

胎息論



Qigong Meditation

Embryonic Breathing

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming

Don't be afraid!

不用害怕！

Dare to challenge.....

敢於挑戰.....

Dare to accept.....

敢於接受.....

Dare to dream.....

敢於夢想.....

*- Dare to emerge from the traditional matrix -
- be free from spiritual bondage -*

"The philosopher should be a man willing to listen to every suggestion, but determined to judge for himself. He should not be biased by appearances, have no favorite hypothesis, be of no school, and in doctrine have no master. He should not be a respecter of persons, but of things. Truth should be his primary object. If to these qualities be added industry, he may indeed hope to walk within the veil of the temple of Nature."

- Michael Faraday (1791-1867)

Qigong
Meditation
Embryonic Breathing

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming

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Romanization of Chinese Words

This book uses the Pinyin romanization system of Chinese to English. Pinyin is standard in the People's Republic of China, and in several world organizations, including the United Nations. Pinyin, which was introduced in China in the 1950's, replaces the Wade-Giles and Yale systems. In some cases, the more popular spelling of a word may be used for clarity.

Some common conversions:

Pinyin	Also Spelled As	Pronunciation
Qi	Chi	chē
Qigong	Chi Kung	chē kǔng
Qin Na	Chin Na	chǐn nǎ
Jin	Jing	jǐn
Gongfu	Kung Fu	gǒng foo
Taijiquan	Tai Chi Chuan	tī jē chüén

For more information, please refer to *The People's Republic of China: Administrative Atlas, The Reform of the Chinese Written Language*, or a contemporary manual of style.

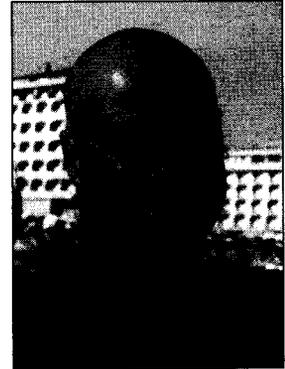
The author and publisher have taken the liberty of not italicizing words of foreign origin in this text. This decision was made to make the text easier to read. Please see the comprehensive glossary for definitions of Chinese words.

Dedication

To my friend whom I can't forget, Mr. Wolfgang Pastore

Dear Wolfgang:

Less than three months ago we practiced Chen Style Taijiquan together in Boston. We went to Cape Cod with others and had a great time. I remember when the other four were swimming; only you, Siu Hung, and I sat on the beach and talked. We had such a good time, and it reminded me that you took me everywhere in Italy for sightseeing. You told me that someday, you would take me to see the Tower of Pisa. Now, I don't think my dream will come true. Even if I have a chance to see it someday, the feeling will not be the same; simply because you will not be there.



I was so shocked and lost when Franco called me on the 18th of July and told me the bad news. Even now, I still believe that I am dreaming and still wait to wake up. You were not just a student, but a good friend. It has not been easy to find people like you in my lifetime. However, you have passed and gone on. I promised you that I would complete the book: *Small Circulation* in a couple of years. Now, I am so disappointed that you will not be able to see it. In fact, my motivation was to write a good book about Small Circulation and Grand Circulation to surprise and please you. Since I promised you, I have started to compile, research the documents, study them, ponder them, and blend them with my thirty years of experience. I was just ready to put down what I had planned for this book, and was waiting to tell you when I came to Venice this September. Now, I am so sad. I wish time could return to before the 18th of this month. However, days have passed and my sorrow has grown deeper.

I looked at some of the pictures we took. I remember you took Master Liang and me to Florence. I remember you walked with me in Venice and explained its history. I remember your expression when you saw me rowing the gondola and could not wait to take a picture of me. I also remember your depression when you could not learn the Chen Style Taijiquan as fast as the others. I promised you that we would go over it together when I came to Venice this September. Now when I practice Chen Style Taijiquan, I am unable to continue and finish. It reminds me of you. Only now, I start to realize how much your friendship has influenced me.

Though we were born in the same year, you always treated me as a teacher and more than a friend. We were so close that we could share philosophies and feelings without hesitation. I don't know how I could not miss you whenever I visit Venice again. It seems that you will still be there waiting for me, waiting to tell me things at which we can laugh together.

One thing that both of us agreed upon, was that there was another dimension coexisting with ours, and that we will enter that dimension when we die. I hope you will be waiting for me there to tell me we were right. The end of life is not an end but the beginning of another life. That is the nature of this universe, isn't it?

I will complete the book which I promised. Your death has made me understand that I should value the rest of my life more, and try my best to share what I know with others. Knowledge is an accumulation of many life times from countless ages. We should not let this knowledge die with us. If we let this happen, then we really die; otherwise, we can continue to live forever.

Whenever I am discouraged, I will remember you. Whenever I am sad, I will recall your smile and laughter. Whenever I am calm and spiritual, I will try to communicate with you. I hope you will try the same on the other side until we meet again. Good bye dear friend.

Most sincerely yours,

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming
July 24, 1995

About the Author

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, Ph.D. 楊俊敏博士

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming was born on August 11th, 1946, in Xinzhu Xian (新竹縣), Taiwan (台灣), Republic of China (中華民國). He started his *Wushu* (武術) (*Gongfu* or *Kung Fu*, 功夫) training at the age of fifteen under the *Shaolin* White Crane (*Bai He*, 少林白鶴) Master Cheng, Gin-Gsao (曾金灶) (1911-1976). Master Cheng originally learned *Taizuquan* (太祖拳) from his grandfather when he was a child. When Master Cheng was fifteen years old, he started learning White Crane from Master Jin, Shao-Feng (金紹峰), and followed him for twenty-three years until Master Jin's death.



In thirteen years of study (1961-1974) under Master Cheng, Dr. Yang became an expert in the White Crane Style of Chinese martial arts, which includes bare hands, various weapons such as saber, staff, spear, trident, two short rods, and many others. With the same master he also studied White Crane *Qigong* (氣功), *Qin Na* (or *Chin Na*, 擒拿), *Tui Na* (推拿) and *Dian Xue* massages (點穴按摩), and herbal treatment.

At the age of sixteen, Dr. Yang began the study of *Yang Style Taijiquan* (楊氏太極拳) under Master Gao, Tao (高濤). After learning from Master Gao, he continued his study and research of *Taijiquan* with several masters and senior practitioners such as Master Li, Mao-Ching (李茂清) and Mr. Wilson Chen (陳威伸) in *Taipei* (台北). Master Li learned his *Taijiquan* from the well-known Master Han, Ching-Tang (韓慶堂). Mr. Chen learned his *Taijiquan* from Master Zhang, Xiang-San (張祥三). Dr. Yang has mastered the *Taiji* barehand sequence, pushing hands, the two-man fighting sequence, *Taiji* sword, *Taiji* saber, and *Taiji Qigong*.

When Dr. Yang was eighteen years old he entered Tamkang College (淡江學院) in Taipei Xian (台北縣) to study Physics. In college he began the study of traditional *Shaolin* Long Fist (*Changquan* or *Chang Chuan*, 少林長拳) with Master Li, Mao-Ching at the Tamkang College Guoshu Club (淡江國術社) (1964-1968), and eventually became an assistant instructor under Master Li. In 1971 he completed his M.S. degree in Physics at the National Taiwan University (台灣大學), and then served in the Chinese Air Force from 1971 to 1972. In the service, Dr. Yang taught Physics at the Junior Academy of the Chinese Air Force (空軍幼校) while also teaching *Wushu*. After being honorably discharged in 1972, he returned to Tamkang College to teach Physics and resumed study under Master Li, Mao-Ching. From Master Li, Dr. Yang learned Northern Style *Wushu*, which includes both barehand (especially kicking) techniques and numerous weapons.

In 1974, Dr. Yang came to the United States to study Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University. At the request of a few students, he began teaching *Gongfu*, which resulted in the foundation of the Purdue University Chinese Kung Fu Research Club in the spring of 1975. While at Purdue, he also taught college-credited courses in *Taijiquan*. In May of 1978 he was awarded a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering by Purdue.

In 1980, Dr. Yang moved to Houston to work for Texas Instruments. While in Houston he founded Yang's Shaolin Kung Fu Academy. This was taken over by his disciple Mr. Jeffery Bolt, when Dr. Yang moved to Boston in 1982 and founded Yang's Martial Arts Academy (YMAA).

In January of 1984 he gave up his engineering career to devote more time to research, writing, and teaching. In March of 1986 he purchased property in the Jamaica Plain area of Boston to be used as the headquarters of the new organization, Yang's Martial Arts Association (YMAA). The organization has continued to expand, and, as of July 1st 1989, YMAA became just one division of Yang's Oriental Arts Association, Inc. (YOAA, Inc.)

In summary, Dr. Yang has been involved in Chinese *Wushu* since 1961. During this time, he has spent thirteen years learning *Shaolin White Crane (Bai He)*, *Shaolin Long Fist (Changquan)*, and *Taijiquan*. He has more than thirty-four years of instructional experience: seven years in Taiwan, five years at Purdue University, two years in Houston, Texas, and twenty years in Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Yang has also offered seminars around the world, to share his knowledge of Chinese martial arts and *Qigong*. The countries he has visited include Argentina, Austria, Barbados, Botswana, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Chile, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

Since 1986, YMAA has become an international organization, which currently includes 54 schools located in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Holland, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, United Kingdom, Venezuela, and the United States. Many of Dr. Yang's books and videotapes have been translated into languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Russian, Hungarian, and Farsi.

Dr. Yang has published thirty volumes on the martial arts and *Qigong*:

1. *Shaolin Chin Na*; Unique Publications, Inc., 1980.
2. *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu*; Unique Publications, Inc., 1981.
3. *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan*; Unique Publications, Inc., 1981.
4. *Introduction to Ancient Chinese Weapons*; Unique Publications, Inc., 1985.

5. *Qigong for Health and Martial Arts*; YMAA Publication Center, 1985.
6. *Northern Shaolin Sword*; YMAA Publication Center, 1985.
7. *Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*; YMAA Publication Center, 1986.
8. *Tai Chi Chuan Martial Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1986.
9. *Analysis of Shaolin Chin Na*; YMAA Publication Center, 1987.
10. *Eight Simple Qigong Exercises for Health*; YMAA Publication Center, 1988.
11. *The Root of Chinese Qigong—The Secrets of Qigong Training*; YMAA Publication Center, 1989.
12. *Qigong—The Secret of Youth*; YMAA Publication Center, 1989.
13. *Xingyiquan—Theory, Applications, Fighting Tactics and Spirit*; YMAA Publication Center, 1990.
14. *The Essence of Taiji Qigong—Health and Martial Arts*; YMAA Publication Center, 1990.
15. *Qigong for Arthritis*; YMAA Publication Center, 1991.
16. *Chinese Qigong Massage—General Massage*; YMAA Publication Center, 1992.
17. *How to Defend Yourself*; YMAA Publication Center, 1992.
18. *Baguazhang—Emei Baguazhang*; YMAA Publication Center, 1994.
19. *Comprehensive Applications of Shaolin Chin Na—The Practical Defense of Chinese Seizing Arts*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
20. *Taiji Chin Na—The Seizing Art of Taijiquan*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
21. *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*; YMAA Publication Center, 1996.
22. *Back Pain—Chinese Qigong for Healing and Prevention*; YMAA Publication Center, 1997.
23. *Ancient Chinese Weapons*; YMAA Publication Center, 1999.
24. *Taijiquan—Classical Yang Style*; YMAA Publication Center, 1999.
25. *Tai Chi Secrets of Ancient Masters*; YMAA Publication Center, 1999.
26. *Taiji Sword—Classical Yang Style*; YMAA Publication Center, 1999.
27. *Tai Chi Secrets of Wu and Li Styles*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
28. *Tai Chi Secrets of Yang Style*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
29. *Tai Chi Secrets of Wu Style*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
30. *Taijiquan Theory of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming*; YMAA Publication Center, 2003.

Dr. Yang has also published the following videotapes:

1. *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan and Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1984.
2. *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu—Lien Bu Chuan and Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1985.
3. *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu—Gung Li Chuan and Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1986.
4. *Shaolin Chin Na*; YMAA Publication Center, 1987.
5. *Wai Dan Chi Kung, Vol. 1 — The Eight Pieces of Brocade*; YMAA Publication Center, 1987.
6. *The Essence of Tai Chi Chi Kung*; YMAA Publication Center, 1990.
7. *Qigong for Arthritis*; YMAA Publication Center, 1991.
8. *Qigong Massage—Self Massage*; YMAA Publication Center, 1992.
9. *Qigong Massage—With a Partner*; YMAA Publication Center, 1992.
10. *Defend Yourself 1—Unarmed Attack*; YMAA Publication Center, 1992.
11. *Defend Yourself 2—Knife Attack*; YMAA Publication Center, 1992.
12. *Comprehensive Applications of Shaolin Chin Na 1*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
13. *Comprehensive Applications of Shaolin Chin Na 2*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
14. *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu—Yi Lu Mai Fu & Er Lu Mai Fu*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
15. *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu—Shi Zi Tang*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
16. *Taiji Chin Na*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
17. *Emei Baguazhang—1; Basic Training, Qigong, Eight Palms, and Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
18. *Emei Baguazhang—2; Swimming Body Baguazhang and Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
19. *Emei Baguazhang—3; Bagua Deer Hook Sword and Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
20. *Xingyiquan—12 Animal Patterns and Their Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
21. *24 and 48 Simplified Taijiquan*; YMAA Publication Center, 1995.
22. *White Crane Hard Qigong*; YMAA Publication Center, 1997.

23. *White Crane Soft Qigong*; YMAA Publication Center, 1997.
24. *Xiao Hu Yan—Intermediate Level Long Fist Sequence*; YMAA Publication Center, 1997.
25. *Back Pain—Chinese Qigong for Healing and Prevention*; YMAA Publication Center, 1997.
26. *Scientific Foundation of Chinese Qigong*; YMAA Publication Center, 1997.
27. *Taijiquan—Classical Yang Style*; YMAA Publication Center, 1999.
28. *Taiji Sword—Classical Yang Style*; YMAA Publication Center, 1999.
29. *Chin Na in Depth—1*; YMAA Publication Center, 2000.
30. *Chin Na in Depth—2*; YMAA Publication Center, 2000.
31. *San Cai Jian & Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 2000.
32. *Kun Wu Jian & Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 2000.
33. *Qi Men Jian & Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 2000.
34. *Chin Na in Depth—3*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
35. *Chin Na in Depth—4*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
36. *Chin Na in Depth—5*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
37. *Chin Na in Depth—6*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
38. *12 Routines Tan Tui*; YMAA Publication Center, 2001.
39. *Chin Na in Depth—7*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
40. *Chin Na in Depth—8*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
41. *Chin Na in Depth—9*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
42. *Chin Na in Depth—10*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
43. *Chin Na in Depth—11*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
44. *Chin Na in Depth—12*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
45. *White Crane Gongfu—1*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
46. *White Crane Gongfu—2*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
47. *Taijiquan Pushing Hands—1*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
48. *Taijiquan Pushing Hands—2*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
49. *Taiji Saber and Its Applications*; YMAA Publication Center, 2002.
50. *Taiji Symbol Sticking Hands—1*; YMAA Publication Center, 2003.
51. *Taiji Ball Qigong—1*; YMAA Publication Center, 2003.
52. *Taiji Ball Qigong—2*; YMAA Publication Center, 2003.

Foreword

Thomas G. Gutheil, M.D.

“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.”

- Genesis 2:7

The Bible in the above quote gives to breath the ultimate creative force, not only giving life, but creating all human life. For the ancient Greeks, “psyche” meant “breath-soul,” capturing how closely identified the breath of life is with life itself. For the ancient Romans, the term “inspired” literally meant “breathed into by a god or muse.”

The essential role of proper breathing is recognized in vocal and instrumental music, rhetoric, public speaking, athletics, meditation, yoga and all the martial arts. This central subject receives clarification in depth by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, one of the most lauded and successful translators and interpreters of ancient Chinese documents: lost works, ancient writings, mistranslated or never-translated archives and forgotten teachings that are as relevant and true today as in the remote past, when they were set down, often in secret. Bringing light to such dark corners has been a long-standing goal, even an obsession, of Dr. Yang, a master and master teacher of martial arts with schools all over the world. His bibliography records a number of previous presentations of ancient Chinese classics now made available in English to the general reader. The present volume joins this distinguished list.



The effort to translate these arcane documents from the ancient Chinese faces formidable obstacles, each Chinese character—nay, each sound—can have multiple meanings and nuances, many totally dependent on context and many of those contexts lost. Further complicating the task are the often metaphoric and poetic imagery used instead of literal meanings and the fact that some expressions have specific meanings in Qi (energy) theory and nowhere else. Many of the writings make use of paradoxes familiar from Zen teaching: “doing without doing,” for example. It is only Dr. Yang’s intimate familiarity with Qi Gong (Qigong) theory and its extensive writing (many translated by himself) that permits his effort to succeed in bringing these old teachings to our present use.

One further point must be made. Few areas like the present topic so vividly demonstrate the separateness and compartmentalization of Western approaches to the mind-body synergy and the contrast with Eastern unity. We Westerners take our

philosophy in school, our spiritual needs in houses of worship, our physical exercise in the gymnasium and our mental or meditative needs in holistic classes. In this text, the mental, physical and spiritual aspects of a human being are combined, not separated, integrated, not divided.

Why “embryonic” breathing? As this volume describes breathing methods in relation to Qi theory aimed at longevity and health, imagery is invoked that is related to the effortless breathless breathing of the baby in the womb; but the essential idea of an embryo captures the vision of potential mental, physical and spiritual growth towards ultimate enlightenment. After a review of Qi and Qi Gong theory, Dr. Yang translates and then provides detailed and essential commentary on these writings to aid the modern reader to appreciate the valuable concepts therein. As future readers, you are invited to breathe in this rare opportunity.

(Dr. Gutheil is Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and a student at Yang’s Martial Arts Association)

Thomas G. Gutheil, M.D.
Harvard Medical School

Preface

Chinese Qigong can generally be categorized into External Elixir (Wai Dan, 外丹) and Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹) Qigong. From External Elixir Qigong practice, a student learns how to build up the Qi to a higher level in the limbs and at the surface of the body. He then allows it to flow inward to the center of the body and the internal organs to nourish them. Through this practice, Qi circulation in the body can be improved and enhanced, to achieve the goal of maintaining health.

In Internal Elixir Qigong practice, a practitioner will build up the Qi internally through correct breathing and meditation methods. When the Qi has been built up to an abundant level, this Qi will then be distributed outward to nourish the entire body and enhance its vital functions.

