

A Student's Manual of Qigong

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氣功指南

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What is Qigong – an Introduction

Qigong is a compound term in Chinese made up of two characters. The first is *Qi* (氣), which actually means a wide range of things including breath or internal vitality. The second word, *Gong* (功), is a type of skill or accomplishment, honed over time with effort. In modern usage it refers to an incredibly wide range of practices encompassing meditation, movement based practices, martial arts, and in some circles the acquisition for supposed miraculous practices. As we will see the term Qigong used in this context is a modern construction and to some extent an invented tradition.

Closely related to Qigong are the Nourishing Life practices (Yang Sheng 養生). The ancient Chinese chased after health and longevity with an almost religious zeal. This search was carried out by carefully regulated diets, harmonizing daily activities with the seasons, practicing breathing exercises or sexual cultivation techniques, regulating the mind and emotions, and other similar practices – all of which fall under the category of Yang Sheng. Unlike ‘Qigong’, the term ‘Yang Sheng’ has been in continuous use for several thousand years in China, and today many of the classical Nourishing Life practices have been subsumed under the broader modern heading of Qigong. Some of these include the 24 Seasonal Node Dao Yin Exercises (二十四氣坐功導引法) and the Six Sounds for Nourishing Life practice, also known as the Six Healing Sounds (六字訣養生功).

Early Qigong and Nourishing Life Practices

While Qigong is a modern term in common use for less than 100 years, the practices now included under that heading are as old as Chinese civilization itself. It is possible that different dance-like movement arts used for personal cultivation had their earliest origins in very ancient shamanic practices. Pieces of Neolithic pottery dating over 7000 years of age have been discovered showing people in various Qigong-like postures. (Deadman 2014; Liu 2010) Other various references to using breathing and physical exercises for treating disease and achieving longevity are found throughout literature in early Chinese imperial times. For example, in the Daoist classic the Zhuang Zi, there is this description:

“Blowing and breathing with open mouth; inhaling and exhaling the breath; expelling the old breath and taking in new; passing their time like the bear, and stretching and twisting like a bird - all this simply shows the desire for longevity. This is what the scholars who manipulate their breath, and the men who nourish the body and wish to live as long as Peng Zu are fond of.”

吹响呼吸，吐故納新，熊經鳥申，為壽而已矣，此道引之士，養形之人，彭祖壽考者之所好也。

Although this quote is presented in a pejorative manner, it demonstrates that various breathing and movement exercises were in common use in China around the time of writing.

The Nei Jing, the classic text of Chinese medicine that dates to about the beginning of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 ACE), discusses several Nourishing Life practices in detail, and word ‘Yang Sheng’ appears four times in the book. As an example, the Yi Fa Fang Yi Lun (Treatise on Different Therapies Suitable to the Different Directions, Su Wen Chapter 12) describes various therapeutic treatments for the different regions of China. This chapter says that Dao Yin and massage techniques are suitable for people living in the central region of China. Dao Yin (literally ‘Guiding and Pulling’ 導引) is a term that describes what might be described as simple yoga movements that treat or prevent disease; today Dao Yin is considered a subset of Qigong.

Between 1972 and 1974 archeologists at the Ma Wang Dui tomb site in modern Hunan Province discovered a series of untouched manuscripts dating back to the early years of the Han Dynasty. This was an extremely important discovery for Chinese medicine and Nourishing Life history. The Nei Jing was most likely compiled in a similar time period, however the Nei Jing we have today has been heavily edited; the earliest original versions of the Nei Jing we have today were editions from at least 1,000 years after the initial writing. On the contrary, the manuscripts found in Ma Wang Dui had been untouched by human hands from the time the tombs were sealed over 2,000 years ago until the early 1970s when archeologists went inside.

Inside Ma Wang Dui was an incredible array of texts including manuscripts on hemerology, philosophy (including some of the oldest versions of the Dao De Jing and Yi Jing that we have today), and, more importantly to our discussion, health and medicine. The health and medicine manuscripts found contained 14 different texts with over 22,000 extant characters. Included were writings on moxibustion, herbal formulas, incantation and magical healing, sexual hygiene, and childbirth. There are also diagrams of the early versions of the channels now used in modern acupuncture, and diagrams of Dao Yin movements. One manuscript is specifically titled Yang Sheng Fang (養生方) – Formulas for Nourishing Life. This text describes various recipes for sexual vigor. (Harper, 1998)

Over the following centuries various breathing and movement arts were developed, some of which have survived to today. Additionally, schools of internal alchemy developed complex meditation and visualization techniques designed not only to increase health and longevity, but also allow the practitioner to experience mystical realization and transcendent states. All of these contributed to the Nourishing Life

schools that have come down to us today. For a more in depth look at the historical development of Nourishing Life practices and Dao Yin as a progenitor of modern Qigong please see Kohn (2008) or Liu (2010).

Modern Qigong

The modern Qigong movement was born at the dawning of the People's Republic of China (established 1949). One of the earliest promoters of taking older methods of self-cultivation and reformatting them for modern consumption was an unassuming person by the name of Liu Guizhen (刘贵珍; 1920 - 1983). Liu, a minor public servant, suffered from ongoing health issues including gastric ulcers and insomnia. He eventually regained his health in 1947 after practicing breathing and meditation exercises taught to him by his paternal uncle, Liu Duzhou. When Liu Guizhen returned to work a healthy man, his Communist party supervisors took notice. Liu was then tasked with secularizing and simplifying the methods he had learned so that the average person could learn from them and benefit their health. At that time in history the ratio of doctors to the general population in China was an appalling 1:26,000. Hence, Communist Party administrators were eager to promulgate an inexpensive method for people to care for their own health. This also fit into the idea of self-strengthening that was a goal of both individual Chinese as well as the nation as a whole. (Chen, 2003)

Around this same time these newly created exercises needed a newly created name that did not link them to their religious or cultural past; after all, a new China needed new things devoid of connection to 'feudalist superstition'. Liu Guizhen and Huang Yueting, director of Research Office of the Health Department of Southern Hebei, decided on the term Qigong to represent these new practices. While the word Qigong had previously existed in several earlier texts, it had never before been widely used to describe the various techniques of the Nourishing Life practices that would later come under its umbrella.

Throughout the 1950s Qigong became increasingly popular in China, especially among the educated and political elite. Numerous Qigong hospitals or sanatoria were created, including the famous Beidahe Sanitarium headed by Liu Guizhen himself. In 1956 Hu Yaozhen opened the first Qigong hospital in Beijing. At this time Qigong was closely associated with Chinese traditional medicine, and several books for mass consumption were published on the topic.

During the years leading up to and through the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976) Qigong enters a time of official governmental persecution and disavowal. Many famous people, including Liu Guizhen, were persecuted; in 1965 Liu was expelled from CCP as the "creator of the poisonous weed of qigong." (Chen, 2003) After this time however, in the 1980s Qigong enjoyed a tremendous renaissance. Different from before however, this time Qigong becomes a practice of the masses outside of

hospital or other medical settings, instead being practiced en masse in places such as public parks.

During this period of renaissance Qigong sometimes took on a decidedly different flavor. While previously Nourishing Life practices were methods of achieving health, or adjunct methods of spiritual practice (e.g., in Daoist movements), now Qigong had started filling the spiritual void left in the wake of Communist suppression of traditional religion. Qigong began to associate breathing and movement exercises with messianism, the development of paranormal abilities in humans, pseudoscientific research, and the overall regeneration of mankind and the Chinese nation – all of this being coined a ‘Qigong Fever’ (Qigong Re 氣功熱). During this same period external Qi healing (wai qi liao fa 外氣療法) was popularized although prior to this time it was rarely seen in classical literature. (Palmer, 2007)

As the popularity of Qigong grew, so also did the number of Qigong teachers. Many of these, often times self-proclaimed ‘masters’, relied on personal charisma as the sole criteria for legitimacy. Certainly, some teachers of this period created valuable modes of practice. Yet others trafficked in either quackery or stage magic, demonstrating their ‘skill’ by such feats as levitating cigarettes or setting things on fire with the power of their Qi alone. (Palmer, 2007) What did happen was that it became increasingly difficult to find classical practices and teachers with historic lineages (or even modern teachers with something substantial to teach) in the milieu just described. As this ‘Fever’ started dying down through the 1990s and into the beginning of the 21st century, much of the more fantastic aspects of Qigong, those aspects that amounted to a modern artificially created tradition, dwindled.

