
Chapter 2 - Qigong [Chi Kung]

Introduction

My first exposure to Qigong [also spelled: Chi Kung] was between 1963 and 1973 while studying martial arts in New York City. After the necessary 'street' foundation and some 'shopping around', my formal training in the Chinese martial arts began with Grand Master Alan Lee at the Chinese Kung Fu Wu Su Association in midtown Manhattan. As great stories would have it, I was pretty much disowned by Grand Master Lee because of my own naivete, the envy and jealousy of other students, and all those other nuances that make up legendary tales. The seed giving birth to this experience is preserved for posterity in the January, 1972 issue of *Martial Arts Illustrated* in an article entitled, "*Is Kung Fu the Father of Karate*". But I have never and could never disown Grand Master Alan Lee because he laid the foundation for my practice, appreciation, and understanding of Qigong. In addition to the other aspects of our training in Northern Southern Shaolin Kung Fu Wu Su, we were taught the Eight Silk Weaving Exercises. I was drawn to this powerful and graceful system of Qigong exercises and the system has developed and matured right along with me over the past 30 years. In addition to Grand Master Alan Lee, all of my teachers have to be credited with some influence on my present understanding of body-mind energy manipulation; but I feel the greatest credit is due to my students.

Around 1973 I began teaching my then brother-in-law Qigong. He was an expert Aikido and Jujitsu practitioner and a chronic asthmatic; always on the inhaler and in the hospital at least twice a year. Within several months after beginning his training, no more inhaler. Two years passed. No attacks! Three years passed. No flare ups! Then, a divorce, sudden change in lifestyle, stress, loss of consistency in practice, and his first asthmatic attack in years. You can relate, RIGHT?! I learned something about Qigong and also something about illness from that observation; and I've been paying attention every since. We'll discuss some of the research and medical applications of Qigong practice and Qigong Therapy in a moment. But first, let's just answer some general questions. This is a good place to begin introducing some of the books on my recommended list [see back of book].

Lin Housheng and Luo Peiyu ⁽¹⁾ offer this answer to the question...

What is Qigong?

"Qigong can be simply defined as the art of training one's Qi (vital energy) and mind (mental consciousness). The Chinese character "Qi" means respiration while "Gong" means continuous regulation of one's respiration and posture with the mind conducting the process."

In this sense, Qigong is the Chinese version of Yoga. Yoga is an East Indian Sanskrit word that can be translated 'to yoke one's self', or 'to impose a discipline upon one's self'. In Qigong we refer to Qi, and in Yoga we refer to Prana or Cretna. Life Force or Vital Energy by any other name is still what it is and every indigenous culture has perceived it and sought to understand and manipulate it. Now before I go on talking about body-mind energy manipulation from the perspective of China and The East, it's very important that you understand something. This capacity and process is not foreign to you! It is not a Chinese invention. Every time you grab a sudden injury (your head, elbow, or toe) with your hand you are practicing Healing Qigong. Every time you experience a natural yawn and stretch, you are engaged in the dynamics of the **Fire Flower System of Qigong**. Every time we groan to relieve pain, grunt when we lift something heavy, fiddle with our fingers

when we are nervous, or shiver, 'dance', and intonate in the cold, we are practicing the innate capacity of our species for body-mind energy manipulation. These natural tendencies were observed, studied, applied to specific situations across various populations and over the millennia were formalized into specific dances, movements, postures, and exercises. Among the ancient Egyptians it was called *Ankh*; *Aṣe* among the Yoruba of West Africa; *Ntu* in southern Africa; *Prana* in India; *Ki* in Japan; *Nkra* in western Africa; *Mitakiyasín* among some Native Americans; *Aloha* in Hawaiian; and the Blank Rune among the Celts of early Europe. We are the beneficiaries of that legacy and those traditions. This process is innate.

"The earliest Chinese exercises called Tuna, Daoyin, and Xingqi have been constantly practised, perfected, and evolved into Qigong." (1)

How Was Qigong Named?

There are five major schools of thought influencing Qigong development. The Confucianist school, Medical school, Taoist school, Buddhist school, and school of Martial Arts. Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming (2) points out the distinctions.

"**Confucians** were primarily interested in the working of human society rather than in withdrawal and self-protection. For them the purpose of Chi Kung is to make people more fit to fulfill their function... The physicians (**Medical school**) were not specifically aligned with any philosophical group, although their work often has recognizable Taoist influence. Their work is distinguished by its emphasis on discussing the balance of Chi. The **Buddhist monks** emphasized becoming free from the suffering of existence through awareness. Their primary method was still meditation with breathing directed toward stilling the mind.. The **Taoists** are associated with withdrawal from society to perfect the self and achieve immortality. To do this they used Chi Kung and alchemy, and these two are frequently discussed together."

All of these schools developed various styles and forms such as *Tuna*, *Daoyin*, *Xingqi*, *Liandan*, *Xuangong*, *Jinggong*, *Dinggong*, *Singgong*, *Neigong*, and a host of others. It was not until 1953 when Liu Guizheng wrote and published *Practice On Qigong Therapy* that Qigong was given a full explanation and recognized as a formal name instead of the various terms used by different schools over the centuries. (1)

What is "Qi"?

