

The Basis of Qigong or Chikung Practice

Qigong was originally called Yang Sheng, “Nurturing Life”. It is important therefore that practitioners of qigong should ask themselves about the wider implications – “How can I live in a way that more fully nurtures life?”

The basic premise, which incidentally is most often misunderstood, is that the focus is NOT on controlling the Qi. Qi just like water and all natural, spiritual elements regulates itself in accordance with the universal laws of Unity and Harmony – it knows how to channel itself according to divine will/universal order.

Physical and psychological imbalance, injury, disease conditions etc., will disrupt the harmony but Unity will be restored unless our thinking and choices dictate otherwise, the body is not strong enough, destiny wills it.

Physical exercise can strengthen the body, meditation guide the mind, and massage clear blockages in circulation, but if our thinking or intention called Yi, is misguided, mislead, or deluded, then Qi, the power of life, is miss-managed or not nurtured.

Yi leads Qi, and so the focus needs to be on Yi. Yi can also be interpreted as mindfulness and awareness but can lack the direction and purpose which is only to be found from the spiritual heart (not emotional heart) in meditation. When the intellect is guided by the spiritual heart according to Man’s natural disposition then “Heaven Man and Earth” are One.

If someone practices qigong mechanically, or instinctively for that matter, repeating movements automatically or habitually without consciously knowing what is happening and fully attentive to the purpose, and intention, there will not only be little benefit to the body and mind but no personal or interpersonal peace for the soul and mankind.

Essentially Qigong is therefore a practice to raise human consciousness.

Intention precedes action in a trained practitioner but the trainee will need to be guided through correct action by the “master” so that intention improves in parallel. There are 3 stages of development:

1. Unconscious incompetence – not knowing what you don’t know, or thinking you know when you do not!
2. Conscious incompetence – knowing what you don’t know and learning skills you need to know.
3. Conscious competence – knowing, skilful and with right intention.
4. Higher consciousness - acting with good conscience, naturally and with spiritual insight and well-being.

Based upon this intentional action it is suggested that qigong practice helps people make better choices and in turn better decisions, enhances creativity and intuition, live a more powerful purposeful life. Being at One with nature according to the Tao/Divine will harmonises every aspect of one’s self, physically, mentally,

energetically and spiritually so that we also become a more valued member of human society. Withdrawing from society is not seen as a healthy option and the practice should not be used as an excuse to avoid involvement with life.

Qigong can liberate us from immature and inappropriate strategies for living through the regulation of Body, Breath and Mind using specific movement, meditation and massage exercises. To stand upright and steady is to give up the burden of insecurity. To breathe slowly is to take life as it comes, without allowing memory or expectations to interfere. As the body becomes quiet, the mind becomes quiet. *The qi flows not only within the body, but also between oneself and nature. In breathing the external world becomes you. Yet you do not own it, you let it go and return breath to source – what the Chinese Master calls the Tao.*

Although, Taoism may be the root of qigong, Confucianism emphasised using qigong to cultivate character and virtue, Buddhism added a strong meditative element with compassion and the Muslim Hui in China created some of the “Shaolin” martial arts and furthered the evolution of internal martial arts and their associated qigong practice.