Basic Theory of Qigong

Even though there are many different practices now subsumed under the name of Qigong, there are some similarities in terms of basic theory and practice. One of the most important is the idea of the Three Regulations (san tiao 三調); namely, regulating the body, regulating the breath, and regulating the heart-mind.

Regulating the Body 調身

Qigong exercises usually include some sort of physical movement or holding of postures. Vigorous and demanding physical movements characterize some Qigong exercises while others are non-moving seated meditations. Even in meditative practices proper posture is important however – for example the maintenance of an upright seated posture.

Because the surface of the body and the four limbs are traversed by the channels, network vessels and blood vessels, stretching the body in different ways or holding certain postures stimulates these structures. Because of this, physical movement has

a direct effect on treating the internal organs and can therefore treat or prevent disease.

Regulating the Breath 調息

In Chinese medicine it is said that the Lung is the commander of the Qi. Furthermore, respiration is one of the methods the body draws in raw material for the production of Qi. Deep, conscious breathing influences the quantity and quality of the Qi being formed at all times. Certain breathing patterns also allow Qi to penetrate into the body and circulate in specific patterns through the channels.

One saying in Chinese medicine says that without relaxation there is pain, and relaxing eliminated pain (bu song ze tong, song ze bu tong 不鬆則痛，鬆則不痛). Pain in Chinese medicine is the result of stagnation in the movement of Qi and blood. Deep and patterned breathing induces states of relaxation helping to open the channels, eliminating blockages in the normal flow of Qi and blood. Thus simple deep breathing can eliminate pain and restore homeostasis.

Regulating the Heart-Mind 調心

Chinese medicine believes that the Qi follows the Yi-intention: yi dao qi (意到氣). It is well known that thought patterns can influence every aspect of our being, including our health. In the first chapter of the Nei Jing Su Wen it says:

“Quiet peacefulness, absolute emptiness, the true qi follows. When essence and spirit are guarded internally, where could a disease come from? Hence, the mind is relaxed and one has few desires. The heart is at peace and one is not in fear.” (Unschuld & Tessenow, 2011, pg. 34)

恬憒虛无，真氣從之，精神內守，病安從來。是以志閑而少欲，心安而不懼

In Chinese medicine and in colloquial Chinese the word ‘heart’ refers not necessarily to cardiac function but rather the mind and affects. Therefore, what we translate here as ‘Regulating the Heart-Mind’ is literally tiao xin – Regulating the Heart. Mind states and emotions are so closely linked to our wellbeing in Chinese traditional medicine that the Heart is considered the most important organ in the body; it is said to hold the position of sovereign (君主之官).

In Qigong and other Nourishing Life practices, “Regulating the Heart” includes counting the breath to induce a stilled mind, focusing attention on various parts of the body, or sometimes visualizing movement of the Qi or breath internally. Meditative or visualization techniques therefore induce relaxation and actively help circulate Qi and blood internally.

Three Regulations Together

The three regulations described above work together. Regulating posture (regulating the body) allows for better and deeper breathing. For example, it is near impossible to practice deep relaxation breaths when sitting in a very hunched over position. Sitting or standing in a relaxed posture also allows the mind to relax. Likewise, deep breathing by itself calms the mind, which then allows the body to relax. A calm mind state naturally induces deeper and slower breathing, which relaxes the physical body so that certain postures can be attained. Thus is it evident that the Three Regulations are just an efficient way to work with the body-breath-mind complex.

References:

Deadman, P (2014) A brief history of qigong. *Journal of Chinese Medicine*: No.105; pp.5-17.

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Kohn, L. (2008) *Chinese Healing Exercises: The Tradition of Daoyin*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

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BASIC QIGONG – DESCENDING QI AND WASHING THE ORGANS PRACTICE

Jiang Qi Xi Zang Gong 降氣洗臟功

One important branch of Chinese medicine is the use of moving meditation that combines physical movements, mindful breathing and visualization. These exercises are collectively known as Qigong, a compound term comprised of *Qi* (vital substance 氣) and *Gong* (a skill or practice 功). The Descending Qi and Washing the Organs Practice is an important first Qigong routine that is both easy to learn and effective for beginners. Albeit simple, it is a foundational exercise that even advanced Qigong practitioners utilize on a daily basis.

1. Stand comfortably with feet about shoulder width apart. Imagine that a string is pulling down at the tailbone while simultaneously another is pulling up at the crown thereby elongating the spine. Take a few deep breaths and relax.
2. While *inhaling* raise hands out to the side and continue up until over the head (ending with palms facing down).
3. While *exhaling* allow the hands to slowly move down (as if pushing down) in front of the body. As the hands move lower, gently sink the body by bending the knees slightly. Coordinate the movement of the hands with the sinking of the body.
4. Repeat the same cycle of inhaling and exhaling with the same movements of the hands and body. As you exhale, imagine that all sick and negative Qi in the body is draining out through the bottom of the feet. Also, visualize any sickness or pain likewise draining out of the body through the bottom of the feet.
5. Continue the same movement for anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes. When finished take a minute to simply stand comfortably, close your eyes and be aware of your breathing and how your body feels.

The Channels of Chinese Medicine

Channel theory (經絡理論) is one of the most important facets of Chinese medicine. Also known as meridians, the channels are systems of interconnection of vital substance (i.e., Qi). They link the interior and the organs of the body with the exterior. Acupuncture regulates body function by stimulating the channels on the exterior of the body, and Qigong can likewise do the same. One of the Qigong systems we practice is the set of Paida (拍打) exercises that regulates the channels.

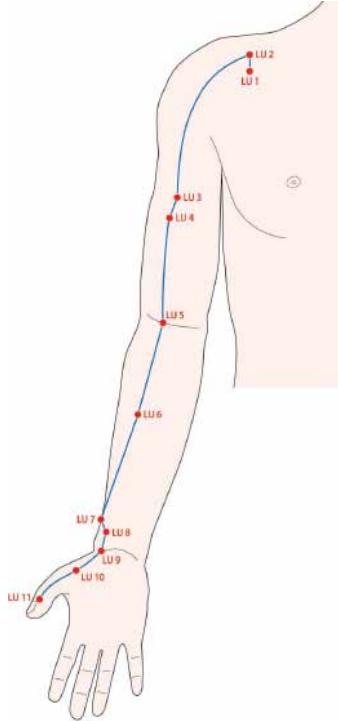
There are a total of twelve primary channels, each connected to one of the key organs identified by Chinese medicine. In addition there are several extra vessels that act as overall regulators and reservoirs in the body. These are called the Eight Extraordinary Vessels (奇經八脈), although in Qigong theory we focus primarily on only a few.

Each of the twelve primary channels is paired with one other, making six total grander Yin-Yang pairings. Also, through the theory of the Five Phases (also known as the Five Elements - 五行) each of the organs and channels is paired with a season, time of day, direction, emotional presentation, etc... Knowledge of the associations for each of the channels, as well as their pathways and connections to the inner organs are important in Qigong practice.