"Qi", (vital energy) or "Aṣe" as I like to call it, is that manifestation and experience by which our Ancestors understood the phenomena of nature. It was the material of the darkness from which all things came into existence. It was the essential substance forming the world. It was dynamic, multifaceted, powerful, and intelligent. There are three categories of Qi; Earth Qi which we derive from our food and water; Heavenly or Cosmic Qi which we can influence and internalize through our rhythmic breathing, and Internal Qi which is coursing through our bodies each and every moment of our lives. In turn, these three broad categories of Qi are further broken down into specific types. For example, **Visceral Qi** is present in the viscera including the heart, lungs, spleen, stomach, liver, and kidneys. **Zhen Qi** or **Jing Qi** is circulating in the main and collateral channels or Meridians. **Zong Qi** is stored in the thorax; **Ying Qi** is circulating in the blood vessels; and **Wei Qi** is circulating outside the vascular tissue of the body and is subject to the will of the individual. There are also five perceived aspects of the functioning of Qi. Chart 1 provides an overview.

Five Functions of Qi

Chart 1

Motivating Function	stimulates and promotes growth and development of the body, the physiological and biochemical activities of viscera and channels, the circulation of blood, and the conveyance and distribution of body fluids.
Warming Up Function	our bodies expend a tremendous amount of energy simply trying to maintain body temperature. Qi acts to regulate body temperature. [see chart 2]
Protective Function	the immune system and kidneys are on the front lines of the body's defense system against dis-ease, disease. Qi provides the energy necessary to mobilize this function.
Astringent Function	underlying all body-mind energy manipulation is the notion of balance. A complementary relationship between the 'yin' and 'yang' (feminine and masculine principles operating in creation) forces. Therefore, the motivating function promoting growth and development must be balanced. The Astringent Function helps to control blood and prevent it from overflowing blood vessels; controls sweat and urine production as well as seminal fluid.
Transformative Function	it is believed that Qi can be transformed into essence or fluid, or blood, and vice versa. This may explain why Qigong practice seems to suppress appetite when fasting.

The 'warming up' function of Qi has been studied and clocked to determine the exact pattern of the Qi's movement through the body. Chart 2 shows the human-heat-cycle promoted by the flow of Qi, and some recommended mudras for these periods.

Human Heat Cycle

Chart 2

Time	System/Meridian	Recommended Mudras
3 AM - 5 AM	Lungs (L)	Dhenu, Tattva, Avahani, Sambahani
5 AM - 7 AM	Large Intestine (LI)	Sankalpa, Dhenu, Avahani, Stapani, Samnidapani, Sambahani, Yoni
7 AM - 9 AM	Stomach (St)	(LI) plus* Lelihana, Tarpana
9 AM - 11 AM	Spleen (Sp)	Matsya, Ankusha, Prathana, Upasanghara, Yoni
11 AM - 1 PM	Heart (H)	Lelihana, Tattva, Samnidapani, Upasanghara, Yoni
1 PM - 3 PM	Small Intestine (SI)	(LI) plus Lelihana, Tarpana
3 PM - 5 PM	Bladder (B)	Sankalpa, Prathana, Upasanghara, Yoni
5 PM - 7 PM	Kidneys (K)	Sankalpa, Prathana, Upasanghara, Yoni
7 PM - 9 PM	Pericardium (Cx)	Matsya, Ankusha, Prathana, Upasanghara, Yoni
9 PM - 11 PM	Triple Warmer (TW)	Lelihana, Tarpana, Stapani, Yoni
11 PM - 1 AM	Gall Bladder (GB)	(LI) plus Lelihana, Tarpana
1 AM - 3 AM	Liver (Liv)	Sankalpa, Prathana, Upasanghara, Yoni

* (LI) plus: Use any or all of the mudras suggested for the Large Intestine plus these mudras.

Of course the **18 Mudra System of Qigong** is comprehensive, integrating a variety of techniques. So you don't need to use the mudras in a time specific manner unless you chose to because you are dealing with a specific problem or area of concern. Then you might enhance the impact of the system on that particular area by using the mudras in the time specific manner. Generally, you will derive the desired benefit by performing the entire system several times a week, if not daily. Chart 2 simply provides you with an understanding of the natural pattern of movement of the Qi as it performs its Warming Up Function and some mudras that you can use to help invigorate that process. Chart 2 also indicates the Twelve Meridians of the body.

What are Meridians?

Meridians or Channels are the pathways that the Zhen Qi (Qi of Channels) follows as it moves through the body replenishing the Visceral Qi of the heart, lungs, spleen, stomach, liver, kidney and other systems and functions of the body. A meridian map of the human body based upon the Qigong perspective would not superimpose over a map of the circulatory or nervous systems depicted on Western medical maps of the body. However, it is important to point out the fact that these various maps, systems, channels or pathways are interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent. The movement of blood, lymph, hormones, nerve impulses, and Qi through the body are all intimately interactive.

I don't want you to get blocked trying to remember too much detail because you think you need it in order to benefit from the **18 Mudra System of Qigong**. This is very useful information that you should continue to pursue. But for our purposes let's just briefly name the fourteen primary meridians, their abbreviations, and locations. Charts 3-7 show the main meridians.

Chart 3
The Fourteen Primary Meridians

Three Yang Channels of the Hands		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Large Intestine	LI	Index fingers, moving up the arms across the shoulders, and to the face.
Triple Warmer	TW	Ring fingers, moving up the back of the arms, shoulders, and up the neck to the face.
Small Intestine	SI	Pinky fingers, moving up the arms, shoulders, and up the neck to the face.

Chart 4
Three Yin Channels of the Hands

<u>Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Lungs	L	Thumbs, moving from the front upper chest down to the tips of the thumbs.
Pericardium	Cx	Middle fingers, moving from the front middle chest near the breasts to the tips of the middle fingers.
Heart	H	Pinkies, moving from the center chest down the inside of the arm to the tip of the pinkies.