Experience teaches that, compared to Internal Elixir Qigong, External Elixir Qigong practice is simpler, easier and also safer. However, the benefits that can be obtained from External Elixir practice are limited to enhancing the health of the physical body. If one wishes to reach the goal of longevity and spiritual enlightenment, Internal Elixir Qigong practice is essential.

The first step in practicing Internal Elixir Qigong is called “Small Cyclic Heaven Meditation” (Xiao Zhou Tian Jing Zuo, 小周天靜坐) or “Small Circulation Meditation.” This is also commonly known as “Microcosmic Meditation” in Indian Yoga (Yujia, 瑜珈). Although many people have heard of it, not many practice this kind of meditation, due to the difficulties and dangers involved. The reasons for this are simple: 1. There are very few experienced and qualified teachers in Qigong society today who are willing to take the risk of being sued due to the dangers involved in the practice. 2. It is much harder to find a sincere and committed student in today’s life-style who will listen and last till the end of practice. The relationship between a teacher and a student is much shallower nowadays than before. This has downgraded the mutual trust between teacher and student. 3. To create a desirable environment for a profound level of meditation, such as “Small Circulation,” “Grand Circulation” (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天), and “Enlightenment Meditation” (Xian Dao Jing Zuo, 仙道靜坐), is very difficult in today’s society. So there are very few books or documents written and revealed to the general public. It is even harder to find any experienced teacher who is able to interpret the entire practice from a scientific point of view.

Through practicing Small Circulation Meditation, one can circulate the Qi (i.e. bioelectricity) smoothly in the Conception (Ren Mai, 任脈) and Governing Vessels (Du Mai, 督脈), the two major Qi vessels which regulate the Qi circulating in the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經). In addition, a practitioner will also learn how to build up the Qi and store it to an abundant level in his Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) (bio-battery). This enables the storage of a higher level of vital energy (i.e. Qi) in the body, in order to strengthen the immune

system and increase the life span. Furthermore, through practicing Small Circulation Meditation, a practitioner can find his peaceful mind and the spiritual center.

Success in Internal Elixir Qigong practice depends on whether a practitioner knows how to build up the Qi (i.e. Elixir) to a higher level and then store it inside his body. In order to store the Qi to an abundant level, a practitioner must locate the Dan Tians (丹田) (i.e. Elixir Fields), and know how to build up and store the Qi. To reach this goal, a practitioner must first know the theory and techniques of Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息). Usually, these theories and techniques were kept top secret in ancient Qigong society. It was not until the second half of the last century, that documents on Embryonic Breathing were gradually revealed to the general public. This book covers most of the available documents. These documents have been translated and commented on from my personal point of view. I sincerely believe, for those who wish to study and practice Embryonic Breathing, that this book will provide them with an important guideline and crucial key to reach this goal. In “Grand Circulation Meditation” and “Spiritual Enlightenment Meditation,” Embryonic Breathing is a vital practice for those who wish to reach their final goal of spiritual cultivation.

Originally, this book was only one part of the book entitled: “Small Circulation Meditation.” However, after five years of writing, I began to realize that it was impossible to include Embryonic Breathing with thorough and detailed discussion and analysis in that book. Translations of the available ancient documents about Embryonic Breathing, together with a scientific commentary took more than 150 pages. Therefore, I decided that Embryonic Breathing merited a book of its own. In this way, the subject of Embryonic Breathing can be treated independently. I believe that I have tried my best to convey the information with a thorough and scientific discussion of the subject.

In order to help those interested Qigong practitioners without general Qigong knowledge, the first part of this book will review and summarize important Qigong concepts. This is followed by the theoretical discussion of Embryonic Breathing.

In the second, core part of this book, the available documents are translated with commentary. However, before you read them, you need to understand a few important points. It is very difficult to translate these ancient Chinese writings. Because of cultural differences, many expressions would not make sense to the Westerner if translated literally. Often, knowledge of the historical context is necessary. Furthermore, since in Chinese every sound has several possible meanings, when anyone tried to understand a poem or write it down, he had to choose from among these meanings. For this reason, many of the poems have several variations. The same problem occurs when the poems are read. Many Chinese characters have several possible meanings, so reading involves interpretation of the text even for the Chinese. Also, the meaning of many words has changed over the course of time. When you add to

this the grammatical differences (generally no tenses, articles, singular or plural, or differentiation between parts of speech) you find that it is almost impossible to translate Chinese literally into English completely. In addition to all this, the translator must have had much the same experience and understanding, as well as similar intuitive feelings as the original author, in order to convey the same meaning.

With these difficulties in mind, I have attempted to convey as much of the original meaning of the Chinese as possible, based on my own Qigong experience and understanding. Although it is impossible to fully translate the original meaning, I feel I have managed to express the majority of the important points. The translation has been made as close to the original Chinese as possible, including such things as double negatives and, sometimes, idiosyncratic sentence structure. Words that are understood but not actually written in the Chinese text have been included in parentheses. Also, some Chinese words are followed by the English in parentheses, e.g. Shen (Spirit). To further assist the reader, I have included my personal commentary with each document.

Finally, in the third part of this book, I will summarize the methods of practice from translated documents and also from my personal practical experience. From this part, you will know how to practice correctly without too much danger.

After you practice Embryonic Breathing for a period of time, you will soon discover that it seems there is another world (i.e. spiritual world) which other regular people cannot reach. This world has not yet been understood by today's science. If you are able to step in and practice, you will become a pioneer of the study and practice of spiritual science. Compared to material science which has been well developed, spiritual science is still far behind. This is why we have encountered the biggest crises and challenges today. On one hand we have developed the material science which is able to destroy the entire world; on the other, we still don't know how to control human desires and temperament.

Compared with the Western spiritual science and understanding, in my personal opinion, the East has developed far beyond the West. The reason for this is simply because of the involvement of politics in Western religion. Glory, dignity, power, and wealth have become the major concerns in Western religious societies. Although of course, there have been examples of the same thing in Eastern religions, this has been more of an exception. For this reason, in Europe and the Americas, it was more common for those people who had natural inborn spiritual capabilities to be accused as witches and burned to death. In China, the situation was very different. Those spiritual people would usually hide themselves in the mountains for spiritual cultivation. Many of them would write their experiences down and these were passed down to us. In China, it was very common that when those spiritually talented people were found, they were said to have affinity for Buddhahood (Fo Yuan, 佛緣) or the Dao (Dao Yuan, 道緣). These people were usually sent to the monasteries for further training.

I sincerely believe that in order to promote human spiritual science to a higher level, the first priority is to translate these existing ancient documents written by those experienced spiritual practitioners. However, there are now too many documents available to society. In the last few years, I have realized that even having spent my last forty years collecting the ancient documents, studying and interpreting them, all my effort has only contributed probably less than 0.1% to the entire study. To expedite the spiritual study, we will need a well funded non profit organization to translate these documents which can thus allow the Western general public to study and practice them.

Before I finish this preface, I would like to point out an important fact. It does not matter how long a person has studied and practiced Qigong, still his knowledge, experience and understanding of Qigong will be limited and shallow, compared with the vast and profound nature of Qigong itself. Therefore, there is no single person who is able to understand all of the practices and share them with you. If you are wise, you should remain humble and search for other sources of knowledge and experience. Only if you can keep an open mind, can you accept the nature of truth.

PART I

Foundations (Gen Ji) 根基

General Concepts 一般概念

1.1 INTRODUCTION 介紹

Throughout human history, we have been wondering at the how and why of our existence. What kind of role are we playing in this universe? What is the meaning of our lives? What will happen after our death? Countless questions and confusions have always been in our mind. Therefore, since ancient times, we have continued to search for ourselves and tried to understand our inner original natural being. Externally, we have sought the ways to survive physically and satisfy ourselves through material enjoyment. In order to understand ourselves and our surrounding environment better, through our five sense organs, eyes (seeing), ears (hearing), skin (touching), tongue (tasting), and nose (smelling), we constantly collect information from around us. As this information has been compiled, analyzed, recorded, and slowly understood, we have gradually untied the knots of the questions and increase our knowledge. From this learning process, we have made our lives better, and also enabled the evolution of our spirit to advance one more tiny step.

Our human learning process about the truth of ourselves and great nature has been very long and painful. In the course of this, we have been subject to the bondage of our own emotional mind. In the course of human history, we have demonstrated that in order to satisfy our emotional desires, such as greed, power, glory, pride, selfishness, jealousy, dignity, etc. we learned how to kill each other but also how to love one another.

In the past, when we encountered difficult problems and unanswered questions, we turned to wise and long-lived humans, and hopefully from their wisdom and experience, the confusion and wonders of our lives could be answered. Therefore, philosophers and holy men were respected and worshiped. This led us to the path of religion and from these philosophers and holy men, we hoped to alleviate the inner pain and doubt in our lives. We also hoped, through the guidance of these holy men, for a better understanding of this universe and ourselves. Through their wisdom, the rules of how to live with each other peacefully and harmoniously, as well as the relationship between humans and nature, were interpreted and codified. Through their

teachings, we have understood something about nature and humanity. Our spirit has been gradually raised up to a higher level. We have learned to be more civilized spiritually.

However, if we reflect sincerely on our past, we realize that, very unfortunately, we have also been seriously abused by many religions which have misled us to continue killing each other. I deeply believe that this was not the original intention of the teachings passed down to us from those wise holy men. For thousands of years, religions have been used as an excuse for killing and conquering. If you step into any European historical museum, you will discover that nearly 80% of the arts created in the past are related to religion and war. Our spirit has been channeled and misused by religion to fulfill the wishes of those in power. Glory, dignity, wealth, and power have been the symbols of religion. I believe that this was a wrong turn.

Many of the spiritual people in the past could see this sadness of human spiritual abusiveness and retired to the mountains which were far from the bondage of the human emotional mind. They meditated and pondered, and hopefully were able to find and connect their spirit to nature. However, this is not an easy task. After all, since birth, we have been taught or brainwashed into wrong thought patterns created in the past and learned how to place a mask on our face, in order to survive in this masked society. It will take a great effort for us to open our minds and remove this mask, and face the truth of nature. Naturally, most of this mask is generated from our emotional bondage and desires. Through the years, this mask has become thicker and heavier and without realizing it, we have forgotten our true face hidden behind the mask. In this way we have isolated ourselves from the true pure nature to which we originally belonged.

To unify with the natural spirit, the spiritual people both in the East and the West realized that they must first learn to calm down their emotional disturbances, filter them through the brain, and finally bring their spirit to a more purified, neutral, and peaceful state. From this spiritual purification, they found that the natural spirit can be reached. From continued pondering, they also discovered that many of our questions could be answered. Therefore, meditation methods which were able to lead us to enter this spiritual and peaceful state were developed and passed down through writing and instruction. Through meditation, a stronger intuition and psychic feeling (extrasensory perception (ESP)) was developed. Even today, this kind of special talent or training cannot yet be explained in terms of the infancy stage of today's human science. The reason for this is simply that humans have been paying more attention to material science than to spiritual science in the last several centuries. Spiritual science remains mysterious and confused, and the human spirit has continued to be abused.

It is amazing that the experience of both Eastern and Western meditators agrees, that meditation is the best way to understand the human spirit better, and further

unify it with the spirit of nature. Both Eastern and Western meditators believe that our spirit resides in our brain and through opening The Third Eye (center of the forehead), we are capable of communicating and unifying with the nature spirit. The Third Eye is called “Tian Yan” (天眼) (i.e. Heaven Eye), or “Upper Dan Tian” (i.e. Upper Elixir Field, 上丹田) in the tradition of Chinese Qigong spiritual cultivation.

Naturally, the final goal of this spiritual cultivation is continuing to search for the meaning of our lives and hopefully to build a connection with the natural spirit. In order to reach the natural spirit, natural Qi such as heaven Qi (energy flows down to us from the heavens) and earth Qi are studied. You should understand that this natural Qi has not only been studied by the Chinese spiritual Qigong practitioners but also by other human cultures. For example, this natural energy is called “prana” in India, “pneuma” in Greece, and “Ki” in Japan. Today, it is commonly called “cosmic energy,” “orgone energy,” or simply “natural energy or force.”

This energy exists everywhere and takes many different forms. This energy manifests in a living body as heat, bioelectricity, or light. This energy supports the spirit when the physical body is alive and also after death. When this energy remains in dead objects without the spirit, though the object does not grow, it can also manifest in different energy forms.

Because the spiritual energy can only be felt but not perceived easily by humans, it has remained a mystery since ancient times. Since then, humans have tended to develop what they know best. While mystified by this spiritual energy, we have continued to develop and have reached a very high level in the material sciences.

According to Chinese philosophy, the material world (i.e. color world) is Yang and is the manifestation of the spiritual world (i.e. colorless world) which is Yin. These two worlds coexist and are closely related to and mutually influenced by each other. If we can build a bridge or a connection between these two and harmonize them smoothly, we can promote our understanding of our lives better. Not only that, we can achieve better health and longevity each time we come back as a physical form. Consequently, this will provide us with a longer time for our spiritual cultivation.

After several hundred years of material development, though we have reached a high level of understanding about the material world, we are still in the dark about our spiritual being. It is now up to us to use what we have developed and understood in material and energy science, to study the spiritual world. It is now time for us to step into the spiritual world and to understand it. *The 21st century is the spiritual century.*

To achieve this we should first study the traditional theory and methods of practice which have been passed down to us both in the East and the West. We must educate the next generation about what we have known about the spiritual world—the world without human emotional bondage. Then, we must teach our children how

to meditate and find their inborn natural spiritual self. Through meditation, they can recognize their original spiritual being, and therefore be able to distinguish the pure spiritual world from the contaminated physical world. If we are able to teach them how to meditate from childhood, we will have provided them with a firm foundation for their spiritual development and growth. Only then can we expect, after a few more generations, to achieve progress in cultivating our spiritual being.

In order to help those interested Qigong practitioners who have not had a clear idea of general Qigong knowledge, the first part of this book will review and summarize those important Qigong concepts. This will be followed by the theoretical discussion of Embryonic Breathing. Readers of my other Qigong books may find many of the contents in the first chapter to be similar to those of other books. The reason for this is simply that the basic general concepts of Qigong remain the same. To those who have never read my other Qigong books, this part is very important. Without the first chapter, the fundamental structure of the entire practice would be incomplete. To those already familiar with these basic concepts, this chapter will serve the purpose of reviewing. From these basic concepts, the theoretical discussion of Embryonic Breathing in Chapter 2 will make sense.

In Part II, the main core of this book, the available documents will be translated and then commented on. Finally, in the Part III, I will summarize the methods of practice from translated documents and also from my personal practical experience. From this part, you will know how to practice correctly without encountering too much danger.

1.2 GENERAL QIGONG CONCEPTS 一般氣功概念

In this section, we will first review the traditional concept of Qi and Qigong. Next, we will discuss the scope of Qigong practice, the differences between External Elixir (Wai Dan, 外丹) and Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹) Qigong practice, and differences between Qigong schools in Chinese history. Then, in order to understand the practice concepts, the theories of Yin-Yang (陰陽) and Kan-Li (坎離) will be explained. Finally, we will summarize the relationship of Qigong practice to health, longevity, and spiritual enlightenment.

1.2.1 Traditional Definition of Qi 氣之傳統概念

In this sub-section, we will first define the general concept of Qi, followed with the narrow concept of Qi. In order to understand the meaning of Qigong practice, you must first have a clear idea of how Qi is defined. After you have understood these traditional concepts, we will, from a scientific point of view, discuss and define the modern concept of Qi in Chapter 2.

A General Definition of Qi. Qi is the energy or natural force that fills the universe. The Chinese have traditionally believed that there are three major powers in the universe. These Three Powers (San Cai, 三才) are Heaven (Tian, 天), Earth (Di,

地), and Man (Ren, 人). Heaven (the sky or universe) has Heaven Qi (Tian Qi, 天氣), the most important of the three, which is made up of the forces that the heavenly bodies exert on the earth, such as sunshine, moonlight, the moon's gravity, and the energy from the stars. In ancient times, the Chinese believed that weather, climate, and natural disasters were governed by Heaven Qi. Chinese people still refer to the weather as Heaven Qi (Tian Qi, 天氣). Every energy field strives to stay in balance, so whenever the Heaven Qi loses its balance, it tries to rebalance itself. Then the wind must blow, rain must fall, even tornadoes or hurricanes become necessary in order for the Heaven Qi to reach a new energy balance.

Under Heaven Qi, is Earth Qi. It is influenced and controlled by Heaven Qi. For example, too much rain will force a river to flood or change its path. Without rain, the plants will die. The Chinese believe that Earth Qi is made up of lines and patterns of energy, as well as the earth's magnetic field and the heat concealed underground. These energies must also balance, otherwise disasters such as earthquakes will occur. When the Qi of the earth is balanced and harmonized, plants will grow and animals thrive.

Finally, within the Earth Qi, each individual person, animal, and plant has its own Qi field, which always seeks to be balanced. When any individual living thing loses its Qi balance, it will sicken, die, and decompose. All natural things, including mankind and our Human Qi, grow within and are influenced by the natural cycles of Heaven Qi and Earth Qi. Throughout the history of Qigong, people have been most interested in Human Qi and its relationship with Heaven Qi and Earth Qi.

In the Chinese tradition, Qi can also be defined as any type of energy which is able to demonstrate power and strength. This energy can be electricity, magnetism, heat, or light. For example, electric power is called "electric Qi" (Dian Qi, 電氣), and heat is called "heat Qi" (Re Qi, 熱氣). When a person is alive, his body's energy is called "human Qi" (Ren Qi, 人氣).

Qi is also commonly used to express the energy state of something, especially living things. As mentioned before, the weather is called "Heaven Qi" (Tian Qi, 天氣) because it indicates the energy state of the heavens. When something is alive it has "vital Qi" (Huo Qi, 活氣), and when it is dead it has "dead Qi" (Si Qi, 死氣) or "ghost Qi" (Gui Qi, 鬼氣). When a person is righteous and has the spiritual strength to do good, he is said to have "Normal Qi or Righteous Qi" (Zheng Qi, 正氣). The spiritual state or morale of an army is called "energy state" (Qi Shi, 氣勢).

You can see that the word "Qi" has a wider and more general definition than most people think. It does not refer only to the energy circulating in the human body. Furthermore, the word "Qi" can represent the energy itself, but it can even be used to express the manner or state of the energy. It is important to understand this when you practice Qigong, so that your mind is not channeled into a narrow understanding of Qi, which would limit your future understanding and development.

A Narrow Definition of Qi. Now that you understand the general definition of Qi, let us look at how Qi is defined in Qigong society today. As mentioned before, among the Three Powers, the Chinese have been most concerned with the Qi that affects our health and longevity. Therefore, after four thousand years of emphasizing Human Qi, when people mention Qi they usually mean the Qi circulating in our bodies.