Paired Channels with their Yin-Yang and Five Phase Correspondences

| Five Phase Association | Yin Channel/Organ | Yang Channel/Organ |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Metal | Lung | Large Intestine |
| Earth | Spleen | Stomach |
| Fire | Heart | Small Intestine |
| Water | Kidney | Bladder |
| Fire | Pericardium | San Jiao (Triple Heater) |
| Wood | Liver | Gallbladder |

Lung Channel



ID10101_LU

Five Phase Association: Metal

Yin-Yang Association: Yin

Season: Autumn

Time of Day: 3-5am

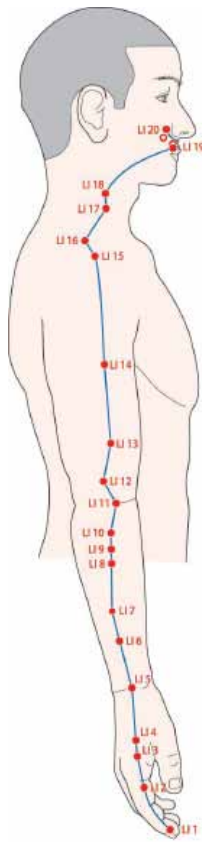
Direction: west

Color: white

Emotion: grief

Sound: Si (四)

Large Intestine Channel



ID10102_LI

Five Phase Association: Metal

Yin-Yang Association: Yang

Season: Autumn

Time of Day: 5-7am

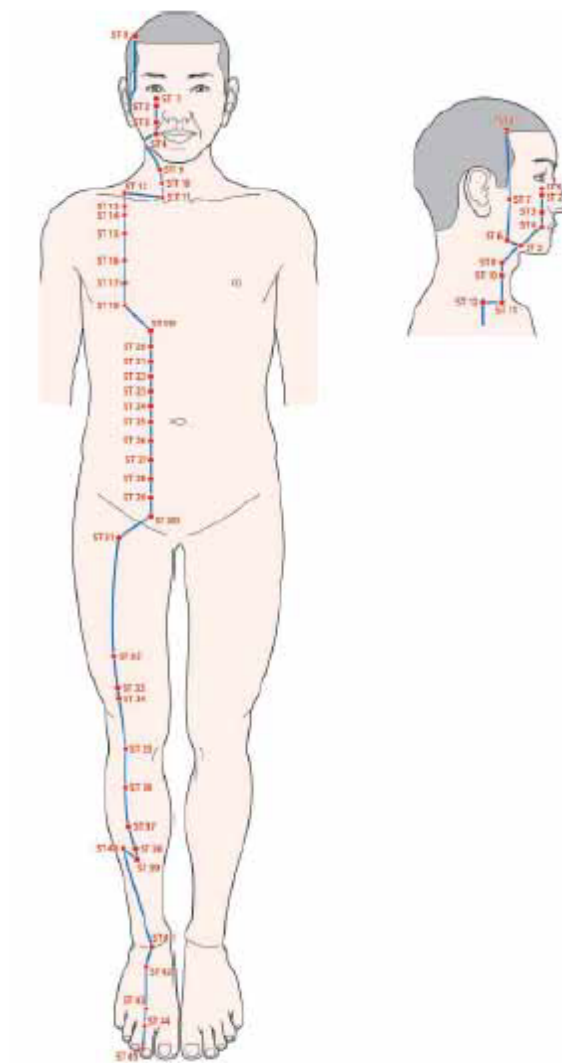
Direction: west

Color: white

Emotion: n/a

Sound: n/a

Stomach Channel



Five Phase Association: Earth

Yin-Yang Association: Yang

Season: (seasonal transition)

Time of Day: 5-7am

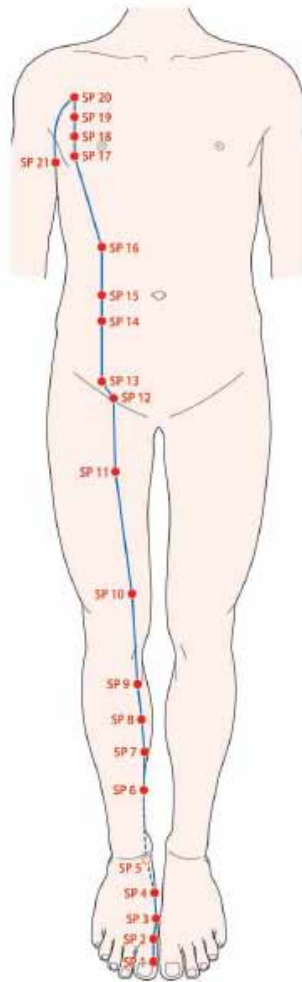
Direction: center

Color: yellow

Emotion: n/a

Sound: n/a

Spleen Channel



ID10104_SP

Five Phase Association: Earth

Yin-Yang Association: Yin

Season: (seasonal transition)

Time of Day: 9-11am

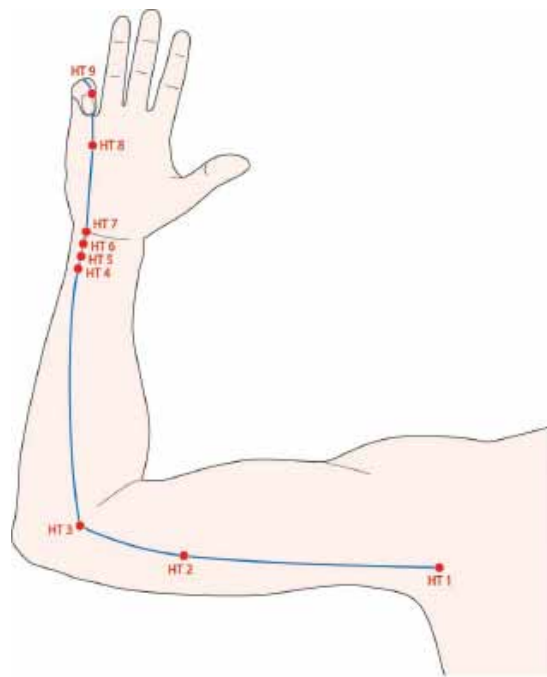
Direction: center

Color: yellow

Emotion: worry, over-thinking

Sound: Hu (呼)

Heart Channel



ID10105_HT

Five Phase Association: Fire

Yin-Yang Association: Yin

Season: summer

Time of Day: 11am – 1pm

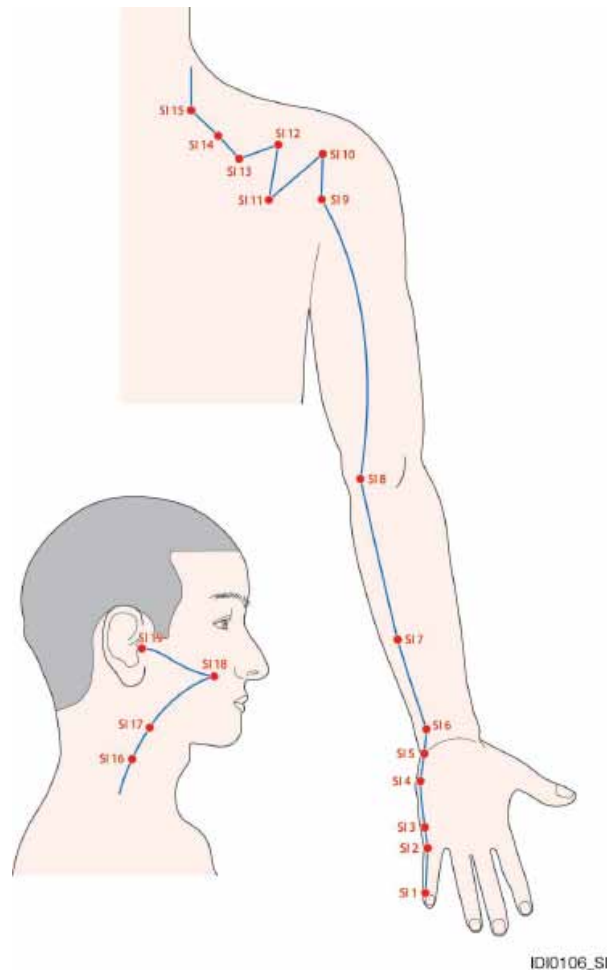
Direction: south

Color: red

Emotion: joy, agitation (煩), hatred (恨)