Chart 5

Three Yang Channels of the Feet		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Stomach	St	Second toes: moves from the eyes, down the chest, inside the legs to the second toe.
Gall Bladder	GB	Fourth toes: moves from the eyes, down the back, along the outside of the legs to second toe, next to the little toe.
Urinary Bladder	B	Little toes: moves from the eyes, up and over the head, down the neck and back, along the back of the legs to the little toe.

Chart 6

Three Yin Channels of the Feet		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Spleen	Sp	Big toes: moves from the outside of the big toes, up the inside of the legs to the front of the stomach and chest.
Liver	Liv	Big toes: moves from the inside of the big toes, up the inside of the legs to the front of the stomach and chest.
Kidney	K	Bottom of Feet: moves from the bottom of the feet, up the inside of the legs to the front of the stomach and chest.

All of these meridians or channels are in turn dependent upon the two connected corridors of Small Circulation Qi flow described in Chart 7.

Chart 7

<u>Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Conception Vessel	Cv	Qi passes from the Dan Tien point located near the navel, down through the groin area called the 'Bottom of the Sea' (Hai Di), and into the Wei Lu cavity located in the tailbone. Then moves up the front center line of the chest to the lower part of the mouth.
Governing Vessel	Gv	Qi moves from the tailbone up the back, across the crown of the head to the top of the mouth.

Like the circulatory, lymphatic, and nervous systems, the complex system of Qi Meridians or Channels represent the pathways in the body. They are like the threads that hold the fabric together and the fibers that determine its strength, flexibility, and durability. A Traditional Chinese Medical Doctor, Qigong practitioner, and friend of mine recently shared with me the fact that some of the current research being done in China is in relation to the fact that some areas of qi flow in modern populations appear to be different than represented in the traditional texts on the subject. There is still much to learn about this amazing phenomenon.

What are some of the Health Benefits of Qigong?

As you might imagine from its long history of development, body-mind energy manipulation has been through a library of applications. Extensive records, case studies, applications, and theories have been compiled over the centuries. However, it is only within the past 30 years or so that Qigong and other body-mind energy manipulation techniques have been studied using the 'scientific method'. It is this development that is and will allow for the synthesis of Western and Eastern medical and healing philosophies and systems into an Integrated or Complementary Health Care System.

In a book I picked up in China called "*Chinese Qigong Therapy*"⁽³⁾, the following illnesses are listed (with case studies) as being responsive to Qigong.

- cardiovascular disease
- pneumonopathy
- renal diseases
- liver disease
- splenic and gastric disease
- tumors (cancers)

J.V. Cerney⁽⁴⁾ offers Acupressure remedies (Acupressure is a form of Qigong Therapy) for the following illnesses and conditions.

- fatigue
- ailments of the neck
- ailments of the head
- ailments of the chest

- pains of the back and spine
- care of the sex organs
- gastro-intestinal problems
- ailments of legs and feet

There may be much that we don't understand about this Vital Energy that we call by so many names. Some of our theories and paradigms may be clouded with cultural mythology and legend. Nonetheless, the experience and evidence of several thousands of years of global application of these various techniques and systems justifies our continued critical but optimistic exploration of body-mind energy manipulation techniques as an efficacious approach to health and healing. Traditional Chinese Medicine and East Indian Ayurveda are perhaps the best prepared for synthesis and symbiosis with the Western model. Housheng and Peiyu ⁽¹⁾ describe specific Qigong exercises for all of the following symptoms, illnesses, and conditions.

- hypertension
- heart disease
- tuberculosis
- nephritis
- asthma
- virus hepatitis
- obesity
- cold
- varicosis
- tumor
- cerebrovascular accident
- shoulder peri-arthritis
- herniated lumbar disk
- peptic ulcers
- diabetes
- arthritis
- neurasthenia

Heart disease, hypertension, cancer, and diabetes are all major causes of death in the United States. Where personal health issues are concerned arthritis, ulcers, obesity, and back pain are major influences in diminished quality of life among the U.S. population. Our fast pace, high stress, socially and environmentally detached lifestyles are producing psycho-somatic illnesses that cry out for greater self-involvement in maintaining our health and healing our dis-eases. In the next chapter we will briefly explore the relationship between vital force, our thoughts (Odic Impressions), and disease.

We're not just talking about healing disease. We are talking about an overall improvement not only in your quality of life; but in the quality of life of everyone who has to interact with you. At the Third World Congress on Qigong and the 2nd American Qigong Association Conference workshops were offered on such topics as:

- Chow Qigong: Relationship, Sensuality and Sex
- Qigong: A Special Knowledge Possessing Material and Spiritual Characteristics
- Health, Beauty and Longevity
- Qigong: The Ancient Secret Behind TCM for Women's Health
- Divine Messages, Divine Structures
- Qigong Training for Nurses and Paramedics
- Qigong in Hospitals, Health Resorts and Fitness Centers
- Wuji Qigong — An Introduction Into Joyful Chaos
- Qigong, Golf, and Other Sports

In other words, the western emergence of the phenomenon of 'Qi', and the practice of Qigong Exercises and Qigong Therapy as viable and scientifically verifiable modalities, is opening doors for virtually unlimited applications. Another workshop offered at the conference was entitled, "*Develop-*

ment and Testing of a Chi Kung Machine Based on Quantum Physics". So the cultural barrier between Eastern and Western thought is being penetrated and bridged. The most respected medical and teaching institutions in the U.S. are today doing credible research in these areas. So can you. Seize the moment, and the opportunity!