If we look at the Chinese medical and Qigong documents that were written in ancient times, the word “Qi” was written “炁.” This character is constructed of two words, “无” on the top, which means “nothing;” and “火” on the bottom, which means “fire.” This means that the word Qi was actually written as “no fire” in ancient times. If we go back through Chinese medical and Qigong history, it is not hard to understand this expression.

In ancient times, *the Chinese physicians or Qigong practitioners were actually looking for the Yin-Yang balance of the Qi which was circulating in the body. When this goal was reached, there was “no fire” in the internal organs.* This concept is very simple. According to Chinese medicine, each of our internal organs needs to receive a specific amount of Qi to function properly. If an organ receives an improper amount of Qi (usually too much, i.e. too Yang or on fire), it will start to malfunction, and, in time, physical damage will occur. Therefore, the goal of the medical or Qigong practitioner was to attain a state of “no fire,” which eventually became the word Qi.

However, in more recent publications, the Qi of “no fire” has been replaced by the word “氣,” which is again constructed of two words, “气” which means “air,” and “米” which means “rice.” This shows that later practitioners realized that, after each of us is born, the Qi circulating in our bodies is produced mainly by the inhalation of air (oxygen) and the consumption of food (rice). Air is called Kong Qi (空氣), which means literally “space energy.”

For a long time, people were confused about just what type of energy was circulating in our bodies. Many people believed that it was heat, others considered it to be electricity, and many others assumed that it was a mixture of heat, electricity, and light.

This confusion lasted until the early 1980’s, when the concept of Qi gradually became clear. If we think carefully about what we know from science today, we can see that (except possibly for gravity) there is actually only one type of energy in this universe, and that is electromagnetic energy (electromagnetic waves). This means that light and heat (infrared waves) are also defined as electromagnetic energy. This makes it very clear that the Qi circulating in our bodies is actually “bioelectricity,” and that our body is a “living electromagnetic field.”¹ This field is affected by our thoughts, feelings, activities, the food we eat, the quality of the air we breathe, our life-style, the natural energy that surrounds us, and also the unnatural energy which modern science inflicts upon us.

1.2.2 Traditional Definition of Qigong 氣功之傳統概念

Now that you have a clear concept of Qi, let us discuss traditionally, how Qigong is defined. Again, we can define it from a general and narrow point of view. In Chapter 2, after you have become familiar with the modern concept of Qi, we will define the meaning of Qigong based on the scientific understanding of today.

A General Definition of Qigong. We have explained that Qi is energy, and that it is found in the heavens, in the earth, and in every living thing. In China, the word “Gong” (功) is often used instead of “Gongfu” (or Kung Fu, 功夫), which means energy and time. *Any study or training which requires a lot of energy and time to learn or to accomplish is called Gongfu.* The term can be applied to any special skill or study as long as it requires time, energy, and patience. Therefore, *the correct definition of Qigong is any training or study dealing with Qi which takes a long time and a lot of effort.* You can see from this definition that Qigong is a science which studies the energy in nature. The main difference between this energy science and Western energy science is that Qigong focuses on the inner energy of human beings, while Western energy science pays more attention to the energy outside of the human body. When you study Qigong, it is worthwhile to also consider the modern, scientific point of view, and not restrict yourself to only the traditional beliefs.

The Chinese have studied Qi for thousands of years. Some of the information on the patterns and cycles of nature has been recorded in books, one of which is the *Yi Jing* (易經) (*Book of Changes*; 1122 B.C.). When the *Yi Jing* was written, the Chinese people, as mentioned earlier, believed that natural power included Heaven (Tian, 天), Earth (Di, 地), and Man (Ren, 人). These are called “The Three Powers” (San Cai, 三才) and are manifested by the three Qi’s: Heaven Qi, Earth Qi, and Human Qi. These three facets of nature have their definite rules and cycles. The rules never change, and the cycles are repeated regularly. The Chinese people used an understanding of these natural principles and the “Yi Jing” to calculate the changes of natural Qi. This calculation is called “The Eight Trigrams” (Bagua, 八卦). From the Eight Trigrams the 64 hexagrams are derived. Therefore, the “Yi Jing” was probably the first book that taught the Chinese people about Qi and its variations in nature and man. The relationship of the Three Natural Powers and their Qi variations were later discussed extensively in the book *Theory of Qi’s Variation* (*Qi Hua Lun*, 氣化論).

Understanding Heaven Qi is very difficult, and it was especially so in ancient times when the science was just developing. But since nature is always repeating itself, the experiences accumulated over the years have made it possible to trace the natural patterns. Understanding the rules and cycles of “heavenly timing” (Tian Shi, 天時) will help you to understand natural changes of the seasons, climate, weather, rain, snow, drought, and all other natural occurrences. If you observe carefully, you can see many of these routine patterns and cycles caused by the rebalancing of the

Qi fields. Among the natural cycles are those which repeat every day, month, or year, as well as cycles of twelve years and sixty years.

Earth Qi is a part of Heaven Qi. If you can understand the rules and the structure of the earth, you can understand how mountains and rivers are formed, how plants grow, how rivers move, what part of the country is best for someone, where to build a house and which direction it should face so that it is a healthy place to live, and many other things related to the earth. In China there are people, called “geomancy teachers” (Di Li Shi, 地理師) or “wind water teachers” (Feng Shui Shi, 風水師), who make their living this way. The term “wind water” (Feng Shui, 風水) is commonly used because the location and character of the wind and water in a landscape are the most important factors in evaluating a location. These experts use the accumulated body of geomantic knowledge and the “Yi Jing” to help people make important decisions such as where and how to build a house, where to bury their dead, and how to rearrange or redecorate homes and offices so that they are better places to live and work in. Many people even believe that setting up a store or business according to the guidance of Feng Shui can make it more prosperous.

Among the three Qi's, Human Qi is probably the one studied most thoroughly. The study of Human Qi covers a large number of different subjects. The Chinese people believe that Human Qi is affected and controlled by Heaven Qi and Earth Qi, and that they in fact determine your destiny. Therefore, if you understand the relationship between nature and people, in addition to understanding “human relations” (Ren Shi, 人事), you can predict wars, the destiny of a country, a person's desires and temperament, and even his future. The people who practice this profession are called “calculate life teachers” (Suan Ming Shi, 算命師).

However, the greatest achievement in the study of Human Qi is in regard to health and longevity. Since Qi is the source of life, if you understand how Qi functions and know how to regulate it correctly, you should be able to live a long and healthy life. Remember that you are part of nature, and you are channeled into the cycles of nature. If you go against this natural cycle, you may become sick, so it is in your best interest to follow the way of nature. This is the meaning of “*Dao*” (道), which can be translated as “*The Natural Way*.”

Many different aspects of Human Qi have been researched, including acupuncture, acupressure, massage, herbal treatment, meditation, and Qigong exercises. The use of acupuncture, acupressure, and herbal treatment to adjust Human Qi flow has become the root of Chinese medical science. Meditation and moving Qigong exercises are widely used by the Chinese people to improve their health or even to cure certain illnesses. In addition, Daoists and Buddhists use meditation and Qigong exercises in their pursuit of enlightenment.

In conclusion, *the study of any of the aspects of Qi including Heaven Qi, Earth Qi, and Human Qi should be called Qigong*. However, since the term is usually used today

only in reference to the cultivation of Human Qi through meditation and exercise, we will only use it in this narrower sense to avoid confusion.

A Narrow Definition of Qigong. As mentioned earlier, the narrow definition of Qi is “the energy circulating in the human body.” Therefore, *the narrow definition of Qigong is “the study or the practice of circulating the Qi in the human body.”* Because our bodies are part of nature, the narrow definition of Qigong should also include the study of how our bodies relate to Heaven Qi and Earth Qi. Today, Chinese Qigong consists of several different fields: acupuncture, herbal treatment, martial arts Qigong, Qigong massage, Qigong exercises, Qigong healing, and religious enlightenment Qigong. Naturally, these fields are mutually related, and in many cases cannot be separated.

In ancient times, Qigong was also commonly called “Tu-Na” (吐納). Tu-Na means to “utter and admit” which implies *uttering and admitting the air through the nose*. The reason for this is simply that Qigong practice is closely related to the methods of how to inhale and exhale correctly. Zhuang Zi (莊子), during the Chinese Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.) (戰國) said: “Blowing puffing to breathe, uttering the old and admitting the new, the bear’s natural (action) and the bird’s extending (the neck), are all for longevity. This is also favored by those people living as long as Peng, Zu (彭祖) who practice Dao-Yin (i.e. Direct-Lead, 導引), and nourishing the shapes (i.e. cultivating the physical body).”² Peng, Zu was a legendary Qigong practitioner during the period of Emperor Yao (堯) (2356-2255 B.C.) who was said to have lived for 800 years. From this saying, we can see that Qigong was also commonly called “Dao-Yin” (i.e. Direct-Lead, 導引) which means to *use the mind and physical movements to direct and to lead the Qi’s circulation in the correct way*. The physical movements commonly imitate the natural instinctive movements of animals such as bears and birds. A famous medical Qigong set passed down at this time was “The Five Animal Sports” (Wu Qin Xi, 五禽戲) that imitates the movements of the tiger, deer, bear, ape, and bird.

The Chinese have discovered that the human body has twelve major Qi channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經) which branch out with countless secondary channels (Luo, 絡). This is similar to the blood circulatory system in the body. The primary channels are like arteries and veins while the secondary channels are like capillaries. The twelve primary channels are like *rivers* and the secondary channels are like *streams* which branch out from rivers. From this network, the Qi is distributed throughout the entire body, connecting the extremities (fingers and toes) to the internal organs and also the skin to the bone marrow. Here you should understand that *the “internal organs” of Chinese medicine do not necessarily correspond to the physical organs as understood in the West, but rather to a set of clinical functions similar to each other, and related to the organ system.*

The human body also has Eight Vessels (Ba Mai, 八脈). The eight vessels, which

are often referred to as the extraordinary vessels, function like *reservoirs* and regulate the distribution and circulation of Qi in your body. The famous Chinese Daoist medical doctor, Li, Shi-Zhen (李時珍) in his book, *The Study of Strange Meridians and Eight Vessels* (*Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao*, 奇經八脈考) said: “It is because the regular meridians (i.e. 12 Primary Qi Channels) are like rivers, while the strange meridians (i.e. Eight Vessels) are like lakes. (When) the regular meridians’ (Qi) is abundant and flourishing, then overflow to the strange meridians.”³ We will discuss the Qi network more in the next section of this chapter.

When the Qi in the eight reservoirs is full and strong, the Qi in the rivers is strong and will be regulated efficiently. When there is stagnation in any of these twelve channels or rivers, the Qi which flows to the body’s extremities and to the internal organs will be abnormal, and illness may develop. You should understand that every channel has its particular Qi flow strength, and every channel is different. All of these different levels of Qi strength are affected by your mind, the weather, the time of day, the food you have eaten, and even your mood. For example, when the weather is dry the Qi in the lungs will tend to be more positive (i.e. Yang, 陽) than when it is moist. When you are angry, the Qi flow in your liver channel will be abnormal. The Qi strength in the different channels varies throughout the day in a regular cycle, and at any particular time one channel is strongest. For example, between 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. the Qi flow in the heart channel is the strongest. Furthermore, the Qi level of the same organ can be different from one person to another.

Whenever the Qi flow in the twelve rivers or channels is not normal, the eight reservoirs will regulate the Qi flow and bring it back into balance. For example, when you experience a sudden shock, the Qi flow in the bladder immediately becomes deficient. Normally, the reservoir will immediately regulate the Qi in this channel so that you recover from the shock. However, if the reservoir Qi is also deficient, or if the effect of the shock is too great and there is not enough time to regulate the Qi, the bladder will suddenly contract, causing unavoidable urination.

When a person is sick, his Qi level tends to be either too positive (excessive, Yang, 陽) or too negative (deficient, Yin, 陰). A Chinese physician would either use a prescription of herbs to adjust the Qi, or else he would insert acupuncture needles at various spots on the channels to inhibit the flow in some channels and stimulate the flow in others, so that balance could be restored. However, there is another alternative, and that is to use certain physical and mental exercises to adjust the Qi. In other words, to use Qigong exercises.

However, when Qigong is defined in scholarly society, it is somewhat different. The Qigong practice is focused on regulating the disturbed emotional mind. When the emotional mind is regulated into a peaceful and calm state, the body will be relaxed, which will assist the Qi to circulate smoothly in the body, and therefore reg-

ulate itself into a more harmonious state. From this, mental and physical health can be achieved.

When Qigong is defined in Daoist and Buddhist society, it refers to the method or training of leading the Qi from the Lower Dan Tian (i.e. Elixir Field, 下丹田) to the brain for spiritual enlightenment or Buddhahood. The Lower Dan Tian is the place at the abdominal area where one is able to store the Qi. It is considered a Qi storage area or bioelectric battery. Naturally, its training theory and methods will not be easy. In fact, religious Qigong is considered one of the highest levels of Qigong training in China.

Finally, when Qigong is defined in martial arts society, it refers to the theory and methods of using Qi to energize the physical body to its maximum efficiency for manifestation of power. However, since a great portion of martial arts Qigong was derived from religious Qigong, *Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong* (*Yi Jin Jing and Xi Sui Jing*, 易筋經·洗髓經), it is not surprising that the profound level of training of martial arts Qigong remains the same as that of religious Qigong.

In order to make the above concepts clearer, we will discuss more about different Qigong categories later. If you wish to know more about medical Qigong, please refer to the books, *Qigong for Health & Martial Arts* and *The Root of Chinese Qigong*. If you wish to know more about religious Qigong, please refer to the book, *Qigong—The Secret of Youth*. However, if you are interested in martial Qigong, the book, *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, is highly recommended. Please see the YMAA web site (www.ymaa.com) for more information about these books.

1.2.3 Scope of Qigong Practice 氣功練習之規範

Often, people ask me the same question: Is jogging, weight lifting, dancing, or even walking a kind of Qigong practice? To answer this question, let us trace back Qigong history to before the Chinese Qin and Han dynastic periods (秦、漢, 255 B.C.—220 A.D.). Then you can see that the origins of many Qigong practices were actually in dancing. Through dancing, the physical body was exercised and the healthy condition of the physical body was maintained. Also, through dancing and matching movements with music, the mind was regulated into a harmonious state. From this harmonious mind, the spirit was raised to a more energized state, or calmed down to a peaceful level. This Qigong dancing later passed to Japan during the Chinese Han Dynasty (206 B.C.—220 A.D.) (漢朝), and became a very elegant, slow, and high class of dancing in the Japanese royal court. This Taijiquan-like dancing is still practiced in Japan today.

The ways of African or Native American dancing in which the body is bounced up and down, also assists in loosening up the joints and improving Qi circulation. Naturally, jogging, weight lifting, or even walking are kinds of Qigong practices. Therefore, we can say that *any activity which is able to regulate the Qi circulation in*

the body is a Qigong practice. Naturally, this can also include the food we eat, the air we breathe and even emotions and thoughts.

Let us define it more clearly. In Figure 1-1, if the left vertical line represents the amount of usage of the physical body (Yang), and the right vertical line the usage of the mind (Yin), then we can see that the more you practice toward the left, the more physical effort, and the less mind are needed. This can be applied to aerobic dancing, walking, or jogging in which the mind usage is relatively small compared to physical action. In this kind of Qigong practice, normally you do not need special training, and it is classified as layman Qigong. In the middle point, the mind and the physical activity are almost equally important. This kind of Qigong will be the slow moving Qigong commonly practiced, in which the mind is used to lead the Qi in coordination with the movements. Theoretically speaking, when the body is in its state of slow and relaxed movements, the Qi led by the mind can reach the deeper places of the body such as ligaments, marrow, and internal organs. Consequently, the self-internal feeling can also be deep and the Qi can be led there significantly. For example, Taiji Qigong, White Crane Qigong, Snake Qigong, Dragon Qigong, and many others are very typical body-mind Qigong exercises. These are specifically practiced in Chinese medical and martial arts societies.

However, when you reach a profound level of Qigong practice, the mind becomes more critical and important. When you reach this high level, you are dealing with your mind while you are sitting or standing still and are extremely relaxed.

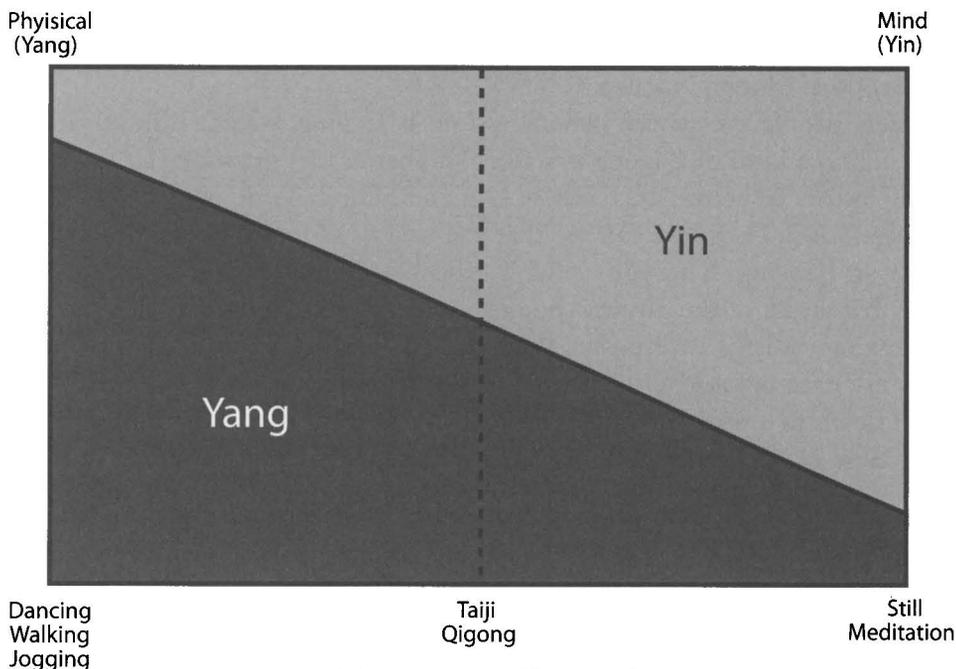


Figure 1-1. The Range of Defined Qigong

Most of this mental Qigong training was practiced by scholars and religious Qigong practitioners. In this practice, you may have a little physical movement in the lower abdomen area. However, *the main focus of this Qigong practice is to cultivate the peaceful and neutral mind and further pursue the final goal of spiritual enlightenment.* This kind of Qigong practice includes Sitting Chan (Ren) (坐禪·忍), Small Circulation Meditation (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天), Grand Circulation Meditation (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天), or Brain Washing Enlightenment Meditation (Xi Sui Gong, 洗髓功).