Sound: Ke (呵)

Small Intestine



Five Phase Association: Fire

Yin-Yang Association: Yang

Season: summer

Time of Day: 1-3pm

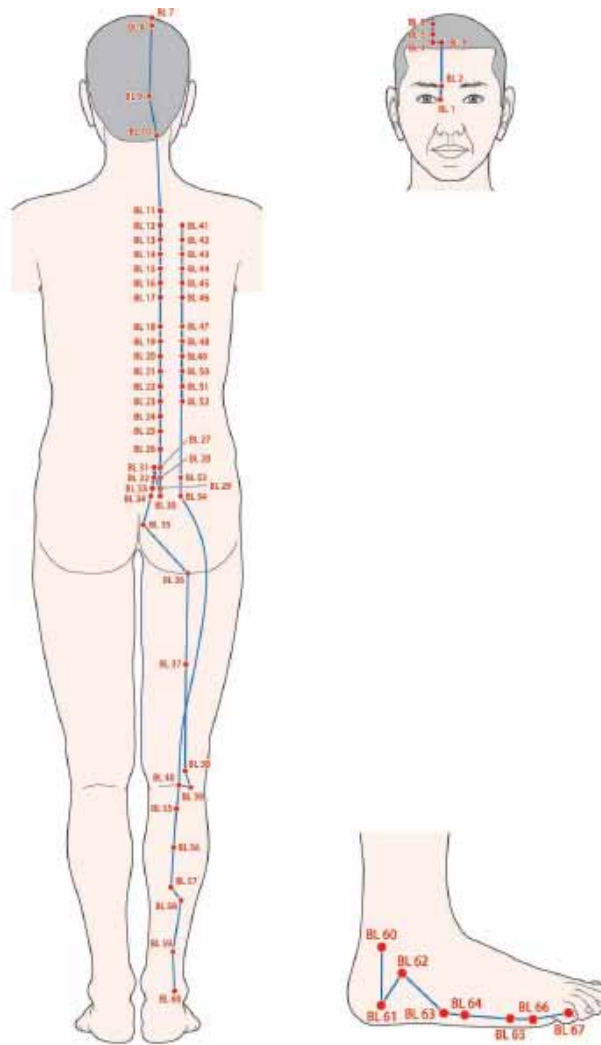
Direction: south

Color: red

Emotion: n/a

Sound: n/a

Bladder



ID10107_BL

Five Phase Association: Water

Yin-Yang Association: Yang

Season: winter

Time of Day: 3-5pm

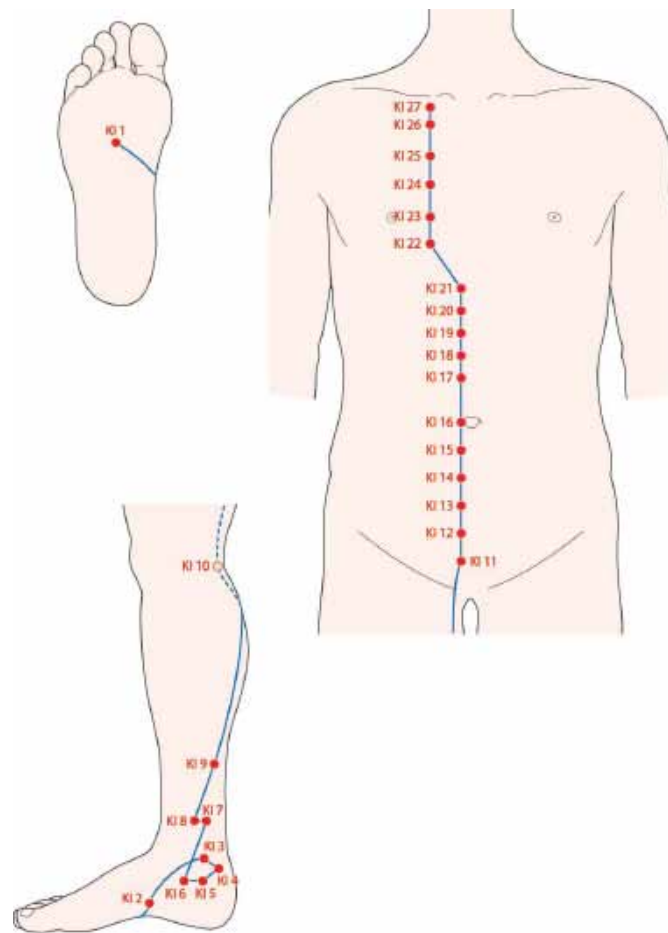
Direction: north

Color: black (alternately deep navy blue)

Emotion: n/a

Sound: n/a

Kidney



ID10108_KI

Five Phase Association: Water

Yin-Yang Association: Yin

Season: winter

Time of Day: 5-7pm

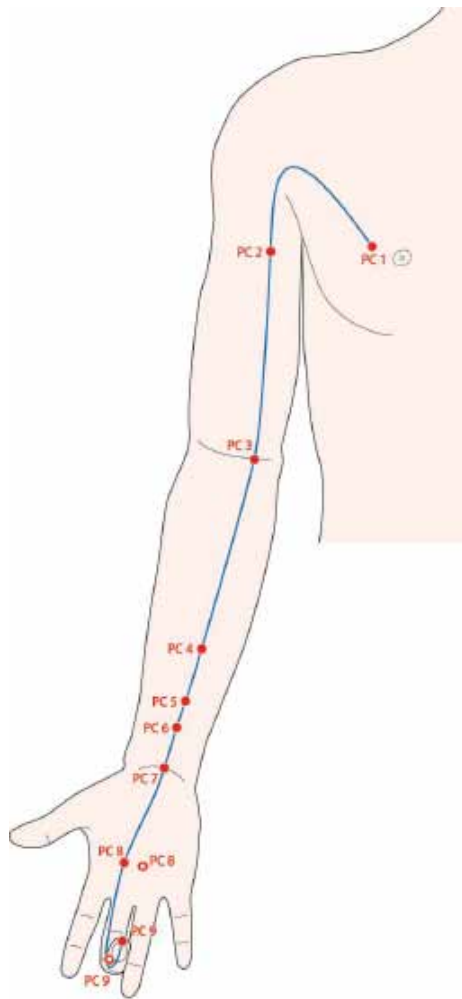
Direction: north

Color: black (alternately deep navy blue)

Emotion: fear

Sound: chui (吹)

Pericardium



ID10109_PC

Five Phase Association: Fire

Yin-Yang Association: Yin

Season: summer

Time of Day: 7-9pm

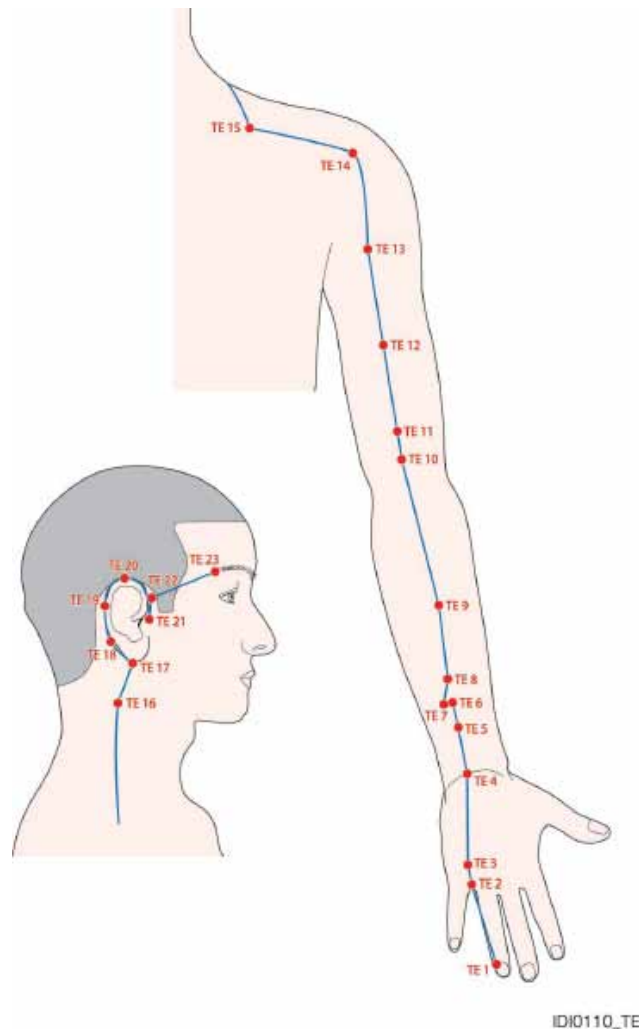
Direction: south

Color: red

Emotion: joy, agitation (煩), hatred (恨)