If this book starts or furthers you on the path to enjoying even half of the benefits that I feel have come to me through my dedicated practice of Qigong, then I'd say you made a really good decision to invest in this book. Now that you've made that investment, it's time for you to invest yourself into the process that I've so carefully laid out for you. It won't be hard at all. You'll be wondering what took you so long to find something so simple, powerful, enjoyable, and 100% portable. It's the power in your hands. I've written this book with my Practical, Pragmatic, Holistic, and Spiritual readers in mind. The **18 Mudra System of Qigong** requires absolutely no equipment. It's functional and based upon time tested, scientifically efficacious principles. It speaks to the needs of the whole person. And the affirmations and meditations that I've offered you with each mudra will hopefully be effective catalysis in your own Wu-Te (Spiritual Development).

Breathing

All body-mind energy manipulation systems are based upon three fundamental elements: focusing the mind, perfect body movement or postures, and regulating or controlling the breath. I would offer a simple example of why I place the greatest emphasis on the regulation or control of the breath. About 17 years ago I got a telephone call asking me if I would come and talk to a young man about Qigong. I was told that he was a martial artist who had been in a recent accident. Well, to my great surprise when I arrived, it turned out that the young man had been in a serious motorcycle accident and was quadriplegic. No! I'm not going to report any miracles. I can't say what his final outcome was. But I will share my realization and continued observation. Breathing is the essential element. In that circumstance I had to engage and use his breathing in order to stimulate his mental focus and physical rehabilitation. His prognosis for recovery and mobility were less than good. But there was a clear improvement in his clarity of mind, stamina, and circulation just in the few months that I was seeing him. All he had to start with was his breath; and with that he was able to participate in his own healing process. Let me give it to you another way, in spiritual terms. In every shamanistic system that I'm aware of, in addition to other prayers and nuances, the practitioner blows her or his breath on an object to make an amulet, on a person to heal them, or on a herbal remedy to release its powers.

*"And the Lord God formed man of
the dust of the ground, and breathed
into his nostrils the breath of life;
and man became a living soul."*

Bible Gen: 2:7

*"Then said Jesus to them again,
Peace be unto you: as my Father hath
sent me, even so I send you.*

*And when he had said this, he
breathed on them, and saith unto
them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"*

John: 20:21-22

A dear friend of mine named Fred Walking Badger disappeared some years ago. His family, seers, and I know that he has completed his Earth Walk on the Great Red Road although his remains were never found. Fred left me with something very special that will forever connect us. Sometimes our hearts are filled with such feelings that words alone can't convey the message. In moments like that some of us transcend.

Fred had invited me to do 'Sweat Lodge' with him in a small community of central Phoenix, Arizona where he counseled Native American youth who did their Earth Walk in the city. One day I showed up. It would be my first Sweat. When I was a young boy I had a very vivid dream of the Trail of Tears, before my mother told me of our Native American connection. So I already had a strong emotional bond with The People. After heating up some rocks in a pit of red hot coals (and I'm not talking about store bought charcoal for the backyard barbecue) the red hot rocks were placed in a pit within the makeshift shelter. A dirty old rug was used to seal off the opening. Water was poured on the rocks. Steam rose and reached out with claws. Skin drew together. Disbelief struck. A moment of fear and uncertainty. I heard myself praying. I resumed breathing. I felt myself calm. I heard myself remembering.

Fred and I had grown very close and this moment was very special for both of us. It reinforced my sense of identification with my Cherokee background, and Fred was about to become, in that moment, my guru, my teacher, my shaman. As we threw open the old rug door Fred said he wanted to make a special prayer for me. Naturally I agreed. Fred reached down into the pit and picked up a glowing red hot piece of coal with his hand. I'm sure my eyes widened. He put the hot coal into the palm of his hand and sprinkled some cedar powder on it. I'm sure my jaw dropped some. He then took his Eagle feather, began fanning the smoke towards my nostrils, looked me in the eyes, and prayed for me. In concluding his prayer and sealing our bond, he took the still red hot coal from his hand, placed it in his mouth, and with open lips he blew his breath into my nostrils. I am here; and he is here with me! Brothers forever. No! He was not burned.

*"Behold! thy Lord said
To the angels: "I am about
To create man, from sounding clay
From mud moulded into shape;*

*"When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit,
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto him."*

Holy Quran Sura XV:28-29
A. Yusuf Ali Translation

The angels bowed to Fred that day. I was there. He disappeared a few months later. His burned car was discovered in the desert but his body was never found. His wife and children have to live without closure.

In the "*Bhagavad-Gita: As It Is*" (5) by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada there is a beautiful image on Plate 9. The caption reads...

"As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. Just as a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones."

Now what is interesting about this plate is that the image shows the soul exiting with the last breath. According to a report I heard, scientists have observed a very slight decrease in weight in humans at the time of death that does not seem to occur in other animals. If I still haven't sold you on my position that regulating the breath is the central and essential element of the three fundamentals of Qigong practice, then just try holding your breath through the next few paragraphs.

I'm going to introduce you to three related breathing techniques that I have used and taught for many years. Each breathing technique will evoke slightly different responses in the body-mind. I'll explain as we go along. Ellen Cannon Reed ⁽⁶⁾ in talking about the Ancient Egyptian God "Shu" offers a wonderful way of thinking about the breath as you practice these techniques. It's a little long but I think worth sharing. Just substitute the Name that you use. We're all talking about the same thing.