From this, you can see that different Qigong practices aim for different goals. Theoretically speaking, in order to have a good healthy, long, and happy life, both your physical body and your mind must be healthy. The best Qigong for health is actually located in the middle of our model, where you learn how to regulate your physical body and also your mind. Naturally, you may practice the Yin side through still meditation and the Yang side from physical action separately. From this Yin and Yang balancing practice, your Qi can be built up to a more abundant level and the Qi can also be circulated smoothly in the body.

From this, we can conclude:

1. Any activity which is able to improve the Qi circulation in our body is called Qigong.
2. Those Qigong forms which emphasize the physical body more, will improve physical strength and Qi circulation of those areas being exercised. Normally, the muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones are conditioned.
3. Through those Qigong forms using both body and mind, one can achieve a deeper level of physical strength and Qi circulation. Normally, with the coordination of the relaxed physical body and concentrated mind, the Qi circulation is able to reach to the internal organs, deep places of the joints, and even the marrow.
4. Through those Qigong forms using mostly the mind, one may reach a deep and profound meditative state. However, due to the lack of physical movements, physical strength will tend to degenerate, unless the physical body is also exercised.

1.2.4 Definition of External and Internal Elixirs 外丹與內丹之定義

Let us now review the traditional classifications of Qigong. Generally speaking, all Qigong practices can be divided, according to their training theory and methods, into two general categories: Wai Dan (External Elixir, 外丹) and Nei Dan (Internal Elixir, 內丹). Understanding the differences between them will give you an overview of most Chinese Qigong practice.

Wai Dan (External Elixir) 外丹

“Wai” (外) means “external” or “outside,” and “Dan” (丹) means “elixir.” External here means the skin surface of the body, or the limbs, as opposed to the torso or the center of the body, which includes all of the vital organs. Elixir is a hypothetical, life-prolonging substance for which Chinese Daoists have been searching for several millennia. They originally thought that the elixir was something physical which could be prepared from herbs or chemicals purified in a furnace. After thousands of years of study and experimentation, they found that the elixir is in the body. In other words, if you want to prolong your life, you must find the elixir in your body, and then learn to cultivate, protect, and nourish it. Actually, the elixir is the essence of the inner energy or Qi circulating in the body.

There are many ways of producing elixir or Qi in the body. In Wai Dan Qigong practice, you may exercise your limbs through dancing or even walking. As you exercise, the Qi builds up in your arms and legs. When the Qi potential in your limbs builds to a high enough level, the Qi will flow through the twelve primary Qi channels, clearing any obstructions and flowing into the center of the body to nourish the organs. This is the main reason that a person who works out, or has a physical job, is generally healthier than someone who sits around all day.

Naturally, you may simply massage your body to produce the Qi. Through massage, you may stimulate the cells of your body to a higher energized state and therefore the Qi concentration will be raised and the circulation enhanced. After massage, when you relax, the higher levels of Qi on the skin surface and muscles will flow into the center of the body and thereby improve the Qi circulatory conditions in your internal organs. This is the theoretical foundation of the Tui Na (推拿) (i.e. pushing and grabbing) Qigong massage.

Through acupuncture, you may also bring the Qi level near the skin surface to a higher level and from this stimulation, the Qi condition of the internal organs can be regulated through Qi channels. Therefore, acupuncture (Dian Xue, 點穴) (i.e. cavity press) can also be classified as Wai Dan Qigong practice. Naturally, the herbal treatments are a way of Wai Dan practice as well.

From this, we can briefly conclude that *any possible stimulation or exercise which accumulates a high level of Qi in the limbs or at the surface of the body, and then flows inward toward the center of the body, can be classified as Wai Dan (External Elixir) (Figure 1-2)*

Nei Dan (Internal Elixir) 內丹

“Nei” (內) means “internal” and “Dan” (丹) again means “elixir.” Thus, Nei Dan means to build the elixir internally. Here, internally means inside the body instead of in the limbs. Normally, the Qi is accumulated in the Qi vessels instead of the primary Qi channels. Whereas in Wai Dan the Qi is built up in the limbs or skin sur-

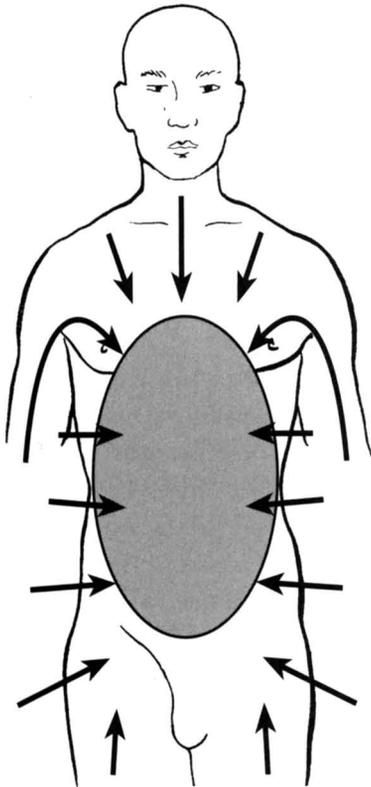


Figure 1-2. External Elixir (Wai Dan)

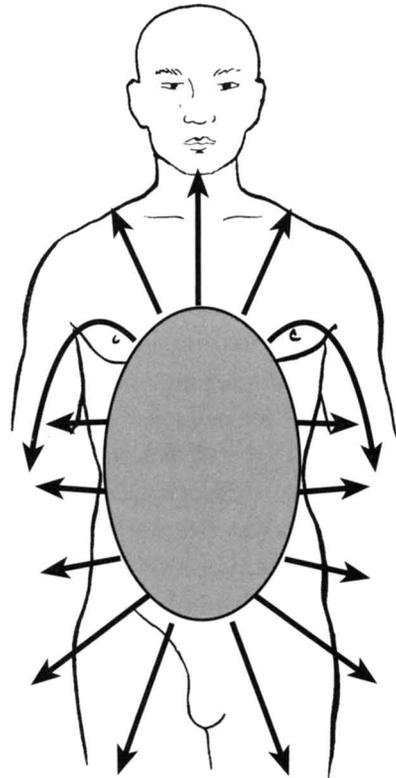


Figure 1-3. Internal Elixir (Nei Dan)

face and then moved into the body through primary Qi channels, *Nei Dan exercises build up Qi in the body and lead it out to the limbs* (Figure 1-3). Normally, Nei Dan Qigong is accomplished by special breathing techniques during the meditation process. The first step of Nei Dan practice is to build up an abundant Qi in the Lower Dan Tian (i.e. human bioelectric battery). This abundant Qi can then be distributed to the eight vessels to increase the store of Qi. Only then can the Qi circulating in the twelve primary Qi channels be regulated smoothly and efficiently.

In order to build up the Qi and store it internally, you must first have a deep and profound feeling which allows your mind to reach the deep places of your body. You should know that *feeling is the language by which your mind and body communicate*. Therefore, to improve the communication ability, your feeling of your physical body and Qi body must reach a high level. The training to increase this sensitivity of feeling is called “Nei Shi Gongfu” (內視功夫), which means the “Gongfu of internal vision or observation.” In fact, to see or to observe inside your body means to feel it. It is called Gongfu (功夫) simply because it will take a great deal of time and practice to reach a high level of accurate feeling.

Generally speaking, Nei Dan theory is deeper than Wai Dan theory, and is more

difficult to understand and practice. Traditionally, most of the Nei Dan Qigong practices have been passed down more secretly than those of the Wai Dan. This is especially true for the highest levels of Nei Dan, such as Marrow/Brain Washing, which were passed down to only a few trusted disciples.

Normally, the first step of practicing Internal Elixir Qigong has been known by Daoists as “Small Cyclic Heaven” (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) or “Small Circulation Meditation.” This is also commonly known as “Microcosmic Meditation” in Yoga (Yujia, 瑜珈) or as “Turning the Wheel of Natural Law” (Zhuan Fa Lun, 轉法輪) by Buddhist society.

Small Circulation can be considered as the foundation of the Internal Elixir Qigong. Through practicing Small Circulation Meditation, a practitioner can circulate the Qi (bioelectricity) smoothly in the Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren and Du Mai, 任·督脈), the two major Qi vessels which regulate the Qi circulating in the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經). After completing Small Circulation, a practitioner will learn “Grand Cyclic Heaven” (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天) or “Grand Circulation.” This is also commonly called “Macrocosmic Meditation” in Indian Yoga. Through Grand Circulation meditation practice, a practitioner will learn how to circulate the Qi throughout his body, and then learn to exchange the Qi with partners or surrounding environments. The purpose of Grand Circulation meditation is to re-open the “Heaven Eye” (Tian Yan, 天眼) (i.e. The Third Eye) so as to unify the natural spirit and human spirit (Tian Ren He Yi, 天人合一). This is the ultimate goal of spiritual enlightenment in both Daoism and Buddhism.

In order to reach the goal of Internal Elixir Qigong practice, a practitioner must first know how to store the Qi to an abundant level in the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) (i.e. human bio-battery), using the theory and the techniques of Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息). These were kept top secret in ancient Qigong society. It was not until the second half of the last century that documents expounding on Embryonic Breathing were gradually revealed to the general public.

1.2.5 Schools of Qigong Practice 氣功練習之門派

We can also classify Qigong into four major categories according to the purpose or final goal of the training: A. curing sickness; B. maintaining health; C. enlightenment or Buddhahood; D. martial arts. These are only general guidelines, however, since almost every style of Qigong serves more than one of the above purposes. For example, although martial Qigong focuses on increasing fighting effectiveness, it can also improve your health. Daoist Qigong aims for longevity and enlightenment, but to reach this goal you need to be in good health and know how to cure sickness. Because of this multi-purpose aspect of the categories, it will be simpler to discuss their backgrounds rather than the goals of their training. Knowing the history and basic principles of each category will help you to understand their Qigong more clearly.

Medical Qigong—for Healing. In ancient Chinese society, most emperors respected the scholars and were affected by their philosophy. Doctors were not regarded highly because they made their diagnosis by touching the patient's body, which was considered characteristic of the lower classes in society. Although the doctors developed a profound and successful medical science, they were commonly looked down on by society. However, they continued to work hard and study, and quietly passed down the results of their research to succeeding generations.

Of all the groups studying Qigong in China, the doctors pursued it the longest. Since the discovery of Qi circulation in the human body about four thousand years ago, Chinese doctors have devoted a major portion of their efforts to studying the behavior of Qi. Their efforts resulted in acupuncture, acupressure or cavity press massage, and herbal treatment.

In addition, many Chinese doctors used their medical knowledge to create different sets of Qigong exercises either for maintaining health or for curing specific illnesses. Chinese medical doctors believed that doing only sitting or still meditation to regulate the body, mind, and breathing, as the scholars Qigong or Buddhist Chan (禪) (i.e. Zen, 忍) meditation did, was not enough to cure sickness. They believed that in order to increase the Qi circulation, you must move. Although a calm and peaceful mind was important for health, exercising the body was more important. They learned through their medical practice that people who exercised properly became sick less often, and their bodies degenerated less quickly, than was the case with people who just sat around. They also realized that specific body movements could increase the Qi circulation in specific organs. They reasoned from this, that these exercises could also be used to treat specific illnesses and to restore the normal functioning of the organs.

Some of these movements are similar to the way in which certain animals move. For an animal to survive in the wild, it must instinctively know how to protect its body. Part of this instinct is concerned with how to build up its Qi, and how to keep its Qi from being lost. We humans have lost many of these instincts over the years that we have been separating ourselves from nature.

Many doctors developed Qigong exercises which were modeled after animal movements to maintain health and cure sickness. A typical, well-known set of such exercises is “Wu Qin Xi” (五禽戲) (Five Animal Sports) created by Dr. Hua Tuo (華佗) nearly two thousand years ago. (Others say Wu Qin Xi was created by Jun Qing (君倩) and was publicized by Hua Tuo.) Another famous set based on similar principles is called “Ba Duan Jin” (八段錦) (The Eight Pieces of Brocade) It was created by Marshal Yue, Fei (岳飛) during Chinese Southern Song Dynasty (南宋) (1127-1280 A.D.). Yue, interestingly enough, was a soldier and scholar rather than a doctor.

In addition, using their medical knowledge of Qi circulation, Chinese doctors researched until they found which movements could help cure particular illnesses

and health problems. Not surprisingly, many of these movements were not unlike the ones used to maintain health, since many illnesses are caused by unbalanced Qi. When an imbalance continues for a long period of time, the organs will be affected, and may be physically damaged. It is just like running a machine without supplying the proper electrical current—over time, the machine will be damaged. Chinese doctors believe that before physical damage to an organ shows up in a patient's body, there is first an abnormality in the Qi balance and circulation. *Abnormal Qi circulation is the very beginning of illness and organ damage.* When Qi is too positive (Yang) or too negative (Yin) in a specific organ's Qi channel, your physical organ begins to suffer damage. If you do not correct the Qi circulation, that organ will malfunction or degenerate. The best way to heal someone is to adjust and balance the Qi even before there is any physical problem. Therefore, correcting or increasing the normal Qi circulation is the major goal of acupuncture or acupressure treatments. Herbs and special diets are also considered important treatments in regulating the Qi in the body.

As long as the illness is limited to the level of Qi stagnation and there is no physical organ damage, the Qigong exercises used for maintaining health can be used to readjust the Qi circulation and treat the problem. However, if the sickness is already so serious that the physical organs have started to fail, then the situation has become critical and a specific treatment is necessary. The treatment can include acupuncture, herbs, or even an operation, as well as specific Qigong exercises designed to accelerate healing. For example, ulcers and asthma can often be cured or helped by some simple exercises. Recently in both mainland China and Taiwan, certain Qigong exercises have been shown to be effective in treating certain kinds of cancer.

Over thousands of years of observing nature and themselves, some Qigong practitioners went even deeper. They realized that the body's Qi circulation changes with the seasons, and that it is a good idea to help the body out during these periodic adjustments. They noticed also that in each season different organs have characteristic problems. For example, in the beginning of autumn the lungs must adapt to the colder air that you are breathing. While this adjustment is going on, the lungs are susceptible to disturbance, so your lungs may feel uncomfortable and you may catch colds easily. Your digestive system is also affected during seasonal changes. Your appetite may increase, or you may have diarrhea. When your temperature drops, your kidneys and bladder will start to give you trouble. For example, if the kidneys are stressed, you may feel pain in the back. Focusing on these seasonal Qi disorders, the meditators created a set of movements which can be used to speed up the body's adjustment.

In addition to Marshal Yue, Fei, many people who were not doctors also created sets of medical Qigong. These sets were probably originally created to maintain health, and were also later used for curing sickness.

Scholar Qigong—for Maintaining Health. In China before the Han Dynasty, there were two major schools of scholarship. One of them was created by Confucius (孔子) (551-479 B.C.) during the Spring and Autumn Period (722-484 B.C.) (Chun Qiu, 春秋). Later, his philosophy was popularized and enlarged by Mencius (372-289 B.C.) (孟子) in the Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.) (Zhan Guo, 戰國). The scholars who practice his philosophy are commonly called Confucians or Confucianists (Ru Jia, 儒家). The key words to their basic philosophy are *Loyalty* (Zhong, 忠), *Filial Piety* (Xiao, 孝), *Humanity* (Ren, 仁), *Kindness* (Ai, 愛), *Trust* (Xin, 信), *Justice* (Yi, 義), *Harmony* (He, 和), and *Peace* (Ping, 平). Humanity and human feelings are the main subjects of study. Confucius' philosophy has become the center of much of Chinese culture.

The second major school of scholarship was called Daoism (Dao Jia, 道家) and was created by Lao Zi (老子) (604-531 B.C.). Lao Zi is considered to be the author of a book called the *Dao De Jing* (*Classic on the Virtue of the Dao*) (道德經) which describes the "virtue of the Dao such as human moralities." Later, in the Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.), his follower Zhuang Zhou (莊周) wrote a book called *Zhuang Zi* (莊子) which led to the formation of another strong branch of Daoism. Before the Han Dynasty, Daoism was considered a branch of scholarship. However, in the East Han Dynasty (25-168 A.D.), traditional Daoism was combined with the Buddhism imported from India by Zhang, Dao-Ling (張道陵); it gradually began to be treated as a religion. Therefore, the Daoism before the Han Dynasty should be considered scholarly Daoism rather than religious.

With regard to their contribution to Qigong, both schools emphasized maintaining health and preventing disease. They believed that many illnesses are caused by mental and emotional excesses. When a person's mind is not calm, balanced, and peaceful, the organs will not function normally. For example, depression can cause stomach ulcers and indigestion. Anger will cause the liver to malfunction. Sadness will cause stagnation and tightness in the lungs, and fear can disturb the normal functioning of the kidneys and bladder. They realized that if you want to avoid illness, you must learn to balance and relax your thoughts and emotions. This is called "regulating the mind" (Tiao Xin, 調心).

Therefore, the scholars emphasize gaining a peaceful mind through meditation. In their still meditation, the main part of the training is getting rid of thoughts so that the mind is clear and calm. When you become calm, the flow of thoughts and emotions slows down, and you feel mentally and emotionally neutral. This kind of meditation can be thought of as practicing emotional self-control. When you are in this "no thought" state, you become very relaxed, and can even relax deep down into your internal organs. When your body is this relaxed, your Qi will naturally flow smoothly and strongly. This kind of still meditation was very common in ancient Chinese scholar society.

In order to reach the goal of a calm and peaceful mind, their training focused on regulating the mind, body, and breath. They believed that as long as these three things were regulated, the Qi flow would be smooth and sickness would not occur. This is why the Qi training of the scholars is called “Xiu Qi” (修氣), which means “cultivating Qi.” “Xiu” (修) in Chinese means to regulate, to cultivate, to repair, or to maintain in good condition. This is very different from the religious Daoist Qi training after the East Han Dynasty which was called “Lian Qi” (練氣), and is translated “train Qi.” “Lian” (練) means to drill or to practice to make stronger. They believed that it is possible to train your Qi to make it stronger; and to extend your life. It is said in scholarly society: “in human life, seventy is rare.”⁴ You should understand that few of the common people in ancient times lived past seventy because of the lack of good food and modern medical technology. It is also said: “peace with Heaven and delight in your destiny” (安天樂命); and “cultivate the body and await destiny” (修身俟命). Compare this with the philosophy of the later Daoists, who said: “one hundred and twenty means dying young.”⁵ They believed and have proven that human life can be lengthened and destiny can be resisted and overcome.

Confucianism and Daoism were the two major scholarly schools in China, but there were many other schools which were also more or less involved in Qigong practices. We will not discuss them here because there are only a very limited number of Qigong documents from these schools.