Sound: Ke (呵)

San Jiao (Triple Heater)



Five Phase Association: Fire

Yin-Yang Association: Yang

Season: summer

Time of Day: 9-11pm

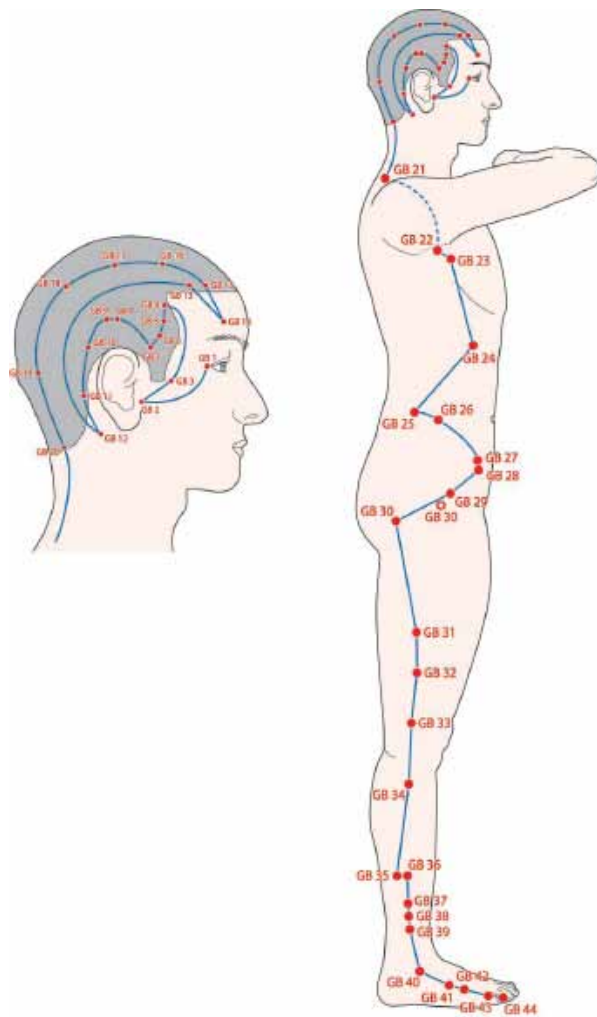
Direction: south

Color: red

Emotion: n/a

Sound: Xi (嘻)