"Take a deep slow breath, trying to feel the air entering your lungs. Hold it there a moment. Remember that the air you breathe is a part of the atmosphere covering our planet... Be aware of the air around you, touching every inch of your body. Think of the wind in all its aspects, from the gentlest breeze to gale force wind. "Listen" to it. Try to hear the God's name. "Shu." Visualize the planet Earth hanging in space. See the atmosphere that surrounds it. See the movement of the winds, the air around the entire sphere, all connected, flowing from one direction to another, surrounding your home.

All of these are Shu. He is around you, within you. He enters your body with each breath, bringing you life, and exits it with each exhalation, taking away that which is poison to you. He enters and exits through your pores as well.

The trees show his passing. The birds soar through and upon Him. Whitecaps reveal His presence on the sea. The movements of air around our planet are His presence. Shu is all of these."

In the Yoruba tradition of Ifa, this is the description given of the female Orisha [spiritual force] "Oya", Goddess of the Air, Breath, Wind, and Tempest. Regardless of the name or the image, the fact remains; the breath is central.

The Cleansing Breath

I could begin with a long list of exotic names, but I won't. Listening to a tape of Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, author of *"Your Sacred Self"* reminded me of an interesting way to introduce this breathing technique and an interesting book. This breath is based upon two important observations. First, as you can discover in the "Encyclopedia of Gods" ⁽⁷⁾ which lists the names and descriptions of over 2,500 deities of the world, one of the most common sounds made cross-culturally in invoking the higher realm is the sound "AH". For example, AllAH, YAHwey, and OloduMAre. The Christian 'chant of affirmation', Amen. And the ancient Egyptian, Ammon Ra. Believe me the list goes on. Second, from my travels and observations it appears that "AH" is also a universal vibration of relief. "AH" like "m-m-m-m-m" are primordial sounds intoned in connection with relief, comfort, understanding, and pleasure.

Exercise:

- Stand or sit in a comfortable erect posture, feet flat on the floor. Push all of the air out of your system without too much exertion. Contract the abdomen gently. You want to deeply evacuate the respiratory system because 'the quality of an inhale is dependent upon the quality of the exhale that preceded it.'
- Now, inhale deeply through the nose. Let the breath fill you like a bottle; first expanding the stomach at the bottom, then the middle chest (solar plexus area), and finally capping off the top almost as an afterthought. Think of the images of air and wind used to represent Shu and Oya as you take it in. Hold the breath. After a brief pause move smoothly into the exhale cycle. Open your mouth and allow the breath to escape unobstructed. Let the breath exit the body (from top to bottom) riding upon the intonation "AH-H-H-H-H-H".
- This intonation can be made as a moderately audible vibratory sound, or as a soft non-vibratory whisper of the breath. In the former case you will feel it vibrating in your throat and chest. In the later, you will feel only the gentle stroke of a warm breeze passing through the throat. In either case, exhale until the breath stills itself and pause. Learn to relax in this 'empty' cycle of the breath. The lesson is that we can relax in those moments of transient deprivation that most of us will experience at one time or another in our lives.
- After pausing, relax the stomach and simultaneously begin the cycle again, filling from bottom to top; and emptying from top to bottom. This process should be done in a slow rhythm with focused awareness on the breath and the effects of this particular breathing technique. You should sit or stand and practice this breath for 5-10 minutes at a time to begin. Then progress to 10-20 minutes. Twice per day with a few minutes here and there is a great routine. With your schedule the twice per day might be hit or miss for a while, but definitely don't leave off the 'few minutes here and there'. *Perfect practice makes perfect!*

We will use the Cleansing Breath whenever we are performing the Transitional Mudras to be described later in this book. It evokes those feelings of relief, comfort, understanding, and pleasure. It also opens our Ori (consciousness, awareness) to the Universal Consciousness by setting us in harmony through the primordial intonation.

The 'Ho-Me-So' Breath

"In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God;
And the Word was God."

Bible John: 1:1

What a profound statement of the power of the breath and the modulated intonation. Words are collections of sounds; sounds that have been prescribed meanings; sounds that have transformative power. Sounds have shattered glasses, eardrums, hearts, minds, and lives. Sound has scattered

kidney stones, penetrated the womb, and caused light to dance. In *"Chanting"* (8) Robert Gass offers this quote from Hazrat Inayat Khan.

"Before the world was, all was in sound. God was in sound, we are made of sound."

Sufi Inayat Khan (9) also says,

"A healer must know in the first place that breath is the very life, that breath is the giver of life, and that breath is the bringer of life... Every atom of man's body is radiant; but if the body is the flame, the breath is the fire, and as the flame belongs to the fire, so the body belongs to the breath."

Beautiful! He also said, *"The breath can be developed by purification, by extension, by expansion, and by rhythm."* (9) We are going to do all of these. Remember, Shu or Oya bring life in and also carry 'poisons' out. The Ho-Me-So Breath is designed to give you control over the rhythm of your breathing. The Cleansing Breathing gave you knowledge of the movement of the breath from bottom to top coming in; and from top to bottom going out; and the primordial intonation "AH". This is referred to as the Buddhist breathing method and is the breathing technique we bring with us into the world. Babies do Buddhist style breathing.