Religious Qigong—for Enlightenment or Buddhahood. Religious Qigong, though not as popular as other categories in China, is recognized as having achieved the highest accomplishments of all the Qigong categories. It used to be kept secret in monastic society, and only in the 20th century was it revealed to laymen.

In China, religious Qigong includes mainly Daoist and Buddhist Qigong. The main purpose of their training is striving for enlightenment (Shen Tong, 神通), or what the Buddhists refer to as Buddhahood (Cheng Fo, 成佛). They are looking for a way to lift themselves above normal human suffering, and to escape from the cycle of continual reincarnation. They believe that all human suffering is caused by the seven passions and six desires (Qi Qing Liu Yu, 七情六慾). The seven passions are happiness (Xi, 喜), anger (Nu, 怒), sorrow (Ai, 哀), joy (Le, 樂), love (Ai, 愛), hate (Hen, 恨), and desire (Yu, 慾). The six desires are the six sensory pleasures derived from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. If you are still bound to these emotions and desires, you will reincarnate after your death. To avoid reincarnation, you must train your spirit to reach a very high stage where it is strong enough to be independent after your death. This spirit will enter the heavenly kingdom and gain eternal peace. This final stage of training is called “unification of heaven and man” (Tian Ren He Yi, 天人合一). This training is hard to do in the everyday world, so practitioners frequently flee society and move into the solitude of the mountains, where they can concentrate all of their energies on self-cultivation.

Religious Qigong practitioners train to strengthen their internal Qi to nourish their Shen (神) (i.e. spirit) until the Shen is able to survive the death of the physical body. Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong (Xi Sui Gong, 洗髓功) training is necessary to reach this stage. It enables them to lead Qi to the brain, where the Shen resides, and raise the brain cells to a higher energy state. This training used to be restricted to only a few priests who had reached an advanced level. Tibetan Buddhists were also heavily involved in this training. Over the last two thousand years the Tibetan Buddhists, the Chinese Buddhists, and the religious Daoists have followed the same principles to become the three major religious schools of Qigong training.

This religious striving toward enlightenment or Buddhahood is recognized as the highest and most difficult level of Qigong. Many Qigong practitioners reject the rigors of this religious striving, and practice Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong solely for the purpose of longevity. It was these people who eventually revealed the secrets of Marrow/Brain Washing to the outside world. If you are interested in knowing more about this training, you may refer to: *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, by Dr. Yang.

Martial Qigong—for Fighting. Chinese martial Qigong was probably not developed until Da Mo (達磨) wrote the *Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong Classic* (*Yi Jin Jing, Xi Sui Jing*; 易筋經·洗髓經) in the Shaolin Temple (少林寺) during the Liang Dynasty (梁朝) (502-557 A.D.). When Shaolin monks trained Da Mo's Muscle/Tendon Changing Qigong, they found they could not only improve their health, but also greatly increase the power of their martial techniques. Since then, many martial styles have developed Qigong sets to increase their fighting effectiveness. In addition, many martial styles have been created based on Qigong theory. Martial artists have played a major role in Chinese Qigong society.

When Qigong theory was first applied to the martial arts, it was used to increase the power and efficiency of the muscles. The theory is very simple—*the mind (Yi) is used to lead Qi to the muscles to energize them so that they function more efficiently*. The average person generally uses his muscles at about 40% of maximum efficiency. If one can train his concentration and use his strong Yi (意) (i.e. the mind generated from clear thinking) to lead Qi to the muscles effectively, he can energize the muscles to a higher level and, therefore, increase his fighting effectiveness.

As acupuncture theory became better understood, fighting techniques were able to reach even more advanced levels. Martial artists learned to attack specific areas, such as vital acupuncture cavities, to disturb the enemy's Qi flow, and create imbalances which caused injury or even death. In order to do this, the practitioner must understand the route and timing of the Qi circulation in the human body. He also has to train so that he can strike the cavities accurately and to the correct depth. These cavity strike techniques are called “Dian Xue” (點穴) (Pointing Cavities) or “Dian Mai” (點脈) (Pointing Vessels).

Most of the martial Qigong practices help to improve the practitioner's health. However, there are other martial Qigong practices which, although they build up some special skill which is useful for fighting, also damage the practitioner's health. An example of this is Iron Sand Palm (Tie Sha Zhang, 鐵砂掌). Although this training can build up amazing destructive power, it can also harm your hands and affect the Qi circulation in the hands and internal organs.

Since the 6th century, many martial styles have been created that were based on Da Mo's Qigong theory and methods. They can be roughly divided into external and internal styles.

The external styles emphasize building Qi in the limbs to coordinate with the physical martial techniques. They follow the theory of Wai Dan (External Elixir) Qigong, which usually generates Qi in the limbs through special exercises. The concentrated mind is used during the exercises to energize the Qi. This increases muscular strength significantly, and therefore increases the effectiveness of the martial techniques. Qigong can also be used to train the body to resist punches and kicks. In this training, Qi is led to energize the skin and the muscles, enabling them to resist a blow without injury. This training is commonly called "Iron Shirt" (Tie Bu Shan, 鐵布衫) or "Golden Bell Cover" (Jin Zhong Zhao, 金鐘罩). The martial styles which use Wai Dan Qigong training are normally called external styles (Wai Jia, 外家). Hard Qigong training is called Hard Gong (Ying Gong, 硬功). Shaolin Gongfu is a typical example of a style which uses Wai Dan martial Qigong.

Although Wai Dan Qigong can help the martial artist increase his power, there is a disadvantage. Because Wai Dan Qigong emphasizes training the external muscles, it can cause over-development. This can cause a problem called "energy dispersion" (San Gong, 散功) when the practitioner gets older. In order to remedy this, when an external martial artist reaches a high level of external Qigong training he will start training internal Qigong, which specializes in curing the energy dispersion problem. That is why it is said: "External Gongfu is from external to internal."

Internal Martial Qigong is based on the theory of Nei Dan (Internal Elixir). In this method, Qi is generated in the body instead of the limbs, and this Qi is then led to the limbs to increase power. In order to lead Qi to the limbs, the techniques must be soft and muscle usage must be kept to a minimum. The training and theory of Nei Dan martial Qigong is much more difficult than those of Wai Dan martial Qigong. Interested readers should refer to the author's book: *Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*, published by YMAA.

Several internal martial styles were created in the Wudang (武當山) and Emei (峨嵋山) Mountains. Popular styles are Taijiquan (太極拳), Baguazhang (八卦掌), Liu He Ba Fa (六合八法), and Xingyiquan (形意拳). However, you should understand that even the internal martial styles, which are commonly called Soft Styles (Ruan Quan, 軟拳), must on some occasions use muscular strength while fighting.

In order to have strong power in the fight, the Qi must be led to the muscular body and manifested externally. Therefore, once an internal martial artist has achieved a degree of competence in internal Qigong, he or she should also learn how to use harder, more external techniques. That is why it is said: “The internal styles are from internal to external and from soft to hard.”

You can see that, although Qigong is widely studied in Chinese martial society, the main focus of training was originally on increasing fighting ability rather than health. Good health was considered a by-product of training. It was not until this century that the health aspect of martial Qigong started receiving greater attention. This is especially true in the internal martial arts. If you would like to know more about Martial Qigong, please refer to the book: *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, published by YMAA.

From the above brief summary, you may obtain a general concept of how Chinese Qigong can be categorized, and should not have further doubt about any Qigong you are training.

1.2.6 Theory of Yin-Yang and Kan-Li 陰陽、坎離之理論

To practice Qigong accurately, you must not only understand the theory but also the correct methods of practice. Knowing the theory correctly places a clear and accurate map in your hands leading you to your goal in the shortest time. Without this map, you may take many years to find the correct path.

Two of the most important concepts in Qigong practice are the theory of Yin and Yang, and of Kan and Li. These two concepts have been commonly confused in Qigong society, even in China. If you are able to understand them clearly, you will have grasped an important key to the practice of Qigong.

What are Kan and Li? Kan and Li training has long been of major importance to Qigong practitioners. In order to understand why, you must understand these two words, and the theory behind them. The terms Kan (坎) and Li (離) occur frequently in Qigong documents. In the Eight Trigrams Kan represents “Water,” while Li represents “Fire.” However, the everyday terms for water and fire are also often used.

First you should understand that though Kan-Li and Yin-Yang are related, Kan and Li are not Yin and Yang. Kan is Water, which is able to cool your body down and make it more Yin, while Li is Fire, which warms your body and makes it more Yang. *Kan and Li are the methods or causes, while Yin and Yang are the results.* When Kan and Li are adjusted or regulated correctly, Yin and Yang will be balanced and interact harmoniously.

Qigong practitioners believe that your body is always too Yang, unless you are sick or have not eaten for a long time, in which case your body may be more Yin.

When your body is always Yang, it is degenerating and burning out. It is believed that this is the cause of aging. If you are able to use Water to cool down your body, you can slow down the process of degeneration, and thereby lengthen your life. This is the main reason why Qigong practitioners have been studying ways of improving the quality of Water in their bodies, and of reducing the quantity of Fire. I believe that as a Qigong practitioner, you should always keep this subject at the top of your list for study and research. If you earnestly ponder and experiment, you can grasp the trick of adjusting them.

If you want to learn how to adjust them, you must understand that Water and Fire mean many things in your body. The first concern is your Qi. Qi is classified as Fire or Water. When your Qi is not pure, and causes your physical body to heat up and your mental/spiritual body to become unstable (Yang), it is classified as Fire Qi. The Qi which is pure and is able to cool both your physical and spiritual bodies (make them more Yin) is considered Water Qi. However, your body can never be purely Water. Water can cool down the Fire, but it must never totally quench it, because then you would be dead. It is also said that Fire Qi is able to agitate and stimulate the emotions, and from these emotions generate a “mind.” This mind is called Xin (心), and is considered the Fire mind, Yang mind, or emotional mind. On the other hand, the mind that Water Qi generates is calm, steady, and wise. This mind is called Yi (意), and is considered to be the Water mind or wisdom mind. If your Shen is nourished by Fire Qi, although your Shen may be high, it will be scattered and confused (a Yang Shen). Naturally, if the Shen is nourished and raised up by Water Qi, it will be firm and steady (a Yin mind). When your Yi is able to govern your emotional Xin effectively, your will (strong emotional intention) can be firm.

You can see from this discussion that your Qi is the main cause of the Yin and Yang of your physical body, your mind, and your Shen. To regulate your body’s Yin and Yang, you must learn how to regulate your body’s Water and Fire Qi, and to do this efficiently you must know their sources.

In order to understand Kan and Li clearly and to adjust them efficiently, you are urged to use the modern scientific, medical point of view to analyze the concepts. This will allow you to marry the past and present, and give birth to the future.

Kan and Li in Breathing, Mind, and Shen

Here we introduce the general concepts of how Kan and Li relate to your breathing, mind, and Shen. Then, we will combine them together and construct a secret key which will lead you to the Qigong treasure.

Breathing’s Kan and Li. In Qigong, breathing is considered a “strategy” which enables you to lead the Qi effectively. For example, you can use your breath to lead the Qi to your skin or marrow. Slow or fast breathing can make the flow of Qi calm or vigorous. When you are excited your body is Yang, and you exhale more than you inhale. This leads the Qi to the skin so that you sweat, and the excess dissipates in

the surrounding air. When you are sad your body is Yin, and you inhale more than you exhale to lead the Qi inward to conserve it, and you feel cold. You can see that breathing can be the main cause of changing the body's Yin and Yang. Therefore, breathing has Kan and Li.

Generally speaking, in the normal state of your body, inhaling is considered to be a Water activity (Kan) because you lead the Qi inward to the bone marrow where it is stored. This reduces the Qi in the muscles and tendons, which calms down the body's Yang. Exhaling is considered a Fire activity (Li) because it brings Qi outward to the muscles, tendons, and skin to energize them, making the body more Yang. When the body is more Yang than its surroundings, the Qi in the body is automatically dissipated outward.

Normally, Yin and Yang should be balanced so that your body will function harmoniously. The trick to maintaining this balance is using breathing strategy. Usually your inhalations and exhalations should be equal. However, when you are excited your body is too Yang, so you may inhale longer and deeper to calm down your mind and lead the Qi inside your body to make it more Yin.

In Qigong practice, it is very important to grasp the trick of correct breathing. It is the exhalation which leads Qi to the five centers (head, two Laogong cavities at the center of the palms, and two Yongquan cavities near the center of the soles) and the skin to exchange Qi with the surroundings. Inhalation leads Qi deep inside your body to reach the internal organs and marrow. Table 1-1 summarizes how different breathing strategies affect the body's Yin and Yang in their various manifestations.

The Mind's Kan and Li. According to Chinese tradition, a human has two minds: Xin (心) and Yi (意). Xin is translated literally as "heart" and is considered as the mind generated from emotional disturbance. Therefore, Xin can be translated as "Emotional Mind." The Chinese word for Yi is constructed of three characters. The top one means "establish" (立), the middle one means "speaking" (言), and the bottom one is "heart" (心). That means the emotional mind is under control when you speak. Therefore, Yi can be translated as "Wisdom Mind" or "Rational Mind." Because the Emotional Mind makes you excited and emotionally disturbed, which results in the excitement of your body (Yang), it is considered as Li. The Wisdom Mind which makes you calm, peaceful, and able to think clearly (Yin) is considered to be Kan.

In Qigong training, the mind is considered the "general" who directs the entire battle. It is the general who decides the fighting strategy (breathing) and controls the movement of the soldiers (Qi). Therefore, as a general, you must control your Xin (Emotional Mind) and use your Yi (Wisdom Mind) to judge and understand the situation and then finally decide on the proper strategy.

In Qigong, your wisdom mind must first dominate the situation and generate an idea. This idea generates and executes the strategy (breathing) and is also the force

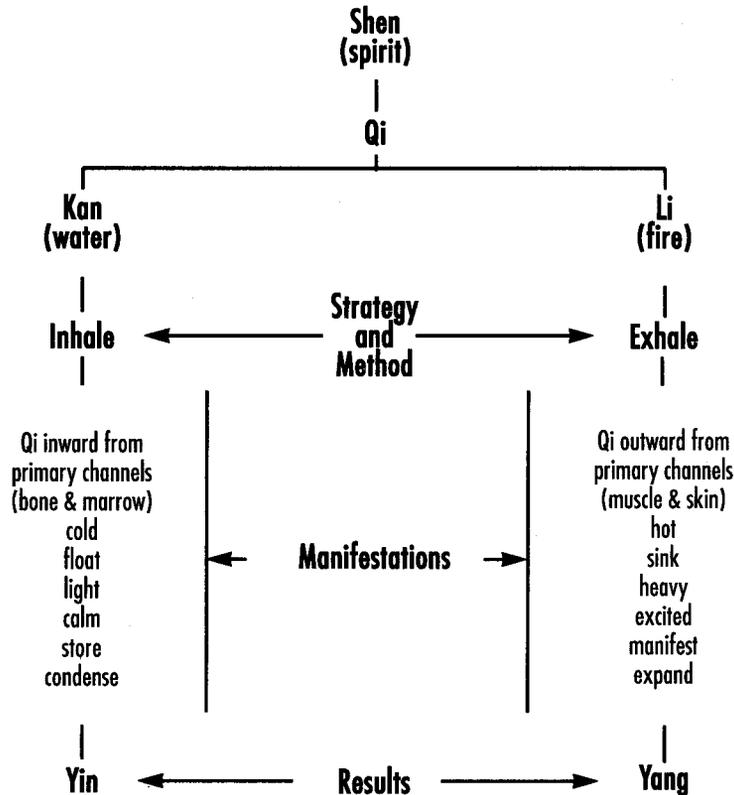


Table 1-1. The Effects of Breathing on the Body's Yin and Yang in their Various Manifestations

that moves the Qi. Generally speaking, when your mind is excited, aggressive, and energized, the strategy (breathing) is more offensive (emphasizing exhalation) and the Qi circulation is more vigorous and expansive. This aggressive mind is then considered a Fire mind, since it is able to make your body more Yang. However, when the strategy is more defensive (i.e. emphasizing inhalation), the Qi circulation will be more calm and condensing. Therefore, a calm or depressed mind is considered a Water mind, since it can make your body more Yin.

You can see that the Kan and Li of the mind are more important than those of breathing. After all, it is the mind which makes the strategy. Regulating the mind and the breathing are two of the basic techniques for controlling your body's Yin and Yang. Regulating the mind and the breathing cannot be separated. When the mind is regulated, the breathing can be regulated. When the breathing is regulated, the mind is able to enter a deeper level of calmness.

The Shen's Kan and Li. Now it is time to consider the final and most decisive element in winning a battle—the Shen (神). Shen is compared to the morale of the

general's officers and soldiers. There are many cases throughout history of armies winning battles against great odds because the morale of their soldiers was high. If a soldier's morale is high enough, he can defeat ten enemies.

It is the same in Qigong training. It is the Shen which determines how successful your Qigong practice will be. Your Yi (Wisdom Mind), which is the general who makes the strategy, must also be concerned with raising up the fighting morale (Shen) of the soldiers (Qi). When their morale is raised the soldiers can be led more efficiently, and consequently the strategy can be executed more effectively.

You can see that knowing how to use the Yi to raise the Shen is the major key to successful Qigong training. In Qigong, Shen is considered the headquarters which governs the Qi. As a matter of fact, both Yi and Shen govern the Qi. They are closely related and cannot be separated.

Generally speaking, when the wisdom mind (Yi) is energized, the Shen is also raised. You should understand that in Qigong training, you want to raise up your Shen but not let it get excited. When the Shen is raised, the strategy can be carried out effectively. However, if the Shen is excited, the body will become too Yang, and that is not desirable in Qigong practice. When you are practicing Qigong, you want to keep your Shen high all the time and use it to govern the strategy and the Qi. This will enable you to readjust or regulate your Kan and Li efficiently.

Shen is the control tower which is able to adjust the Kan and Li, but it does not have Kan and Li itself. However, some Qigong practitioners consider the raised Shen to be Li (Fire) and the calm Shen to be Kan (Water).

Now, let us draw a few important conclusions from the above discussion:

- A. Kan (Water) and Li (Fire) are not Yin and Yang. Kan and Li are methods which can cause Yin or Yang.
- B. Qi itself is only a form of energy and does not have Kan and Li. When Qi is too excessive or too deficient, it can cause the body to be too Yang or too Yin.
- C. When you adjust Kan and Li in the body, the mind is the first concern. The mind can be Kan or Li. It determines the strategy (breathing) for withdrawing the Qi (Kan) or expanding it (Li).
- D. Breathing has Kan and Li. Usually inhaling, which makes the body more Yin, is Kan. Exhaling, which makes the body more Yang, is Li.
- E. The Shen does not have Kan and Li. Shen is the key to making the Kan and Li adjustment effective and efficient.