Gallbladder



ID10111_GB

Five Phase Association: Wood

Yin-Yang Association: Yang

Season: spring

Time of Day: 11pm – 1am

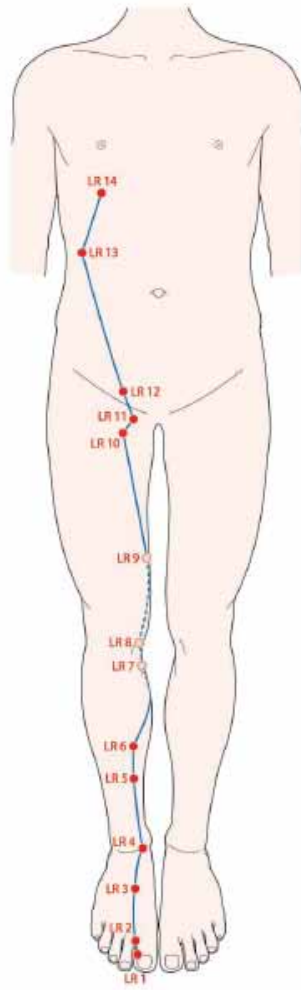
Direction: east

Color: green

Emotion: fear, indecisiveness

Sound: n/a

Liver



ID10112_LR

Five Phase Association: Wood

Yin-Yang Association: Yin

Season: spring

Time of Day: 1-3am

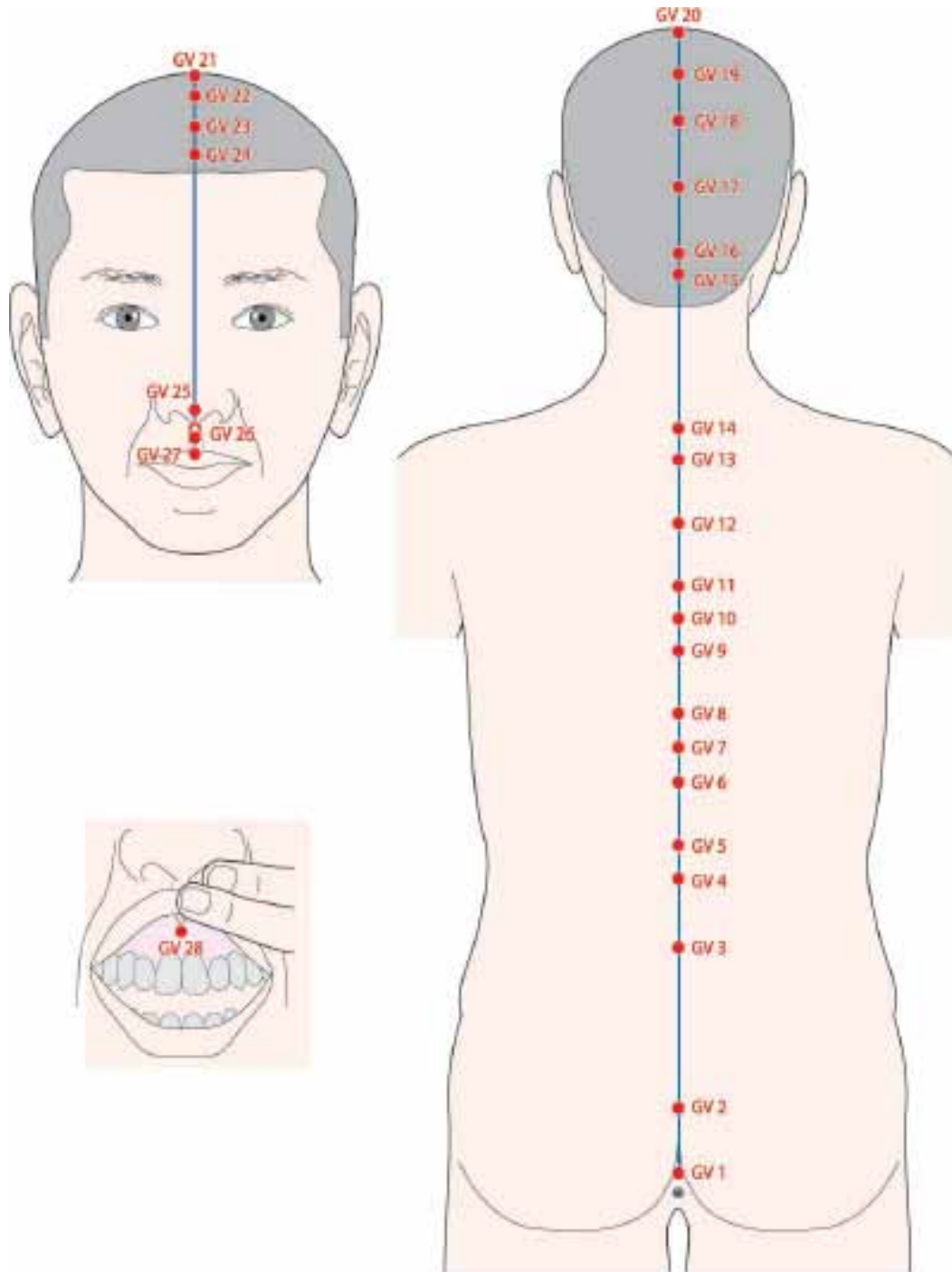
Direction: east

Color: green

Emotion: anger

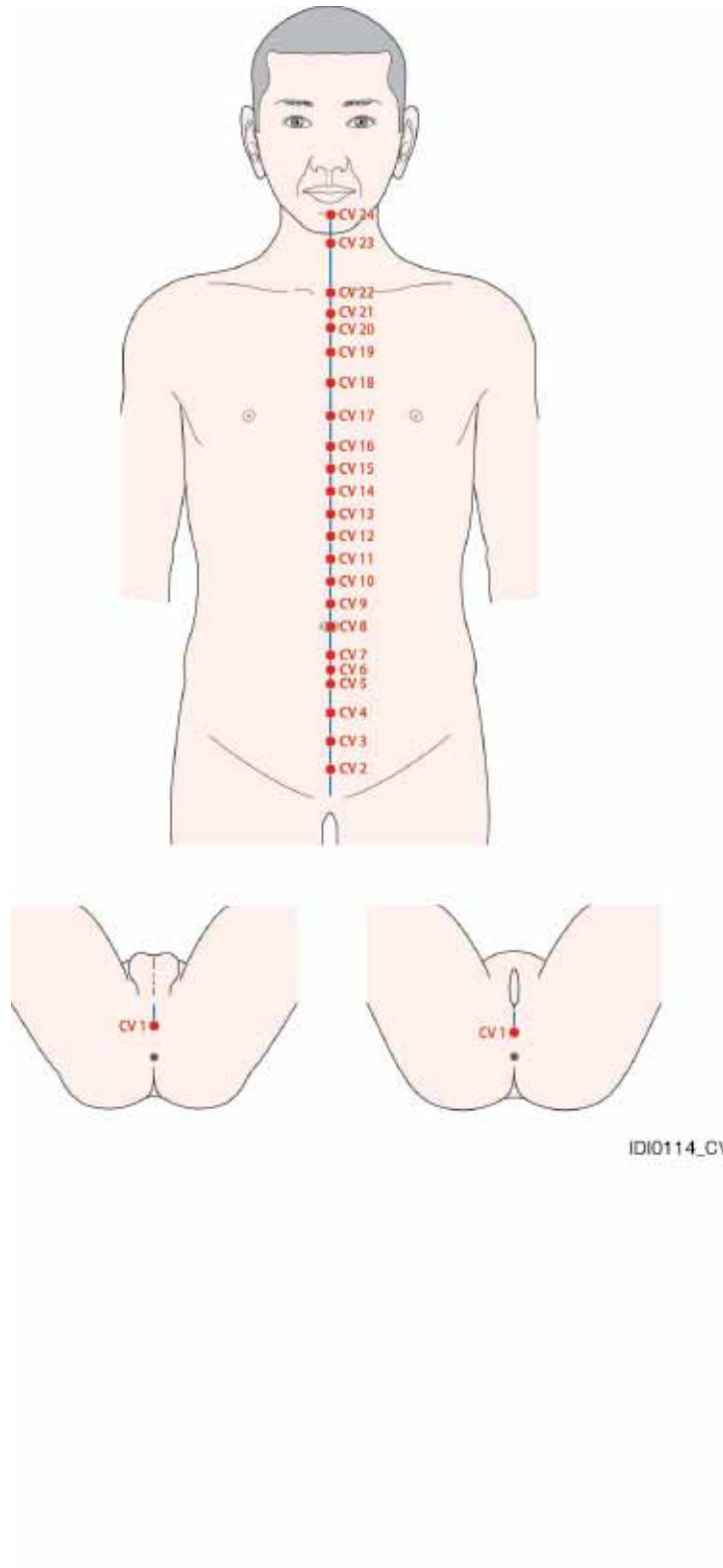
Sound: Xu (嘘)

Governing Vessel (Du Mai 督脈)



IDI0113_GV

Conception Vessel (Ren Mai 任脈)



Belt Vessel (Dai Mai 帶脈)



THE SONG OF PREVENTING DISEASES IN THE FOUR SEASONS

From the *Zun Sheng Ba Jian*, by Gao Lian (Ming Dynasty)

Commentary by Dr. Henry McCann

春噓明目木扶肝 夏至呵心火自閑
秋呬定收金肺潤 腎吹惟要坎中安
三焦嘻卻除煩熱 四季長呼脾化餐
切忌出聲聞口耳 其功尤勝保神丹

*Chūn xū míng mù mù fú gān, xià zhì kē xīn huǒ zì xián
Qiū sī dìng shōu jīn fèi rùn, shèn chuī wéi yào kǎn zhōng ān
Sān jiāo xī què chú fán rè, sì jì cháng hū pí huà cān
Qiè jì chū shēng wén kǒu ěr, qí gōng yóu shèng bǎo shén dān*

In spring, Xu brightens the eyes and supports Liver-Wood,
When summer is reached Ke lets one avoid Heart Fire,
In autumn, Si secures Metal's harvest to moisten Lung,
Kidney's Chui verily brings peace to the center of Kan,
For the San Jiao having said Xi eliminates heat vexation,
And in all seasons constantly utter Hu and the Spleen can transform food.
Do not utter sound that the ears can hear,
And this Gong will be outstanding to guard the Spirit Medicine.

Commentary:

The Six Sounds for Nourishing Life (六字決養生功) is a traditional exercise with a very long history of use in China. The exercise is based on uttering six different sounds, each of which is associated with one of the Five Viscera, with an additional sound for the San Jiao. The exercise of exhaling these sounds is said to have a regulatory effect on their corresponding viscera and channel. The first real version of the Six Sounds comes from Sun Si Miao's *Qian Jin Yao Fang* Ch.27, the Longevity Methods of Master Daolin (道林), and the same method appears in the Dao Zang in DZ1427 *Taiqing Daolin Shesheng Lun* (Great Clarity Discourse on Protecting Life by Master Daolin). However, these early versions of the Six Sounds did not yet include the San Jiao. The first model that includes San Jiao is also found

in the Dao Zang, in DZ818 *Taiqing Daoyin Yangsheng Jing* (Great Clarity Scripture of Daoyin and Nourishing Life).

The poem translated here is recorded in the *Zun Sheng Ba Jian* (Eight Treatises on Following the Principles of Life), a text on the Nourishing Life tradition written by Gao Lian in the Ming Dynasty. Here Gao associates the Six Sounds exercise with the movement of the seasons based on Five Phase associations.

“In spring, Xu brightens the eyes and supports Liver-Wood”

Spring is the season of the Wood Phase and thus associated with the Liver and other correlates of Wood – eyes, sinews, etc... Practicing exercises in conjunction with exhaling the “Xu” sound regulates Liver and the correlates of Liver, hence the line says “brightens the eyes.” We can also use this sound for other problems of Liver, for example Yang ascending leading to headaches. Here the poem only gives us the sound, but various lineages of practice have added in other postures, either static or moving, to accentuate the sound’s ability to effectively regulate Liver.