Rhythm is provocative and transformative. There are three different kinds of rhythms in the breath. And as Inayat Khan says, *"Those who have not mastered their breath are under the influence of these three rhythms, their health, their mood, and their condition in life; but those who master the breath, can put their breath in any of these rhythms; ...disease means something wrong with the rhythm."* (9)

Exercise:

- Sit or stand and begin with an evacuating exhale. Inhale through the nose as you did in the Cleansing Breath, filling from the bottom up. On the exhale, you're going to make three sounds moving the breath from upper thorax, to the middle chest or solar plexus area, and finally to the contracting abdomen. At first I want you to make the sounds distinct. Exhale with the audible, vibratory sound of "HO" in the upper chest. Feel it vibrating in your chest. When you feel that you have released about one third of the breath, make a short break in the intonation and then let the exhaling breath move down to the middle chest with the sound "ME". The middle chest will tighten slightly and the vibration will be felt radiating from the solar plexus to the nasal cavity.
- If you focus your awareness on your breathing rhythm, you will pick up the natural cues that signal the 'right moment of transition FOR YOU'. You will feel the middle chest collapsing. When about three fourths of the remaining breath has been evacuated, momentarily stop the intonation and let the breath conclude with the contracting abdomen intoning "SO". Squeeze the breath out gently just as you do with the "AH" intonation in the Cleansing Breath. Practice this for about 5-10 minutes. Just pay attention to the different locations of the breath, the fullness of the breath, and the rhythm of the breath; and of course to any sensations that you experience as a result of this training.
- After this brief period of practice you're going to begin blending the HO-ME-SO intonations into a smoother transition. Repeat the exercise I just described. But this time connect the

"HO" vibration to the "ME" intonation. The blending of the two intonations will produce the sound "OM" as the breath moves from the upper chest to the middle chest. "Ho-o-o-OMmmmE-e-e-e..." Allow the brief intonation of "OM" to carry the breath directly into the "ME" intonation. (Later, as your respiratory system expands, you can begin extending the "OM" intonation.) Feel the vibratory energy moving up and down the respiratory system and stimulating all the internal organs and the head. When you move to transition to the collapsing abdomen and the "SO" intonation you will first experience a distinct contraction of the solar plexus and momentary break in the intonation. This will occur right as you 'reach' for the "S" in the "SO" intonation. Extend the "S" sound and the contraction for a very brief moment and then open the "Ssssss" out into the "sssO-o-o-o" intonation allowing for the final contraction of the abdomen. You will also eventually be able to extend the "Ssssss" part of the "SO" intonation. These exercises are excellent for chronic respiratory sufferers and every respiratory therapist and clinic should know them and teach them to their patients.

After practicing this breath for a few days, 5-10 minutes at a time, include it in your 10-20 minutes practice sessions with the Cleansing Breath. Progress from three to five to eight repetitions of the HO-ME-SO Breath each set followed by a single repetition of the Cleansing Breath over the period of 10-20 minutes of Breath Controlled Meditation. Once you become familiar and comfortable with the movement and intonation of the breath, then gradually begin decreasing the audio and vibratory level of the intonations until they are completely internalized. First exhaling through the mouth in silent rhythm; and finally closing the mouth, placing the tip of the tongue lightly on the roof of the mouth just behind the teeth, then inhaling and exhaling through the nose using the same rhythm and mental intonations.

The HO-ME-SO Breath will be used while creating and holding each of the mudras and interim mudras. There are actually some 60 mudras in the 18 Mudra System of Qigong when we consider the interim positions. The Cleansing Breath will be used in the Transitional Set. Remember, the four dimensions of development:

- **purification** (exhale fully and 'release' gently pushing the diaphragm upwards) "AHHHHHHHHH!";
- **extension** (breathe slowly and elongate the pauses in between the two cycles of inhale and exhale);
- **expansion** (inhale fully filling the respiratory cavity from lower abdomen to upper thorax allowing the diaphragm to go through its full range of motion up and down).
- **rhythm** (maintain a constant timing and movement of the breath that is both comfortable to perform and enjoyable to experience) "HO-ME-SO" plus "AH".

The Centering Breath

The Centering Breath is a special technique (affirmation) that works wonders for me. It is performed exactly the way that you did the HO-ME-SO Breath. With one exception. Instead of intonating HO-ME-SO, you will intonate the mantra, "**I Am Here**". Each of the three 'Words' replaces one of the three primordial sounds with the same respective relationship to the breathing cycle. "I" is in the upper thorax, "Am" is in the middle chest, and "Here" is in the abdomen or Dan Tien. They are all expressed in a low, non-vibratory intonation; almost inaudible. The significance of this particular breathing mantra will become clear as we move further into the **18 Mudra System of Qigong**. But first a word about 'this thing' we call Qi, and then on to focusing the mind. There is another

breathing technique called the Agni or Fire Breath. My method is different from the traditional Hindu Agni breath. I believe it is a simpler yet more powerful technique. We use it in the 64 movement Fire Flower System of Qigong but not in the 18 Mudra System.

One More Thing On The Identity Of Qi

One of the problems Western science has had in recent decades is that of a dual mathematics to explain creation. The Newtonian, Cartesian, Einsteinian view of the world worked well in explaining, in mathematical terms, many of the forces and relationships that we encountered here on Mother Earth and in our local solar system. But when it came time to explain warped space, discontinuities in time, black holes, and the origin of the universe, a different mathematics was required. One that did not reconcile with the 'local math'. Until now! I'm not an advanced mathematician but some of our astrophysicists, quantum physicists, and mathematicians have allowed themselves to think outside of the box, and to allow the mathematics to drive the theory; and what they have arrived at seems to answer the questions, "What was the universe before Creation took form?" "What is the Essence of the Universe?" "What is the material of the darkness from which all things come?" The answer has been coined, "String Theory". "Qi" by any other name still is what it is! *Ase. Ankh. Nkra. Ntu. Prana. Cretna. Ki. Chi. Mitakiyasin. The Blank Rune!* It may well be the understanding of ourselves and creation for which we have been searching.