The Key Secrets of Adjusting Kan and Li

In the light of these conclusions, let us discuss the keys of Kan and Li adjustment. These keys are repeatedly mentioned in the ancient documents. The first key

is that Shen and Breathing mutually rely on each other. The second key is that Shen and Qi mutually combine and harmonize with each other.

Shen and Breathing Mutually Dependent (Shen Xi Xiang Yi, 神息相依). We know that breathing is the strategy which directs the Qi in various ways and therefore controls and adjusts the Kan and Li, which in turn control the body's Yin and Yang. We also know that the Shen is the control tower which is able to make the strategy work in the most efficient way. Therefore, Shen governs the strategy directly, and controls Kan and Li and the body's Yin and Yang indirectly. You can see that the success of your Kan and Li adjustment depends upon your Shen.

When the Shen matches your inhaling and exhaling, it can lead the Qi to condense and expand directly in the most efficient way. Your Shen must match with the breathing to be raised up or calmed down, and the breathing must rely on the Shen to make the strategy work efficiently. In this case, it seems that the Shen and breathing are depending on each other and cannot be separated. In Qigong practice, this training is called "Shen Xi Xiang Yi" (神息相依) which means "Shen and breathing depend on each other." When your Shen and breathing are matching each other, it is called "Shen Xi" (神息) (i.e. Shen breathing), because it seems that your Shen is actually doing the breathing.

You can see that "Shen Xi Xiang Yi" is a technique or method in which, when the Shen and breathing are united together, the Shen is able to control the Qi more directly.

Shen and Qi Mutually Combined (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合). When your Shen and breathing are able to match with each other as one, then the Qi can be led directly, and thus Shen and Qi become one. In Qigong practice it is called "Shen Qi Xiang He" (神氣相合), which means "Shen and Qi mutually combined or harmonized." When this happens, the Shen can govern the Qi directly and more efficiently. You can see from this that the Shen and Qi combining is the result of the Shen and breathing being mutually dependent.

Da Mo (達磨) believed that in order to have a long and peaceful life, Shen and Qi must be coordinated and harmonized with each other. He said: "If (one) does not know how to keep the mother (Qi) and son (Shen) together, though the Qi (is directed) by breathing internally, (nevertheless) the Shen is labored and craves external (objects), resulting in the Shen being always debauched and dirty; the Shen is thus not clear. (If) the Shen is not clear, the original harmonious Qi will disperse gradually, (Shen and Qi) cannot be kept together."⁶ From this, you can see that Shen is very important. To regulate the Shen is one of the highest levels of Qigong practice. The reason for this is simply that in order to reach a high level of harmony, you must first regulate your emotional mind. This is hard to achieve in laymen society.

1.3 THE NETWORK OF QI VESSELS AND CHANNELS 氣脈與經絡網路

As explained earlier, we have two bodies, the physical body and the Qi body (or bioelectric body). The physical body can be seen, but Qi can only be felt. The Qi body is the vital source of the physical body (i.e. all living cells) and the foundation of our lives. The Qi body is not only related to our cells, but also to our thinking and Shen, since it is the energy source which maintains the brain's functioning. Therefore, any Qi imbalance or stagnation will be the root and cause of any physical sickness or mental disorder.

Western medical science has long studied the physical body, but ignored the Qi body for the most part. This has begun to change in the last two decades. The scientific understanding of the Qi body, and how it affects our health and longevity, is still in its infancy. Under these circumstances, we may still accept the ancient Chinese understanding of our body's Qi network.

1.3.1 Twelve Primary Qi Channels and the Eight Vessels 十二經、絡與八脈

From the understanding of Chinese medicine, the Qi circulatory system in a human body includes eight vessels (Ba Mai, 八脈), twelve primary Qi channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經), and thousands of secondary channels branching out from the primary channels (Luo, 絡). On two of the vessels (Conception and Governing Vessels) (Ren and Du Mai, 督·任脈) and the twelve primary Qi channels, there are more than seven hundred acupuncture cavities, through which the Qi level in the channels can be adjusted and regulated. From this Qi adjustment, the Qi circulation in the body, especially in the internal organs, can be regulated into a harmonious state, and the body's sickness can be cured and health maintained. Here, we will briefly review these three circulatory networks. If you are interested in learning more about this Qi network, you may refer to Chinese acupuncture books or to the book: *The Root of Chinese Qigong*, published by YMAA.

1. Eight Vessels (Ba Mai) 八脈

- a. The Eight Vessels include four Yang vessels and four Yin vessels. They therefore balance each other.
- b. The Four Yang Vessels are:
 - Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈) (Figure 1-4)
 - Girdle (or Belt) Vessel (Dai Mai, 帶脈) (Figure 1-5)
 - Yang Heel Vessel (Yangqiao Mai, 陽蹻脈) (Figure 1-6)
 - Yang Linking Vessel (Yangwei Mai, 陽維脈) (Figure 1-7)

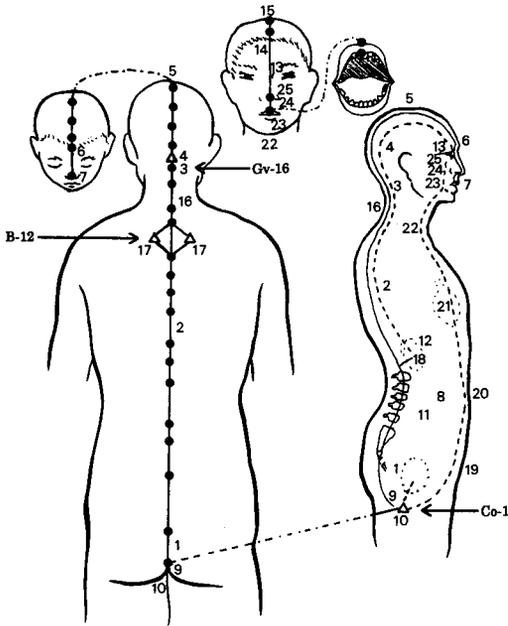


Figure 1-4. The Governing Vessel (Du Mai)

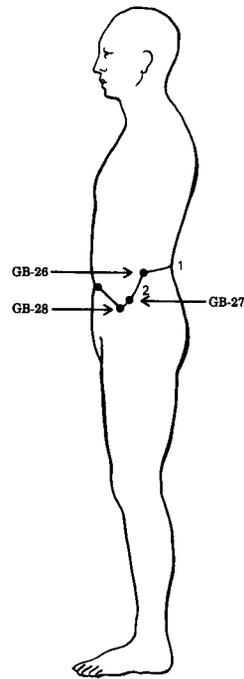


Figure 1-5. The Girdle Vessel (Dai Mai)

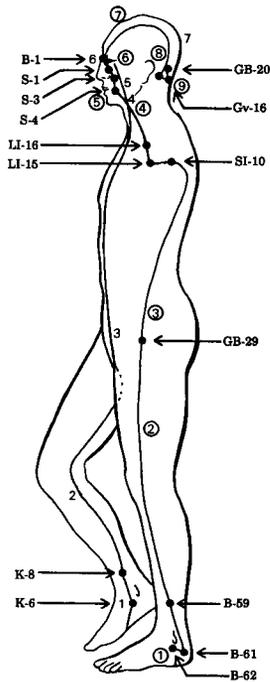


Figure 1-6. The Yang Heel Vessel (Yangqiao Mai) and The Yin Heel Vessel (Yinqiao Mai)

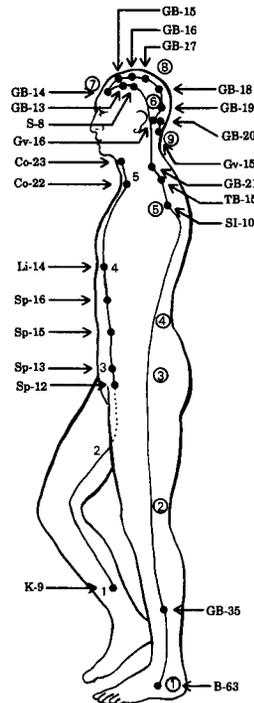


Figure 1-7. The Yang Linking Vessel (Yangwei Mai) and The Yin Linking Vessel (Yinwei Mai)

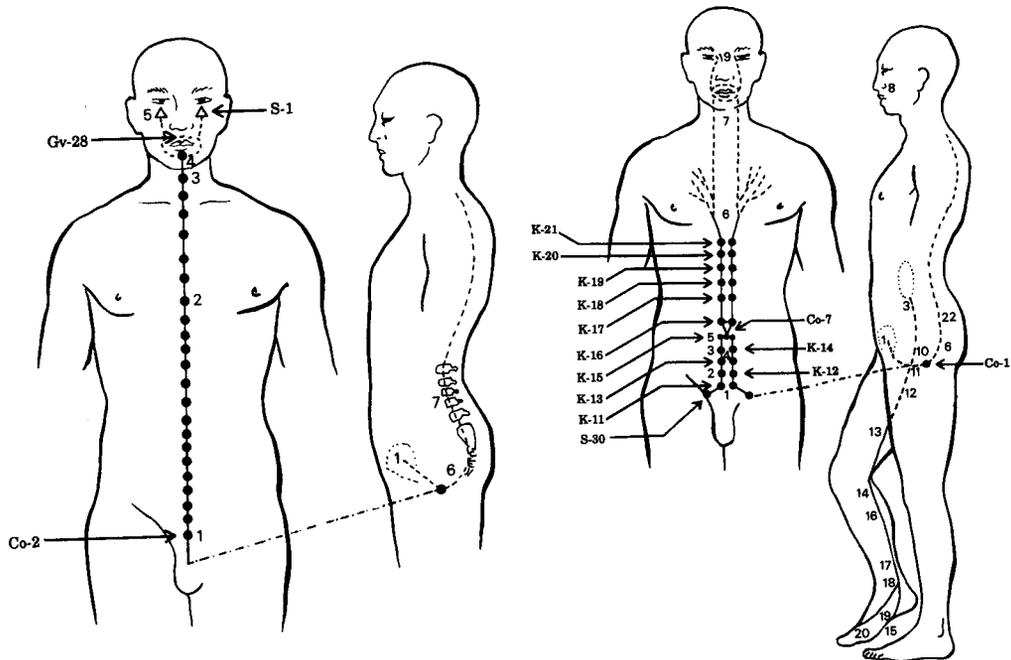


Figure 1-8. The Conception Vessel (Ren Mai) Figure 1-9. The Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai)

The Four Yin Vessels are:

Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) (Figure 1-8)

Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Figure 1-9)

Yin Heel Vessel (Yinqiao Mai, 陰蹻脈) (Figure 1-6)

Yin Linking Vessel (Yinwei Mai, 陰維脈) (Figure 1-7)

- c. According to Chinese medicine, *vessels function as reservoirs, connected to the twelve primary Qi channels and regulating the Qi level circulating in these channels*. When the Qi level in some specific channel is too high, one or more of the reservoirs will absorb the excess Qi, and if the Qi is too low, the shortfall will be supplied from these vessels. This enables a harmonious level to be maintained.
- d. The two Yang vessels (Governing and Girdle Vessels), and the two Yin vessels (Conception and Thrusting Vessels), are individual and located in the torso. The other four vessels exist in pairs, and are located in the legs. There are no vessels in the arms.
- e. Among the eight vessels, according to Chinese medicine, the Governing and Conception Vessels are the most important, since they are the main vessels that regulate the twelve primary Qi channels. The Governing Ves-

- sel regulates the Qi in the six primary Yang Qi channels, while the Conception Vessel regulates the Qi in the six primary Yin Qi Channels. There are acupuncture cavities on these two vessels, and none on the other six vessels. However, there are many cavities on these six vessels that belong to the twelve primary Qi channels. These cavities are considered to be gates that allow the Qi to pass between the vessels and channels.
- f. According to Chinese Qigong practice for health and longevity, the methods of learning how to expand the Qi in the vessels are very important. The reason for this is that these eight vessels are the reservoirs for the Qi. When the Qi in these reservoirs is abundant, the Qi regulating potential of the primary Qi channels will be high and efficient. Among these eight vessels, the Governing and Conception Vessels are the most important, since they regulate the twelve primary Qi channels. The Qi circulates in these two vessels and distributes to the twelve primary Qi channels throughout the day.
- g. In religious Qigong meditation practice for enlightenment, the Thrusting Vessel (i.e. spinal cord) is very important. The Thrusting Vessel connects the brain and the perineum, and the Qi is abundant in this vessel at midnight. Traditionally, during the midnight hours, we are sleeping and the physical body is extremely relaxed. In this situation, the physical body does not need a great amount of Qi to support its activities, and the Qi circulates abundantly in the spinal cord to nourish the brain and sexual organs. Hormone production from pineal, pituitary and adrenal glands, and the testicles or ovaries, is therefore increased at night. When the brain is nourished and its function is raised up to a high level, the Shen can be raised and enlightenment can be achieved. If you are interested in more on this subject, please refer to the book: *Qigong, The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.
- h. The Governing Vessel, which is located at the center of the back, is the main vessel supplying Qi to the nervous system branching out from the spinal cord. The nervous system is constructed of physical cells which need to be nourished with Qi (bioelectricity) to function and stay alive. This tells us that Qi is ultimately the root of the nerves' functioning. To maintain abundant Qi circulation in this vessel, your physical condition is extremely important. If there is any physical injury or damage along the course of this vessel, the Qi supply to the nervous system will be stagnant and irregular. Moreover, in order to have healthy and abundant Qi circulation in this vessel, you must learn how to increase Qi storage in the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田), which is the main Qi reservoir or bioelectric battery in our body.
- i. The Yang Girdle Vessel is the only vessel in which the Qi circulates horizontally. To Qigong practitioners, this vessel is very important. Since the

Qi status in this vessel is Yang, the Qi is expanding outward. It is from this vessel that we feel our balance. It is just like an airplane or a tight-rope walker: the longer the wings or the balancing pole, the easier it will be to find and maintain balance. A Qigong practitioner or a Chinese martial artist will train this vessel and make the Qi expand outward farther, therefore increasing the balance and stability of both the physical and mental bodies. *When you have more balance and stability, you can find your center. When you find your physical and mental center, then you will be rooted. Once you are rooted, your Shen can be raised to a higher level.*

1.3.2 The Twelve Primary Qi Channels and Their Branches (Shi Er Jing Luo)

十二經絡

- a. The Twelve primary Qi Channels include six Yang channels and six Yin channels. They therefore balance each other.
- b. The Six Yang channels are:
 - Arm Yang Brightness Large Intestine Channel (Shou Yang Ming Da Chang Jing, 手陽明大腸經) (Figure 1-10)
 - Leg Yang Brightness Stomach Channel (Zu Yang Ming Wei Jing, 足陽明胃經) (Figure 1-11)

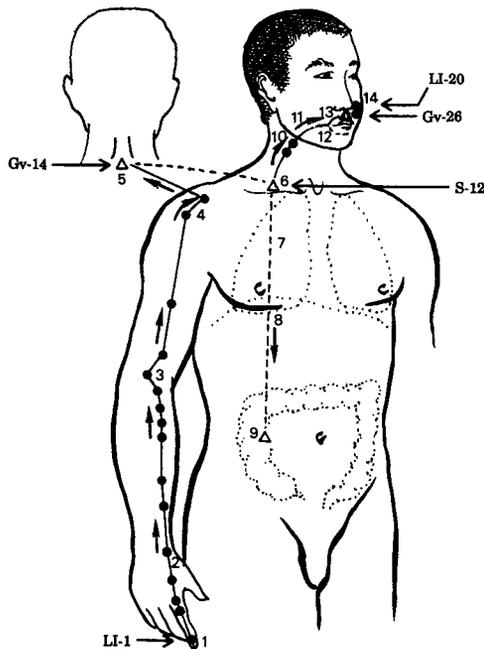


Figure 1-10. Arm Yang Brightness Large Intestine Channel

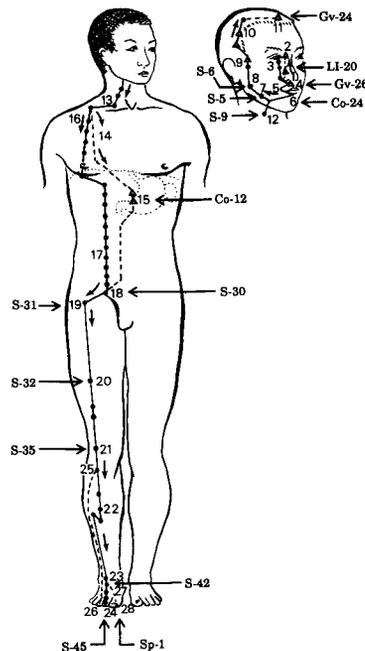


Figure 1-11. Leg Yang Brightness Stomach Channel

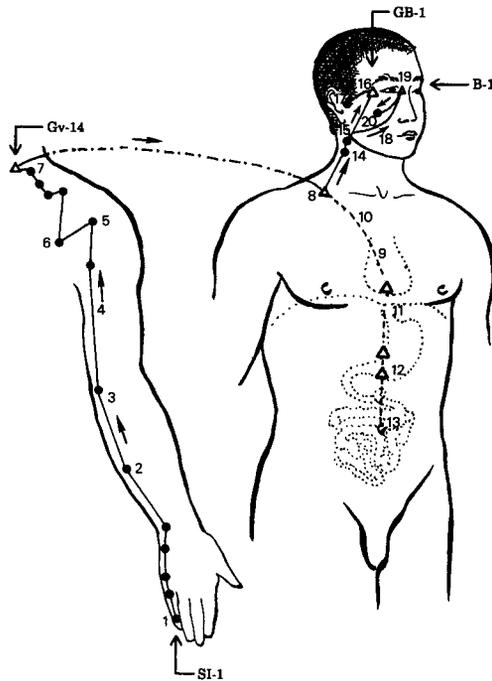


Figure 1-12. Arm Greater Yang Small Intestine Channel

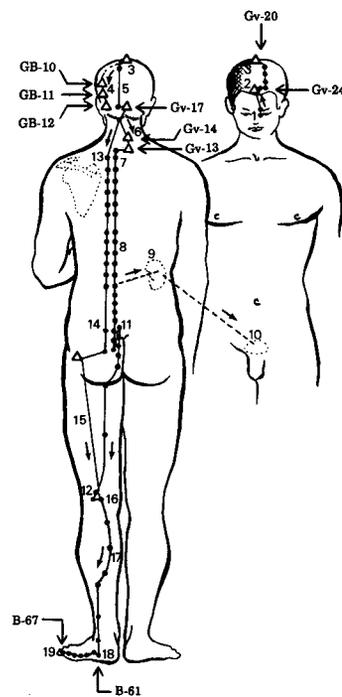


Figure 1-13. Leg Greater Yang Bladder Channel

Arm Greater Yang Small Intestine Channel (Shou Tai Yang Xiao Chang Jing, 手太陽小腸經) (Figure 1-12)