“When summer is reached Ke lets one avoid Heart-Fire”

The character for the Heart sound is usually pronounced “He,” but an alternate reading of the character is “Ke.” In the lineage of the Six Sounds I practice, a lineage that comes through Hu Yaozhen, we use the sound “Ke” so that is how I have rendered the character into Pinyin Romanization for this translation. The Heart sound is said to regulate and settle the Heart, and can be used as well to clear Heart fire. Thus it can treat conditions such as insomnia, agitation, anxiety, et. al.

“In autumn, Si secures Metal’s harvest to moisten Lung”

In the Huang Di Nei Jing the movement of the four seasons is described repeatedly as the movement of birth, growth, harvest and storage. Thus the phrase “Spring brings birth, summer grows, autumn harvest and winter stores” (春生夏長秋收冬藏) is seen in the Ling Shu. Here the sound of the Lung, “Si,” secures the Metal phase’s ability to move Qi into harvest, the movement of autumn. When the body can

appropriately store, and the Lungs can appropriately store, then the Lungs are able to hold onto moisture to counteract the drying nature of autumn.

“Kidney’s Chui verily will bring peace to the center of Kan”

“Chui” is the sound of the Kidney, and while not explicitly mentioned in this line it is thus the sound for winter. The Kidney, as the water viscera, is associated with the water trigram – Kan 坎. This trigram is composed of 2 yin/broken lines on the outside with one yang/solid line on the inside. The image of Kan then is the yin of water, which holds and stores the true yang of the body; this is the yang of the Ming Men, that which is also called the Dragon in the Water. One of the key practices in Neigong is the movement of Qi down to be stored and secured in the Dan Tian, the Elixir Field. This is the same as bringing the upright yang down to be secured in the Kidney root. Doing so consolidates both Qi and Essence, and the importance of this cannot be understated. Hence the text here states that the Kidney sound brings peace to the center of Kan – thus it sinks Qi to the Dan Tian or Lower Jiao to secure the Essence. Sinking and securing the Qi is also the very image of Kidney and the Water phase, which, as mentioned in the previous line, has the function of storage.



KAN TRIGRAM 坎卦

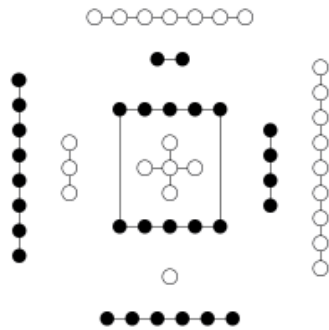
“For the San Jiao having said Xi eliminates heat vexation”

The San Jiao is closely related, from the time of the Nanjing onwards, with the dissemination of Source Qi and Yang of the Kidney throughout the body. Thus, it is linked as well with the Ming Men Fire. Because of this, the San Jiao is associated with Fire. When normally functioning the San Jiao allows for the dissemination of Qi

through the body. Also, when functioning properly, the San Jiao assists the Kidney in the consolidation of Qi in the Dan Tian. Thus, one of the pathologies of San Jiao is repletion heat that frequently rises up into the head; this can arise from damage due to the Seven Affects, or can arise from external contraction. Repletion heat manifests as vexation or agitation, hence the statement above. However, it does not only lead to vexation, but can also cause tinnitus, ear inflammation, red or swollen throat, headache, or even bleeding patterns. When we read these lines the specific complaints are just single examples of patterns that arise from the related viscera (or in this case bowel). In actual practice the single complaint is a stand in for the multitude of problems that can be associated with the diseased organ. This needs to be kept in mind.

“And in all seasons constantly utter Hu and the Spleen can transform food”

Spleen-Earth is the latter heaven source of Qi and Blood, and movement and transformation are the functions of the Spleen. There are two ways of looking at the season for Spleen. One is that the Spleen, as the Earth viscera, is associated with late summer. However, this way of looking at Earth is tied more to a rigid application of Five Phase theory and is not as useful in actual clinical practice. In the He River diagram Earth is represented by the number 5, which is placed in the center of the arrangement (see diagram). Earth is the movement of transformation that allows the birth, growth, harvest and storage to continuously move, and therefore it is active in all seasons. The 29th chapter of the Su Wen says that the Spleen as the Earth phase “governs the center. Throughout the four seasons it tends the four [other] viscera. In each of the seasons it is entrusted with government for 18 days [at the end of the season as the transformation/transition]. It cannot govern one season by itself.” The Spleen Earth is therefore active in all seasons, and thus this song says, “in all seasons constantly utter Hu.”



HE RIVER DIAGRAM 河圖

“Do not utter sound that the ears can hear”

This line is a reference to how we practice the Six Sounds. Most variations on how the sounds are practiced are of two types: first is that the sounds are said aloud, as if sung with the voice, and the second is that the sounds are exhaled using the proper mouth position but without engaging the vocal cords, like a whisper. This passage could perhaps be read that the latter, i.e., practicing without engaging the vocal cords, is the proper method. Yet, this is not the case. Most beginners, and for that matter intermediate and advanced practitioners, should practice emitting the sound during practice, and either singing the sound or whispering the sound is appropriate. For the most inexperienced beginner, singing is best since it will more fully engage the practitioner’s attention on the sound. The real meaning of this line though is a glimpse into the highest level of practice – leading Qi using mind-intent only. In Chinese we say 意到氣到 – mind-intent (Yi) leads and the Qi arrives. The practitioner who is at the highest ability can lead Qi using intent only, so just thinking of the sound and visualizing the organ and channel alone (as in a type of meditation) will be effective. This level takes time but practitioners can aspire to this goal. Here the passage tells us about the level to which we should aspire, knowing however that in the mean time we practice by actually making the sound.

“And this Gong will be outstanding to guard the Spirit Medicine.”

The word Gong 功 is the same as in Neigong 內功, Qigong 氣功, or Gongfu 功夫 (Kung Fu), and it means some sort of work or achievement that takes time to accomplish. In other words, this line tells us we have to practice the technique for it to work. When I teach my Neigong/Qigong classes, often students tell me they have a hard time concentrating or hard time feeling the movement of Qi internally. They're often surprised when I tell them I have the same problem! My Shifu says that 3 years gets one a small achievement only, 6 years to a medium one, and 9 years until there is a stable result. My own level of practice is just a small fraction of my teachers' and grand-teachers'; in modern times we are just so busy that intensive practice is really difficult. So, we move slowly, and that's fine. But we need to realize it will take time, and that we have to practice with patience and persistence.

The second part of this line mentions the Spirit Medicine. The word Spirit 神 means something important, something precious, something transcendent. In the medical classics Spirit can mean consciousness, or can even mean the finest type of upright or source Qi. The word Medicine is what I have used to translate Dan 丹. Dan means pellet, as a type of medicine that is very special because it is composed of many ingredients and produced over a long period of time, often following a ritual procedure. Some of the best modern examples of Dan are the Precious Pills of the Tibetan medical tradition. Dan also means cinnabar, but this cinnabar is not the actual mineral cinnabar but rather the cinnabar of Daoist Internal Alchemy. Dan is also the same word as in Dan Tian 丹田, the Cinnabar Field, the areas of meditative concentration in Neigong and Alchemy. Together, Shen Dan, Spirit Medicine, is the same as what the alchemists call the Great Medicine, Da Yao 大藥. Contemplative practices are medicine for both the physical body as well as the Spirit. The practice of Spiritual cultivation in the Daoist sense starts with healing and strengthening the physical body, then cultivating longevity, and lastly cultivating spiritual transcendence. Neigong or Neidan practices are the highest form of medicine, and exercises as simple as the Six Sounds are a foundation in what can become the Spirit Medicine.