Focusing Your Awareness and Experiencing Your Qi

Exercise:

Now that you've learned these powerful breathing techniques let's use them to help you focus your awareness on experiencing your Qi. Read this entire exercise and then try it.

- Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet flat on the floor, back straight. Begin rubbing your hands together at the palms and continue rubbing until you feel the heat in the palms of your hands. Rub for about 20-30 seconds.
- Then, extend your arms out in front of your mid-chest with the palms facing each other, elbows bent and arms relaxed. Align your hands with the palms about one to two inches apart. Your hands and arms should be in the approximate position of the prayer posture used by many Christians, except that your palms will not be touching. Focus your gaze, your attention, and your awareness on the space in between your palms.
- Use the HO-ME-SO Breath for this exercise.
- [Picture this image: You have a wet sponge between your hands. You want to squeeze it; but not so much that any water drips out. And, you want to release it; but not so much that the sponge drops out from between your hands.] This is what I call the '**as if**' movement. **Think it but don't do it!** Now, with that image in mind:

Begin making very slight in and out ['as if'] movements with your hands [mind].

- Coordinate your 'as if' movements with your breathing; 'as if' squeezing or pressing the hands together on your entire HO-ME-SO exhale, and releasing the 'as if' pressure with your inhales. ANY ACTUAL MOVEMENTS OF YOUR HANDS SHOULD BE VERY SUBTLE; VERY SLIGHT.
- In a few moments you will begin to feel something substantive between your hands; as though you were playing with two magnets. YOU ARE!

Once you feel the energy [Qi] field, gradually [very slowly] begin moving your hands further and further apart; still continuing the in and out oscillating movements coordinated with the breath. Just make the space between the hands wider. See how far apart you can separate your hands and how animated you can make your movements and still feel the Qi.

- Have fun with it!
- Play with it!
- Dance with it!!!!!!

This is the same energy that you will be evoking as you move through the **18 Mudra System of Qigong**. The more you relax; the more you regulate your breathing; the more you focus your awareness and open your consciousness to new experiences; the more powerfully you will experience your Qi. This is an exercise that you can share with anyone; right now!; even your children. When friends ask you about 'that thing you do!' this exercise is a good way to acquaint them with the concept and reality of Qi. OK! You've done a basic focusing exercise so let's look a little deeper into the role and importance of right thinking, right concentration, and right mindfulness. Remember, this is body-MIND energy manipulation.



*"As the fletcher whittles
and makes straight his arrows,
So the master directs
his straying thoughts."*

*Dhammapada
Sayings of the Buddha*



———— Chapter 3 - Odic Impressions and The Akashic Record ————

My understanding of the relationship between the body and mind, between our thoughts and our experiences is based upon decades of observation, study, and experience. James Allen's contribution came many years ago in a simple pocket size book entitled, "As a Man Thinketh" (10). He opens with this quote:

"Mind is the Master-power that moulds and makes, And Man is Mind, and evermore he takes The tool of Thought, and, shaping what he wills, Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills: - He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass: Environment is but his looking-glass."

Most of us have heard the aphorism, "*As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.*" According to Allen, and I agree, this aphorism "*not only embraces the whole of a man's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of his life. A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts.*" Ladies, this book has also been rewritten from a female perspective and entitled, "*As a Woman Thinketh*".

The meditations that I have ascribed to each of the mudras in the system are based upon the traditional meanings of the mudras and my own inspiration regarding each mudra. Throughout the presentation of the **18 Mudra System of Qigong**, I will be referring to the importance of controlling your Odic Impressions and the influence of those impressions on you and upon the rest of creation. It's been said that we humans, as individuals and as a group, are our own worst enemies. Indeed,

"Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armory of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace.

By the right choice and true application of thought, man ascends to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, he descends below the level of the beast." (10)

To a certain extent the expression Positive Mental Attitude has been overplayed in the culture and gets easily brushed aside today. But from the standpoint of your health, healing, and quality of life, PMA - a Positive Mental Attitude is essential. Next to your breathing, focusing the mind on positive images is the most important thing in accomplishing your goals for improvement. A Positive Mental Attitude can otherwise be spoken of as a 'right' mental attitude. It is composed of the positively charged attributes that we have come to recognize as the characteristics of those people who genuinely enrich all of our lives. PMA is the mental vibration to which we have ascribed such words as: faith, integrity, hope, optimism, courage, initiative, generosity, tolerance, tact, kindness, and good common sense. In my view, the highest aspects of this 'right' mental attitude are Love, Empathy, and Compassion toward ourselves and others.

We're going to be reinforcing the importance of positive Odic Impressions throughout the remaining Chapters of the **18 Mudra System of Qigong**, so for now I just want to give a basic introduction and definition. You and I are minds with bodies, not bodies that somehow acquired mental capacities. In understanding and trusting in the relationship between the body and the mind, you can:

1. enhance your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being.

2. increase your degree of joy and success in your chosen field of endeavor.
3. learn to evoke, invoke, use, control, and harmonize with powers known and unknown.