Leg Greater Yang Bladder Channel (Zu Tai Yang Pang Guang Jing, 足太陽膀胱經) (Figure 1-13)

Arm Lesser Yang Triple Burner Channel (Shou Shao Yang San Jiao Jing, 手少陽三焦經) (Figure 1-14)

Leg Lesser Yang Gall Bladder Channel (Zu Shao Yang Dan Jing, 足少陽膽經) (Figure 1-15)

The Six Yin channels are:

Arm Greater Yin Lung Channel (Shou Tai Yin Fei Jing, 手太陰肺經) (Figure 1-16)

Leg Greater Yin Spleen Channel (Zu Tai Yin Pi Jing, 足太陰脾經) (Figure 1-17)

Arm Lesser Yin Heart Channel (Shou Shao Yin Xin Jing, 手少陰心經) (Figure 1-18)

Leg Lesser Yin Kidney Channel (Zu Shao Yin Shen Jing, 足少陰腎經) (Figure 1-19)

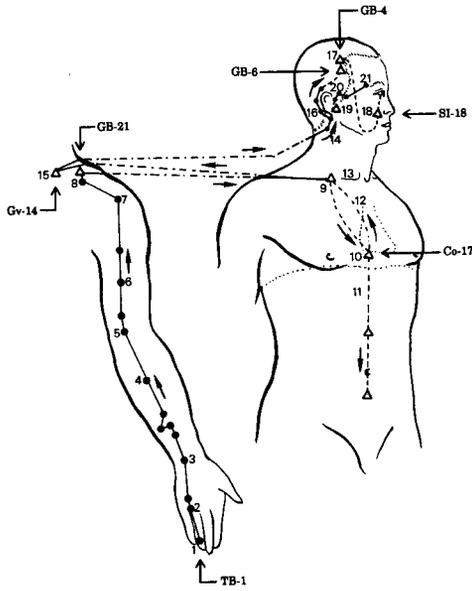


Figure 1-14. Arm Lesser Yang Triple Burner Channel

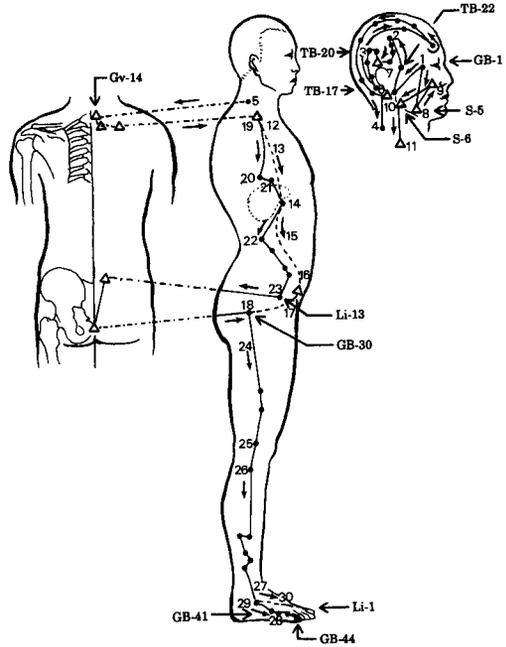


Figure 1-15. Leg Lesser Yang Gall Bladder Channel

- Points Belonging to Channels
- △ Points of Intersection
- Connecting Lines
- Primary Channels on Which There are Points
- Primary Channels and Branches without Point

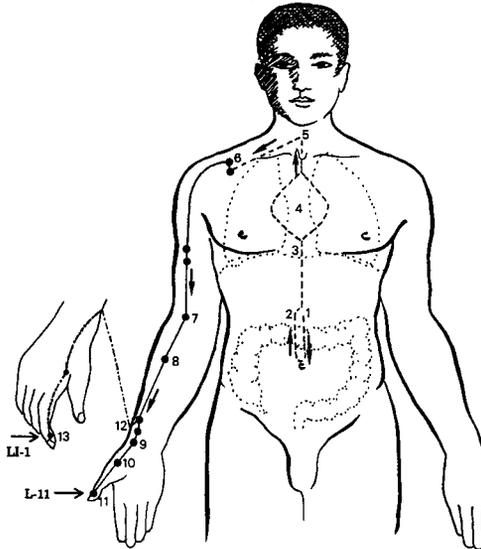


Figure 1-16. Arm Greater Yin Lung Channel

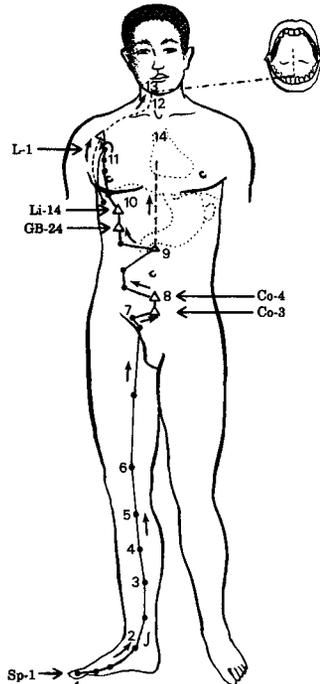


Figure 1-17. Leg Greater Yin Spleen Channel

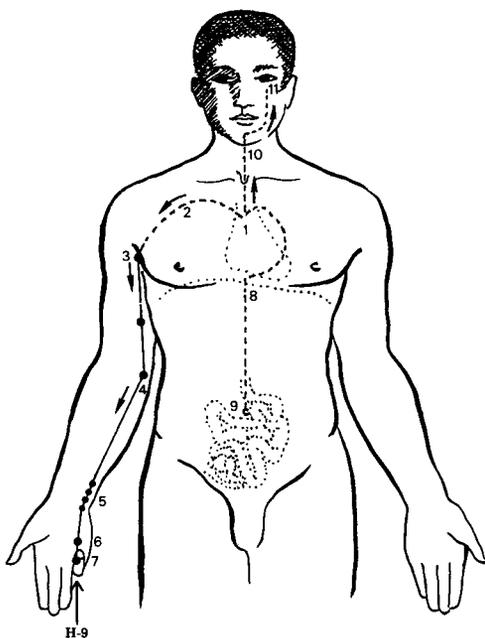


Figure 1-18. Arm Lesser Yin Heart Channel

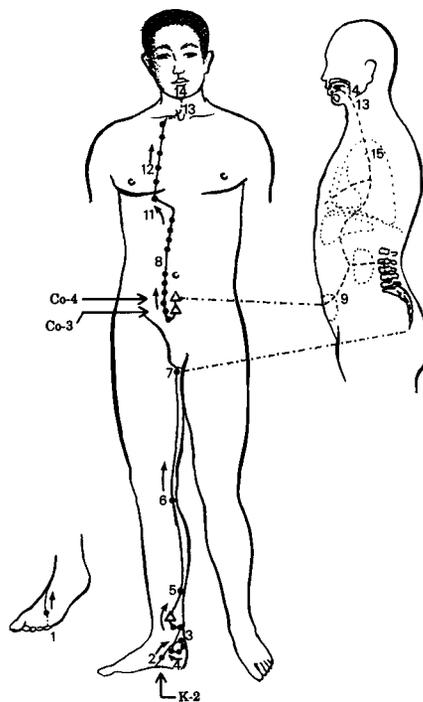


Figure 1-19. Leg Lesser Yin Kidney Channel

Arm Absolute Yin Pericardium Channel (Shou Jue Yin Xin Bao Luo Jing, 手厥陰心包絡經) (Figure 1-20)

Leg Absolute Yin Liver Channel (Zu Jue Yin Gan Jing, 足厥陰肝經) (Figure 1-21)

- c. From the above, you can see that one end of each channel connects to an extremity, and the other end connects with a different internal organ. In each channel, there are many acupuncture cavities through which the Qi condition in each channel can be regulated. This is the basic theory of acupuncture.
- d. There are thousands of secondary channels (Luo, 絡) branching out from each primary; these lead the Qi to the surface of the skin and to the bone marrow. It is very similar to the artery and capillary system. Instead of blood, Qi is being distributed.

1.4 BUDDHIST AND DAOIST QIGONG CONCEPTS 佛家與道家之氣功概念

Because it was kept so secret, religious Qigong did not become as popular as the other categories in China before the Qing Dynasty (清朝) (1644-1912 A.D.). It was not until the 20th century, when the secrets were gradually released to the public,

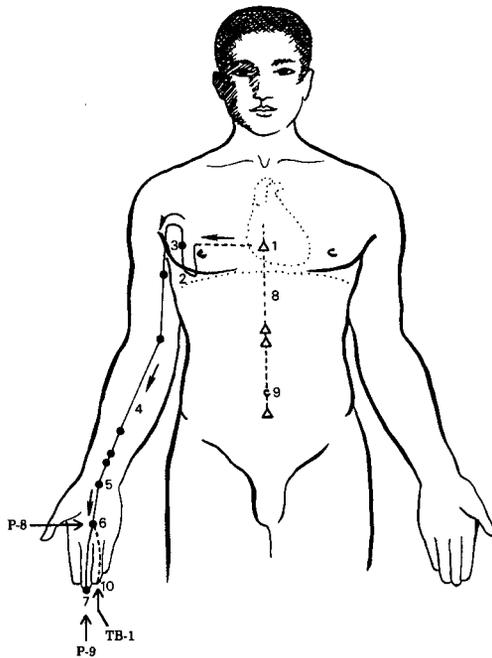


Figure 1-20. Arm Absolute Yin
Pericardium Channel

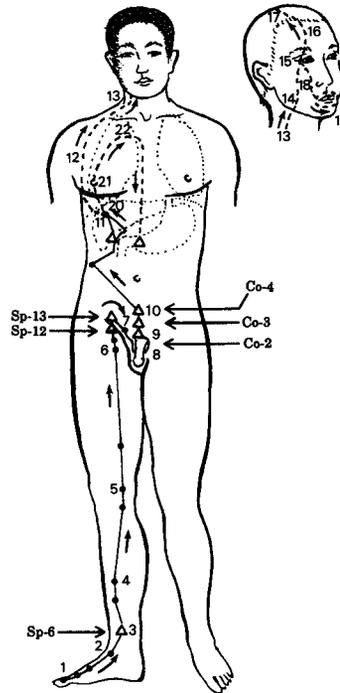


Figure 1-21. Leg Absolute Yin
Liver Channel

that religious Qigong became popular in China. Religious Qigong is mostly Daoist and Buddhist, and its main purpose is to aid in the striving for enlightenment, or what the Buddhists refer to as Buddhahood.

In order to help you understand both the training theory and methods studied in Buddhist and Daoist societies, I would like to give a brief introduction to Buddhist and Daoist Qigong, followed by a comparison of their training.

Buddhist Qigong. Three main schools of Buddhist Qigong developed in Asia during the last two thousand years: Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan. Because Buddhism was created in India by an Indian prince named Gautama between 558 B.C. and 478 B.C., Indian Buddhist Qigong has the longest history. Buddhism was imported into China during the Eastern Han Dynasty (Dong Han, 東漢) (58 A.D.), and the Chinese Buddhists gradually learned its methods of spiritual cultivation. Their practice was influenced by traditional Chinese scholar and medical Qigong, which had been developing for about two thousand years. What resulted was a unique system of training which was different from its ancestors.

According to the fragments of documents that are available, it is believed that at least in the first few hundred years after Buddhism's importation, only the philosophy and doctrines were passed down to the Chinese. The actual methods of cultivation and Qigong training were not known. There are several reasons for this:

1. Because of the difficulty of transportation and communication at that time, the transferal of Buddhist documents from India to China was limited. Although a few Indian priests were invited to China to preach, the problems remained.
2. Even if the documents had been transferred, because of the profound theory and philosophy of Buddhism, very few people were qualified and could really translate the documents accurately from Indian language to Chinese. This problem was exacerbated by the different cultural backgrounds. Even today, different cultural backgrounds are always the main problem in translating accurately from one language to another.
3. The main reason was probably that most of the actual training methods need to be taught and guided personally by an experienced master. Only a limited amount can be learned from the documents. This problem was exacerbated by the tradition of passing information secretly from master to disciples.

You can see that the transferal process was very slow and painful, especially with regard to the actual training methods. For several hundred years it was believed that as long as you were able to purify your mind and sincerely strive for Buddhahood, sooner or later you would succeed. This situation was not improved until Da Mo (達磨) wrote the *Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic* and the *Marrow/Brain Washing Classic* (*Yi Jin Jing, Xi Sui Jing*; 易筋經·洗髓經). Then finally there was a firm direction for the training to reach the goal of Buddhahood.

Before Da Mo, Chinese Buddhist Qigong training was very similar to Chinese scholar Qigong. The main difference was that while scholar Qigong aimed at maintaining health, Buddhist Qigong aimed at becoming a Buddha. Meditation is a necessary process in training a priest to stay emotionally neutral. Buddhism believes that all human spiritual suffering is caused by the seven passions and six desires (Qi Qing Liu Yu, 七情六慾). As mentioned earlier, the seven passions are *happiness* (Xi, 喜), *anger* (Nu, 怒), *sorrow* (Ai, 哀), *joy* (Le, 樂), *love* (Ai, 愛), *hate* (Hen, 恨), and *desire* (Yu, 慾). The six desires are the six sensory pleasures derived from the *eyes*, *ears*, *nose*, *tongue*, *body*, and *mind*. Buddhists also cultivate within themselves a neutral state separated from the four emptinesses of *earth*, *water*, *fire*, and *wind* (Si Da Jie Kong, 四大皆空). They believe that this training enables them to keep their spirits independent so they can escape from the cycle of repeated reincarnation.

Tibetan Buddhism has always been kept secret and isolated from the outside world. Because of this, it is very difficult to decide when exactly Tibetan Buddhism was established. Because Tibet is near India, it is reasonable to assume that Tibetan Qigong training has had more influence from India than Chinese Qigong has. However, over thousands of years of study and research, the Tibetans established their

own unique style of Qigong meditation. The Tibetan priests are called Lamas (La Ma, 喇嘛), and many of them also learned martial arts. Because of the different cultural background, not only are the Lamas' meditation techniques different from those of the Chinese or Indian Buddhists, but their martial techniques are also different. Tibetan Qigong meditation and martial arts were kept secret from the outside world, and were therefore called "Mi Zong" (秘宗) which means "secret style." Generally speaking, Tibetan Qigong and martial arts did not spread into Chinese society until almost the Qing Dynasty (清朝) (1644-1912 A.D.). Since then, however, they have become more popular.

Daoist Qigong. Like the Buddhists, the Daoists believe that if they can build up their Shen (神) so that it is independent and strong, they can escape from the cycle of repeated reincarnation. When a Daoist has reached this stage, he has reached the goal of enlightenment. It is said that he has attained eternal life. However, if he cannot build his Shen quite strong enough before he dies, his soul or Shen will not go to hell, and he can control his own destiny, either remaining a spirit or being reborn as a human. They believe that it is only possible to develop the human spirit while in a body, so that the continual cycle of rebirth is necessary to attain enlightenment.

Daoist monks, in the past, found that in order to enhance their Shen, they had to cultivate the Qi which was converted from their Essence (Jing, 精). The normal Daoist Qigong training process is: 1. To convert the Essence (Jing) into Qi (Lian Jing Hua Qi, 練精化氣); 2. To nourish the Shen with Qi (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 練氣化神); 3. To refine the Shen and return into nothingness (Lian Shen Fan Xu, 練神返虛); and 4. To crush the nothingness (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空).

The first step involved firming and strengthening the Jing, then converting this Jing into Qi through meditation or other methods. This Qi is then led to the top of the head to nourish the brain and raise up the Shen. When a Daoist has reached this stage, it is called "the three flowers meet at the top" (San Hua Ju Ding, 三花聚頂). The three flowers mean essence (Jing), Qi, and Shen. This stage is necessary to gain health and longevity. Finally, the Daoist can start training to reach the goal of enlightenment. However, the biggest obstacle to achieving this goal is the emotions, which affect the thinking and upset the balance of the Shen. This is the reason why Daoists hid themselves away in the mountains, away from other people and their distractions. Usually they also abstained from eating meat, feeling that it muddled thinking and increased the emotions, leading the Shen away from self-cultivation.

An important part of this training to prolong life is Yi Jin Jing (易筋經) (Muscle/Tendon Changing) and Xi Sui Jing (洗髓經) (Marrow/Brain Washing) Qigong. While the Yi Jin Jing Qigong is able to build up an abundant Qi in the Lower Dan Tian and strengthen the physical body, the basic idea of Xi Sui Jing Qigong is to lead the Qi to the brain to raise up the Shen and keep the Qi circulating in the marrow so that the marrow stays clean and healthy. Your bone marrow manufactures most of

your blood cells. The blood cells bring nourishment to the organs and all the other cells of the body, and also take waste products away. When your blood is healthy and functions properly, your whole body is well-nourished and healthy, and can resist disease effectively. When the marrow is clean and fresh, it manufactures a plentiful quantity of healthy blood cells which will do their job properly. Your whole body will stay healthy, and the degeneration of your physical body will be significantly slowed.

For longevity, although the theory is simple, the training is very difficult. You must first learn how to build up your Qi at the Lower Dan Tian (human bio-battery) and fill up your eight Qi vessels, and then you must know how to lead this Qi into the bone marrow to “wash” the marrow. Except for some Daoist monks, there are very few people who have lived longer than 150 years. The reason for this is that the training process is long and hard. You must have a pure mind and a simple lifestyle so that you can concentrate entirely on the training. Without a peaceful life, your training will not be effective.

Many Daoist Qigong styles are based on the theory of cultivating both the Shen and the physical body. It is said: “Talking about human temperament (i.e. Shen) and life (i.e. physical life), (one) must cultivate both of them. (One must) place the lead (Pb, i.e. Yin) and mercury (Hg, i.e. Yang) together (i.e. they interact harmoniously). This message (secret) is hard to comprehend. Cultivating human temperament is to refine self-being, while cultivating life is to return the essence (i.e. convert the essence into Qi). The Xin (i.e. mind) is the house of the Shen while the body is the residence of the Qi. Life is the Qi. Those who cultivate human temperament, must blend the body and the Xin as a family, Jing (essence), Qi, and Shen must be combined into one unit. Then the cultivation of life can be approached.” This paragraph emphasizes that in order to reach enlightenment, you must cultivate both human temperament and physical life. The key to reaching it is to harmonize the Yin and Yang. Yin is the spiritual body related to human temperament while Yang is the physical life related to physical condition. Only when these Yin and Yang are harmonious and three treasures (essence, Qi, and Shen) have reached the top (brain) are you able to achieve the goal of enlightenment.