Patting (Pai Da) Gong 拍打功

by, Wang Fengming 王鳳鳴

The Methods of Making Patting Sack:

1. Make a sack with cloth 40-50 cm in length, and 4-5cm in diameter.
2. Stuffing in the patting sack includes rice and 14 kinds of herbal medicines.
3. Stuffing in the pad should be changed every two years to keep effect.
4. The medicine contents of the Pai Da bag are a secret Daoist formula; there are three formulas for different levels of practice (formulas for sinews, bones, and marrow)

Precautions:

1. All those of normal health can practice Patting Qigong without reservation.
2. Participant who suffer from diseases should be diagnosed by a physician and necessary herbs may be added in line with the condition.
3. The part of the body or the acupuncture point, whether to be patted with mild strength or heavy strength or special technique, should follow the instructor's advice.
4. Parts of the body with external trauma or severe muscular injury or fracture should not be patted until it is healed.
5. The patting pad should be used individually (do not share sacks with others, especially if one has any sort of dermatological disorder, infection, etc...)

Actions:

1. The exercise of patting qigong can alleviate muscular tension, activate blood circulation and remove blood stasis, improve the local flow of qi and blood, remove the obstruction from the channels and collaterals, promote qi and blood to reach the hand and foot, smooth the flow of qi in the twelve channels to relieve cold sensation in the hand and foot, and regulate interior metabolism.
2. The exercise of patting qigong is effective for the soreness and pain, arthritis, bone spur, nerve pain and paralysis in the chest, abdomen, back, lower back, arm and leg.
3. The exercise of patting qigong can strengthen the endurance of the bone and intensity of ligament, the stability of joints, build up the bone and ligament, resilience of muscle, and ability of the body to withstand being struck.

The 6 Methods of Practicing Patting Qigong:

1. Patting on sick or painful areas.
2. Patting on areas of importance to Qigong / Neigong practice.
3. Patting on the channel system.
4. Patting on muscular system.
5. Patting on skeletal system (bones).
6. Patting on nervous system.

導炁針 THE GUIDING QI NEEDLE
道家太極棒尺氣功 Daoist Taiji Stick and Ruler Qigong

Part I – Important Points of Refining the Pellet (*Lian Dan Yao Jue* 煉丹要訣)

1. Starting Posture of Wu Ji (*Wu Ji Qi Shi* 無極起式)
2. Descending Qi, Washing Zang Gong (*Jiang Qi Xi Zang Gong* 降氣洗臟功)

Part II – Gathering Qi Gong (*Cai Qi Gong* 採氣功)

1. Gathering Nature Qi (*Cai Zi Ran Qi* 採自然氣)
2. Gathering Heavenly Yang Qi (*Cai Tian Yang Qi* 採天陽氣)
3. Gathering Earthly Yin Qi (*Cai Di Yin Qi* 採地陰氣)

Part III – Dantian Inner Movement Gong (*Dan Tian Nei Gong* 丹田內動)

1. Rotating to the Left and Right (*Zuo You Yun Zhuan* 左右運轉)
2. Rotating to the Front and Back (*Qian Hou Yun Zhuan* 前後運轉)
3. Rotating Horizontally (*Ping Xing Yun Zhuan* 平行運轉)

Part IV – Standing Stump Gong (*Zhan Chun Gong* 站樁功)

1. Lower Dantian (*Xia Dan Tian* 下丹田)
2. Middle Dantian (*Zhong Dan Tian* 中丹田)
3. Upper Dantian (*Shan Dan Tian* 上丹田)

Part V – Strengthening the Body Gong (*Jian Shen Gong* 健身功)

1. Ancient Tree with Twisted Root – Upper Coil (*Gu Shu Pan Gen* 古樹盤根 – 上盤)
2. Ancient Tree with Twisted Root – Lower Coil (*Gu Shu Pan Gen* 古樹盤根 – 下盤)
3. Feet Stepping on Kun Lun (*Jiao Ta Kun Lun* 腳踏崑崙)
4. Rhinoceros Gazing at the Moon (*Xi Niu Wang Yue* 犀牛望月)

Part VI – Small Heavenly Circuit Gong (*Xiao Zhou Tian Gong* 小周天功)

1. Drawing the Pupil in the Dragon's Eye (*Hua Long Dian Jing* 畫龍點睛)
2. Heavenly Circuit Dynamic Gong (*Zhou Tian Xing Gong* 周天行功)

Part VII – Qi Rushing Through Three Passes (*Qi Chuang San Guan* 氣闖三關)

1. Weilü Pass (*Wei Lu Guan* 尾閭關)
2. Jiaji Pass (*Jia Ji Guan* 夾脊關)
3. Yuzhen Pass (*Yu Zhen Guan* 玉枕關)

Part VIII – Dai Mai Gong (*Dai Mai Gong* 帶脈功)

1. Millstone Gong (*Mo Pan Gong* 磨盤功)
2. Jade Belt Surrounding the Waist (*Yu Dai Chan Yao* 玉帶纏腰)

Part IX – Six Coordination Moving Gong (*Liu He Xing Gong* 六合行功)

1. Coordination in the Same Direction (*Shun Shi Xiang He* 順式相合)
2. Coordination in a Cross (*Jiao Cha Xiang He* 交叉相合)

Part X – Large Heavenly Circuit Gong (*Da Zhou Tian Gong* 大周天功)

1. Turning a Windlass (*Yao Lu Lu* 搖輓轆)
2. Genuine Man Pointing Out the Way (*Zhen Ren Zhi Lu* 真人指路)

Part XI – Silk Reeling Gong (*Chan Si Gong* 纏絲功)

1. Black Dragon Striking a Pillar - Part 1 (*Wu Long Zhuang Zhu* 烏龍撞柱 — 上盤)
2. Black Dragon Striking a Pillar - Part 2 (*Wu Long Zhuang Zhu* 烏龍撞柱 — 下盤)
3. White Ape Offering Fruit (*Bai Yuan Xian Guo* 白猿獻果)

Part XII – Center Qi Gong (*Zhong Qi Gong* 中氣功)

1. Daoist Child Striking the Bell (*Dao Tong Zhuang Zhong* 道童撞鐘)
2. Recovering Youthful Vigor (*Fan Lao Huan Tong* 返老還童)

Part XIII – Hunyuan Qi Gong (*Hun Yuan Qi Gong* 混元氣功)

1. Shaking Heaven's Pillar (*Han Tian Zhu* 撼天柱)
2. Gathering Qi Accomplishing the Pellet (*Ju Qi Cheng Dan* 聚氣成丹)

Part XIV – Harvesting Gong (*Shou Gong* 收功)

1. Single Entry Gathering Gong (*Dan Shi Shou Gong* 單式收功)
2. Five Qi Return to the Origin (*Wu Qi Gui Yuan* 五氣歸元)

Formal Neigong/Qigong Lineage

Chen Xi Yi (d. 989)



Zhong Fang



Huo Cheng Guang (19th c.; *many generations later*)



Peng Ti Jun (19th c.)



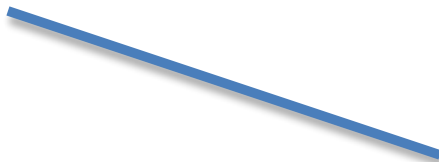
Hu Yao Zhen (1897-1973)



Feng Zhi Qiang (1928-2012)



Wang Feng Ming (b.1952)



Henry McCann

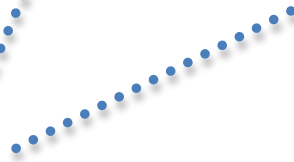
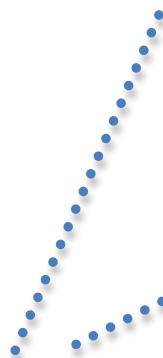
Bai Yun (White Cloud Hermit)



Mantak Chia (Xie Ming De)



Michael Winn



Private disciple (formal lineage transmission)



Regular student



Class Schedules

Regular classes are held at the:

*Wushu Kung Fu Fitness Center
15A Melanie Lane, No.5
East Hanover, NJ 07936*

Mondays 7:30-8:30pm Qigong

Thursdays 8:30-9:30am Qigong

Sundays 8:00-9:00am Qigong

Sundays 9:00am-10:00am Chen Style Hunyuan Taiji