"Dare to investigate all non-physical forces lying outside the realm of known physical processes - forces which you can use when you learn to apply them." ⁽¹¹⁾ The **18 Mudra System of Qigong** is a significant step in that direction.

Odic Force is a certain force or energy, a manifestation of the *Ase* which is drawn in, or manifests within our head as an emanation from the ego or consciousness. In the ancient wisdom Odic Force was considered as the brain cell sensitizer. It is the particular energy or force which penetrates every cell in the brain, into, and on which, the impressions are imprinted, and are indelibly implanted and recorded, never to be entirely disintegrated or destroyed while the body exists. These remain as permanent impressions. The magnetic field of our Earth passes through each and everyone of us, and as it does it passes along every nerve path in the human body and is the carrier of released Odic Impressions from the brain cells. In other words, "As a Man or Woman Thinketh ...". If a person repeats the Odic Impression, "She makes me sick to my stomach!", or "I get a headache every time I think about it!"; that wonderful and responsive body of theirs and that powerful mind will make the word flesh. An occasional stomach ache may well turn into a chronic condition, and the rare headache may ultimately give way to persistent migraine headaches. These Odic Impressions travel from the frontal lobe or transverse fissure along with the magnetic field and the mitro-genetic rays that emanate from the frontal lobe of the brain in relation to the polarities of the body. Understand that when we experience the notion of 'thirst' in what feels like a 'head' experience, every other cell in our bodies have also had that experience. They all go into the instantaneous service of the organism. Before we are even aware of the 'notion' or need as a 'conscious experience' in the head, the body has already mobilized. The cellular fluid exchange slows down, the kidneys reduce urine production; the whole body - the whole self goes into fluid retention and replacement. LIKEWISE, the whole body is intimately involved with, being fed and directed by, all your Odic Impressions - for better or for worse.

The Akashic Record

In the Ancient Eastern wisdom it is said that every act, every action, every willed thought of the individual helps to form an indelible imprint upon the Akashic Records. Everything which has ever happened is impressed upon this cosmic record. Basically there are two kinds of records and these may well be that which the scriptures are speaking of when they declare that our deeds are being recorded for the Day of Judgement or some final accounting.

1. The first kind of record is that which retains all the physical actions of every created, shaped, and formed thing because of the radiant nature of all matter.
2. The second kind of impression is that of Intentions, willed thoughts which may never be brought into action but yet, carry with them the creative power of the will and ego, and therefore, precipitate consequences.

So we are warned, "...be careful what you pray for; you might just get it!" I don't want to invest too much time and attention to defining these terms or concepts because they will become clearer as

we use and apply the concepts throughout the rest of this book. However, if you want to follow up on this subject after finishing the **18 Mudra System of Qigong**, a good source is the writings of Dr. M. Doreal who was a scholarly occultist writing back in the 1940's. He published under the Brotherhood of the White Temple, Inc. in Sedalia, Colorado.

As a final comment in this Chapter let me tie the concepts of Odic Impressions, Akashic Records, Karmic Consequences, and Auras together. Consider that an emanation of (light) energy surrounds every living thing - plants, animals, as well as humans - whether this light is seen or not. All life itself gives off radiations of energy. These radiations are the Aura, and this aura exists in between the internal manifestation of the Odic Impressions and the external Akashic Record and Karmic Consequences. In other words, thoughts do become things. And all things move space and the Ase and therefore bring about consequences (Karma).

"Man is not only constituted of matter in his being but also of spirit... For the physical body is sustained by material food and drink, breath by the air, mind by thoughts and imaginations and impressions; but that is not all, there is something besides mind and body that man possesses in his being, and that is his spirit, which is light, a divine light." (9)



*"Whoever follows impure thoughts
suffers in this world and the next
In both worlds they suffer.
And how greatly,
when they see the wrong they have done.*

*But whoever follows the law
is joyful here and joyful there.
In both worlds they rejoice.
And how greatly,
when they see the good they have done."*

*Dhammapada
Sayings of the Buddha*



MUDRAS: GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR HANDS

The hand is so sensitive that it can feel the footstep of a fly; it can perform brain surgery, and sense changes in temperature without contact with surfaces. It is so strong that it can punch through wood, ice, brick, and rock; it can twist a screw into wood, and bend metal into or out of shape. The thumb allows our species to enjoy the highest level of dexterity of any mammal on the planet. We can clinch a hammer with enough strength to drive a nail into concrete; and we can pluck a single eyelash. The twenty seven bones in each of our hands, including the carpal bones of the wrists, are controlled by the ligaments and strong muscles in the forearms. These muscles in turn connect to the shoulders and back; and become part of the entire network of body movement and energy flow.

You are going to use your hands to unlock certain forces in your body and certain psycho-emotional states in your mind. Every finger will play a part in the process. Posture will be important. So will the slow, deliberate, calm, gracefulness of your movements. Don't rush your process. Take your time. You've got the rest of your life to learn and grow. Immortality exists in the space in between events. So don't rush from Chapter to Chapter in this book or from event to event in your life. Don't rush from posture to posture. Take the time to experience the transitions and changes in between postures. Love and Live the Process. The events are just short lived punctuations; essential but not sufficient. It is the processes of event formation that provide continuity to life.



To Fred

*"Like the One-legged
We stand tall,
so that we might brush against heaven;
We bend and twist,
to show respect, and
that we are yielding in the face of the wind.
Yet, we do not forget
who we are;
We are the two-legged,
The Earth Walkers.
We also make wind."*

Umar Sharif

