the circulation of the blood and Qi .

In order to heal others using Medical Qi-Gong, the practitioner needs to perform Qi-Gong breathing, meditation and exercises regularly. The cultivation of one's own Qi is important insofar as it enables the "channeling" or focusing of the Qi which is present all around us. The health of the practitioner is enhanced, as is the ability to focus Qi outwards for healing others.

WHAT CAN MEDICAL QI-GONG DO?

Medical Qi-Gong is effective in preventing disease and treating chronic conditions or disabilities. It may not be effective in treating acute illness or medical emergencies.

Qi-Gong enhances the process of delivering oxygen to the cells. It reduces stress and improves digestion. Chinese doctors have applied Medical Qi-Gong in hospitals and clinics to treat individuals suffering from a variety of ailments. These include allergies, arthritis, asthma, bowel problems, constipation, diabetes, gastritis, gout, headaches, heart disease and hypertension. The list continues to include chronic kidney disease, liver disease, lower back pain, myopia, obesity, neurasthenia, paralysis induced by external injury, retinopathy, rheumatism, sciatic neuralgia, sleeplessness, stress, ulcers, and peripheral vascular disease.

Medical Qi-Gong can be used to treat cancer and reduce or eliminate side effects from radiation and chemotherapy. It will help in treating aphasia, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and post-stroke syndrome. It is especially useful in treating any kind of chronic pain and chronic disorders of the digestive, respiratory, cardiovascular and nervous systems.

Medical Qi-Gong can help one fight virtually any disease. Through Medical Qi-Gong, patients can strengthen inner energy and thus increase the chance of survival from many diseases which Western doctors consider untreatable.

² Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press (1999).

HOW DOES ONE LEARN MEDICAL QI-GONG?

To learn Medical Qi-Gong, one must be trained by an experienced practitioner who can continue to provide guidance and advice. Discipline and persistence are required to achieve results.

In my experience, people who attend my Medical Qi-Gong Seminar are able to deliver healing right away. Kristin Query, a licensed massage therapist without any prior Medical Qi-Gong experience, attended the class specifically to learn how to help a friend of hers, Christy Sloan. Christy has Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. Two days after the class, Kristin excitedly called to tell me that she had given her friend two treatments and Christy was now able to move her legs and talk more intelligibly. There is no known cure of ALS, but Medical Qi-Gong's ability to improve quality of life is powerfully compelling. Christy was able to help her friend after a one-weekend seminar.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS MEDICAL QI-GONG?

The effectiveness of Medical Qi-Gong treatments in my experience is quite amazing. One of my clients Chris Bomba had ALS. He passed away nearly 10 years after being positively diagnosed with the disease. Average life expectancy after an ALS diagnosis is 2 to 5 years. Chris was able to walk and sometimes speak until the very end of his illness. These abilities are generally taken away very rapidly after diagnosis. Chris had learned of my Medical Qi-Gong practice from his caregiver and came twice a month to receive Medical Qi-Gong treatments from me. He observed a noticeable, albeit temporary, improvement in his condition after each treatment and a greatly slowed disease progression.³

In China, Medical Qi-Gong is accepted as both a self-healing method and also as an effective medical treatment. The Wahzhan Zhineng Chigong Clinic and Training Center, in Qinhuangdao, was established in 1988. They claim an astounding success rate with everything from arthritis to cancer. No medicine is used, only Medical Qi-Gong. Often several doctors will practice on a patient simultaneously. Some of the practitioners at the hospital were originally patients there with serious "incurable" diseases.

Scientific studies have been held both in-vitro (cell culture) and in-vivo (live subjects). Most of the significant human studies have been done at the treatment center mentioned above. Animal studies have also been documented, and they have the additional advantage of eliminating the placebo effect. The studies do not bear out the purported 95 percent cure rate at the Chi-gong Clinic and Training Center, but they are quite compelling nonetheless:

Effects of Qigong on Preventing Stroke and Alleviating Multiple Cerebro-Cardiovascular Risk Factors

A Follow-up Report on 242 Hypertensive Cases for 30 years

Source: Richard Lee, *Scientific Investigation into Chinese Qi-Gong*, 1999.

³ See, Leigh Kelley, "Lawyer does battle with ALS," *Hendersonville Times-News*, 8 October 2002.

SHANGHAI INSTITUTE OF HYPERTENSION
 120 IN CONTROL GROUP, 122 IN QG GROUP, RANDOMLY DIVIDED.
 BOTH GROUPS TOOK STANDARD ANTI-HYPERTENSIVE DRUGS.
 RESULTS OF 30-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

	Control Group	Qi-Gong Group
Deaths	47.76 %	25.41%
Stroke	40.83%	20.49%
Death from Stroke	32.50%	15.57%

The Effect of Emitted Qi on Experimental Animals Infected by Pneumocystis Carinii

GUANGZHOU UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
 80 ADULT FEMALE WISTAR RATS INFECTED BY P. CARINII RANDOMLY DIVIDED INTO 3 GROUPS.
 GROUP A AND B TREATED BY 2 QI-GONG MASTERS EVERY OTHER DAY IN 15 MIN. SESSIONS, 7 TIMES TOTAL. GROUP C (CONTROL) UNTREATED.
 ALL GROUPS RECEIVED STANDARD DIET AND THERAPY (CORTISONE ACETATE & TETRACYCLINE).

	Control Group	Qi-Gong Groups
Infected	92.3%	A 65.4%
		B 50%
		A:C P<.01
		B:C P<.01

CONCLUSION

In summary, Medical Qi-Gong originates in pre-history, and while not extensively, is mentioned in many early classics of Chinese Medicine. Medical Qi-Gong, with help from Chairman Mao and the Communist party, is now becoming known by more and more people and is openly taught and practiced in the West and in China as well. The Communists, being very scientifically and progressively oriented, have conducted a number of studies showing efficacy of Medical Qi-Gong and so validating it as a healing technique.

Medical Qi-Gong can be used to help patients, even those with incurable terminal diseases, to live fuller, longer lives. The Medical Qi-Gong practitioner can be effective with even limited training and practice. Medical Qi-Gong is a valuable tool for self-healing and a powerful "tool in the toolbox" in any healing practice.

I am convinced that the physicians of the future will diagnose through intuition and their healing technique will be their ability to connect to the source of all healing through Medical Qi-Gong.