In Daoism, there are generally three ways of training: Golden Elixir Large Way (Jin Dan Da Dao, 金丹大道), Dual Cultivation (Shuang Xiu, 雙修), and Herb Picking Outside of the Dao (Dao Wai Cai Yao, 道外採藥). Generally, there are two meanings to Dual Cultivation; one is to cultivate the Qi with a partner, while the other implies both the cultivation of the human temperament and physical body.

Golden Elixir Large Way teaches the ways of Qigong training within yourself. This approach believes that you can find the elixir of longevity or even enlightenment within your own body.

In the second approach, Dual Cultivation, a partner is used to balance one's Qi more quickly. Most people's Qi is not entirely balanced. Some people are a bit too positive, others too negative, and individual channels are also positive or negative. If

you know how to exchange Qi with your partner, you can help each other out and speed your training. Your partner can be either the same sex or the opposite.

The third way, Herb Picking Outside of the Dao, uses herbs to speed and control the cultivation. Herbs can be plants such as ginseng, or animal products such as musk from the musk-deer. To many Daoists, herbs also mean the Qi which can be obtained from sexual practices.

According to the training methods used, Daoist Qigong can again be divided into two major schools: Peaceful Cultivation Division (Qing Xiu Pai, 清修派) and Plant and Graft Division (Zai Jie Pai, 栽接派). This division was especially clear after the Song and Yuan dynasties (960-1367 A.D., 宋、元). The meditation, training theory and methods of the Peaceful Cultivation Division are close to those of the Buddhists. They believe that the only way to reach enlightenment is Golden Elixir Large Way, according to which you build up the elixir within your body. Using a partner for the cultivation is immoral and will cause emotional problems which may significantly affect the cultivation.

However, the Plant and Graft Division claims that their approach of using Dual Cultivation and Herb Picking Outside of the Dao in addition to Golden Elixir Large Way makes the cultivation faster and more practical. For this reason, Daoist Qigong training is also commonly called “Dan Ding Dao Gong” (丹鼎道功) which means “the Dao Training in the Elixir Crucible.” The Daoists originally believed that they would be able to find and purify the elixir from herbs. Later, they realized that the only real elixir was in your body.

1.5 FOUR REFINEMENTS 四化

Before you start to read this section, you should first clearly understand the concepts of Jing (精) (essence), Qi (氣) (inner energy or bioelectricity), and Shen (神).

Understanding Jing (精) (Essence), Qi (氣) (internal energy), and Shen (神) spirit) is one of the most important requirements for effective Qigong training. They are the root of your life and therefore also the root of Qigong practice. Jing, Qi, and Shen are called “San Bao” (三寶), which means “The Three Treasures,” “San Yuan” (三元), which means “The Three Origins,” or “San Ben” (三本), which means “The Three Foundations.” In Qigong training, a practitioner learns how to “firm his Jing” (Gu Jing; 固精), (Gu means to firm, solidify, retain, and conserve) and how to convert it into Qi. This is called “Lian Jing Hua Qi” (練精化氣), which means “to refine the Jing and convert it into Qi.” Then he learns how to lead the Qi to the head to convert it into Shen (also called nourishing Shen). This is called “Lian Qi Hua Shen” (練氣化神), which means “to refine the Qi and convert it into (nourish) the Shen.” Finally, the practitioner learns to use his energized Shen to govern the emotional part of his personality. This is called “Lian Shen Liao Xing” (練神了性), or “to refine the Shen to end human (emotional) nature.”

These conversion processes are what enable you to gain health and longevity. As a Qigong practitioner, you must pay a great deal of attention to these three elements during the course of your training. If you keep these three elements strong and healthy, you will live a long and healthy life. If you neglect or abuse them, you will frequently be sick and will age fast. Each one of these three elements or treasures has its own root. You must know the roots so that you can strengthen and protect your three treasures.

Jing (Essence) 精. The Chinese word Jing means a number of things depending on where, when, and how it is used. Jing can be used as a verb, an adjective, or a noun. When it is used as a verb, it means “to refine.” For example, to refine or purify a liquid to a high quality is called “Jing Lian” (精煉). When it is used as an adjective, it is used to describe or signify something which is “refined,” “polished” and “pure without mixture.” For example, when a piece of art work is well done, people say “Jing Xi” (精細), which means “delicate and painstaking” (literally, “pure and fine”), or “Jing Liang” (精良), which means “excellent quality” (literally “pure and good”). When Jing is used to apply to personal wisdom or personality, it means “keen” and “sharp.” For example, when someone is smart or wise, they are called “Jing Ming” (精明), which means “keen and clever.” When Jing is applied to a thought, it means “profound” or “astute,” and indicates that the idea or plan was well and carefully considered. When used as a noun for an object, Jing means “the essence” or “the essentials.” When it is used for the energy side of a being, it means “spirit” or “ghost.” Since Chinese tradition believes that the male sperm or semen is the refined and the most essential product of a man, Jing also means sperm or semen.

When Jing is used as “essence,” it exists in everything. Jing may be considered the primal substance or original source from which a thing is made, and which exhibits the true nature of that thing. When Jing refers to animals or humans, it means the very original and essential source of life and growth. This Jing is the origin of the Shen which makes an animal different from a tree. In humans, Jing is passed down from the parents. Sperm is called “Jing Zi” (精子), which means “the sons of essence.” When this essence is mixed with the mother’s Jing (egg), a new life is generated which, in certain fundamental respects, IS an intertwinement of the Jings of both parents. The child is formed, the Qi circulates, and the Shen grows. The Jing which has been carried over from the parents is called “Yuan Jing” (元精), which means “Original Essence.”

Once you are born, Original Jing is the fountainhead and root of your life. It is what enables you to grow stronger and bigger. After birth you start to absorb the Jing of food and air, converting these Jings into the Qi which supplies your body’s needs. You should understand that when Jing is mentioned in Qigong society, it usually refers to Yuan Jing (元精) (Original Jing). Qigong practitioners believe that Original Jing is the most important part of you, because it is the root of your body’s Qi and

Shen. The quantity and quality of Original Jing is different from person to person, and it is affected significantly by your parents' health and living habits while they were creating you. Generally speaking, it does not matter how much Original Jing you have carried over from your parents. If you know how to conserve it, you will have more than enough for your lifetime. According to Chinese medicine, you probably cannot increase the amount of Jing you have. However, it is believed that Qigong training can improve its quality.

In Qigong training, knowing how to conserve and firm your Original Jing is of primary importance. To conserve means to refrain from abusing your Original Jing through overuse. For example, if you overindulge in sexual activity, you will lose Original Jing faster than other people and your body will degenerate faster. To firm your Jing means to keep and protect it. For example, you should know how to keep your kidneys strong. Kidneys are thought of as the residence of Original Jing. When your kidneys are strong, the Original Jing will be kept firm and will not be lost without reason. The firming of your Original Jing is called "Gu Jing" (固精), which is translated "to make solid, to firm the essence." Only after you know how to retain (meaning to conserve and firm) your Original Jing can you start seeking ways to improve its quality. Therefore, conserving and firming your Jing is the first step in training. You need to know the root of your Jing, where the Original Jing resides, and how Original Jing is converted into Qi.

The root of your Original Jing before your birth is in your parents. After birth, this Original Jing stays in its residence, the kidneys, which are now also its root. When you keep this root strong, you will have plenty of Original Jing to supply your body.

Qi (Inner Energy) 氣. Since we have already discussed Qi at the beginning of this chapter in general terms, we will now discuss Qi in the human body and in Qigong training. We must note that as of yet, there is no clear explanation of the relationship between all of the circulatory systems and the Qi circulatory system. The Western world knows of the blood system, nervous system, and lymphatic system. Now, there is the Qi circulation system from China. How are, for example, the Qi and the nervous system related? If the nervous system does not match the Qi system, where does the sensing energy in the nervous system come from? How is the lymphatic system related to the Qi system? All of these questions are still waiting for study by modern scientific methods and technology. Here, we can only offer you some theoretical assumptions based on the research conducted up to now.

Chinese medical society believes that the Qi and blood are closely related. Where Qi goes, blood follows. That is why the term "Qi-Xue" (氣血) (Qi Blood) is commonly used in Chinese medical texts. It is believed that Qi provides the energy for the blood cells to keep them alive. As a matter of fact, it is believed that blood is able to store Qi, and that it helps to transport air Qi to every cell of the body.

If you look carefully, you can see that the elements of your physical body such as the organs, nerves, blood, and even every tiny cell are all like separate machines, each with their own unique function. Just like electric motors, if there is no current in them, they are dead. If you compare the routes of the blood circulatory system, the nervous system, and the lymphatic system with the course of the Qi channels, you will see that there is a great deal of correspondence. This is simply because Qi is the energy needed to keep them all alive and functioning.

Now, let us look at your body as an entire system. Your body is composed of two major parts. The first is your physical body, and the second is the energy supply which your body needs to function. Your body is like a factory. Inside your body are many organs, which correspond to the machines required to process the raw materials into the finished product. Some of the raw materials brought into a factory are used to create the energy with which other raw materials will be converted into finished goods. The raw materials for your body are food and air, and the finished product is life.

The Qi in your body is analogous to the electric current which the factory power plant obtains from coal or oil. The factory has many wires connecting the power plant to the machines, and other wires connecting telephones, intercoms, and computers. There are also many conveyer belts, elevators, wagons, and trucks to move material from one place to another. It is no different in your body, where there are systems of intestines, blood vessels, complex networks of nerves and Qi channels to facilitate the supply of blood, sensory information and energy to the entire body. However, unlike the digestive, circulatory, and central nervous systems — all of whose supportive vessels can be observed as material structures in the body — Qi channels cannot be observed as physical objects. The circulatory, nervous, and Qi systems all possess similar configurations within the body, and are distributed rather equally throughout the body.

In a factory, different machines require different levels of electrical current. It is the same for your organs, which require different levels of Qi. If a machine is supplied with an improper level of power, it will not function normally and may even be damaged. In the same way, when the Qi level supplied to your organs is either too positive or too negative, they will be damaged and will degenerate more rapidly.

In order for a factory to function smoothly and productively, it will not only need high quality machines, but also a reliable power supply. The same goes for your body. The quality of your organs is largely dependent upon what you inherited from your parents. To maintain your organs in a healthy state and to insure that they function well for a long time, you must have an appropriate Qi supply. If you don't have it, you will become sick.

Qi is affected by the quality of air you inhale, the kind of food you eat, your life-style, and even your emotional make-up and personality. The food and air are like the fuel or power supply, and their quality affects you. Your life-style is like the way

you run the machine, and your personality is like the management of the factory.

The above discussion clarifies the role that Qi plays in your body. However, it should be noted that the above metaphor is an oversimplification, and that the behavior and function of Qi is much more complex and difficult to handle than the power supply in a factory. You are neither a factory nor a robot, you are a human being with feelings and emotions. These feelings also have a major influence on your Qi circulation. For example, when you pinch yourself, the Qi in that area will be disturbed. This Qi disturbance will be sensed through the nervous system and interpreted by your brain as pain. No machine can do this. Moreover, after you have felt the pain, unlike a machine, you will react either as a result of instinct or conscious thought. Human feelings and thought affect Qi circulation in the body, whereas a machine cannot influence its power supply. In order to understand your Qi, you must use your feelings, rather than just the intellect, to sense its flow and make judgments about it.

Now a few words as to the source of human Qi. As mentioned, Chinese doctors and Qigong practitioners believe that the body contains two general types of Qi. The first type is called Pre-Birth Qi or Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣). Original Qi is also called “Xian Tian Qi” (先天氣) which, translated literally, means “Pre-Heaven Qi.” Heaven here means the sky, so Pre-Heaven means before the baby sees the sky. In other words, before birth. Original Qi comes from converted Original Jing (Yuan Jing, 元精) which you received before your birth. This is why Original Qi is also called Pre-Birth Qi. Once the Qi is converted, it will stay at its residence, the Lower Dan Tian.

The second type is called Post-Birth Qi or “Hou Tian Qi” (後天氣), which means “Post-Heaven Qi.” This Qi is drawn from the Jing (i.e. essence) of the food and air we take in. As mentioned, the residence of the Post-Birth Qi is the Middle Dan Tian. This Qi then circulates and mixes with the Pre-Birth or Dan Tian Qi (Original Qi) (Yuan Qi, 元氣). Together, they circulate down, passing into the Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈), from where they are distributed to the entire body.

Pre-Birth Qi is commonly called “Water Qi” (Shui Qi, 水氣) because it is able to cool down the Post-Birth Qi, which is called “Fire Qi” (Huo Qi, 火氣). Fire Qi usually brings the body to a positive (Yang) state, which stimulates the emotions and scatters and confuses the mind. When the Water Qi cools your body down, the mind will become clear, neutral and centered. It is believed in Qigong society that Fire Qi supports the emotional part of the body, while Water Qi supports the wisdom part.

After the Fire Qi and Water Qi mix, this Qi will not only circulate to the Governing Vessel, but will also supply the “Thrusting Vessel” (Chong Mai, 衝脈) which will lead the Qi directly up through the spinal cord to nourish the brain and energize the Shen and soul. As will be discussed later, energizing the brain and raising the Shen are very important in Qigong practice.

Qi can be divided into two major categories, according to its function. The first is called “Ying Qi” (營氣) (Managing Qi), because it manages or controls the functioning of the body. This includes the functioning of the brain and the organs, and even body movement. Ying Qi is again divided into two major types. The first type circulates in the channels and is responsible for the functioning of the organs. The circulation of Qi to the organs and the extremities continues automatically as long as you have enough Qi in your reservoirs and you maintain your body in good condition. The second type of Ying Qi is linked to your Yi (mind, intention). When your Yi decides to do something, for example to lift a box, this type of Ying Qi will automatically flow to the muscles needed to do the job. This type of Qi is directed by your thoughts, and is therefore closely related to your feelings and emotions.

The second major category of Qi is “Wei Qi” (衛氣) (Guardian Qi). Wei Qi forms a shield on the surface of the body to protect you from negative outside influences. Wei Qi is also involved in the growth of hair, the repair of skin injuries, and many other functions on the surface of the skin. Wei Qi comes from the Qi channels, and is led through millions of tiny channels to the surface of the skin. This Qi can even extend beyond the body. When your body is positive (Yang), this Qi is strong, and your pores will be open. When your body is negative (Yin), this Qi is weak, and your pores will close up to preserve Qi.

In the summertime, your body is Yang and your Qi is strong, so your Qi shield will be bigger and extend beyond your physical body, and the pores will be wide open. In the wintertime, your body is relatively Yin (negative), and you must conserve your Qi in order to stay warm and keep pathogens out. The Qi shield is smaller and doesn't extend out much beyond your skin.

Wei Qi functions automatically in response to changes in the environment, but it is also influenced significantly by your feelings and emotions. For example, when you feel happy or angry, the Qi shield will be more open than when you are sad.

In order to keep your body healthy and functioning properly, you must keep the Ying Qi functioning smoothly and, at the same time, keep the Wei Qi strong to protect you from negative outside influences such as the cold. Chinese doctors and Qigong practitioners believe that the key to doing this is through Shen. Shen is considered to be the headquarters which directs and controls the Qi. Therefore, when you practice Qigong you must understand what your Shen is and know how to raise it. When people are ill and facing death, very often the ones with a strong Shen, which is indicative of a strong will to live, will survive. The people who are apathetic or depressed will generally not last long. A strong will to live raises the Shen, which energizes the body's Qi and keeps you alive and healthy.

In order to raise your Shen, you must first nourish your brain with Qi. This Qi energizes the brain so that you can concentrate more effectively. Your mind will then be steady, your will strong, and your Shen raised.

As a Qigong practitioner, in addition to paying attention to the food and air you take in, it is important for you to learn how to generate Water Qi and how to use it more effectively. Water Qi can cool down the Fire Qi and, therefore, slow down the degeneration of the body. Water Qi also helps to calm your mind and keep it centered. This allows you to judge things objectively. During Qigong practice, you can sense your Qi and direct it effectively.

In order to generate Water Qi and use it efficiently, you must know how and where it is generated. Since Water Qi comes from the conversion of Original Jing, they both have the kidneys for their root. Once Water Qi is generated, it resides in the Lower Dan Tian below your navel. In order to conserve your Water Qi, you must keep your kidneys firm and strong.

Shen (Spirit) 神. It is very difficult to find an English word to exactly express Shen. As in so many other cases, the context determines the translation. Shen can be translated as spirit, god, immortal, soul, mind, divine, and supernatural.

When you are alive, Shen is the spirit which is directed by your mind. When your mind is not steady it is said “Xin Shen Bu Ning” (心神不寧), which means “the (emotional) mind and spirit are not at peace.” The average person can use his emotional mind to energize and stimulate his Shen to a higher state, but at the same time he must restrain his emotional mind with his wisdom mind (Yi). If his Yi can control the Xin, the mind as a whole will be concentrated and the Yi can govern the Shen. When someone’s Shen is excited, however, it is not being controlled by his Yi, so we say, “Shen Zhi Bu Qing” (神志不清), which means “the spirit and the will (generated from Yi) are not clear.” In Qigong it is very important for you to train your wisdom Yi to control your emotional Xin effectively. In order to reach this goal, Buddhists and Daoists train themselves to be free of emotions. Only in this way are they able to build a strong Shen which is completely under their control.

When you are healthy you are able to use your Yi to protect your Shen and keep it at its residence: the Upper Dan Tian. Even when your Shen is energized, it is still controlled. However, when you are very sick or near death, your Yi becomes weak and your Shen will leave its residence and wander around. When you are dead, your Shen separates completely from the physical body. It is then called a “Hun” (魂) (soul). Often the term “Shen Hun” (神魂) is used, since the Hun originated with the Shen. Sometimes “Shen Hun” is also used to refer to the spirit of a dying person since his spirit is between “Shen” and “Hun.”

Chinese believe that when your Shen reaches a higher and stronger state, you are able to sense and feel more sharply, and your mind is more clever and inspired. The world of living human beings is usually considered a Yang world (Yang Jian, 陽間), and the spirit world after death is considered a Yin world (Yin Jian, 陰間). When your Shen has reached its higher, more sensitive state, you can transcend your mind’s normal capacity. Ideas beyond your usual grasp can be understood and controlled,

and you may develop the ability to sense or even communicate with the Yin world. This supernatural Shen is called “Ling” (靈). “Ling” describes someone who is sharp, clever, nimble, and able to quickly empathize with people and things. It is believed that when you die this supernatural Shen will not die with your body right away. It is this supernatural Shen (Ling Shen, 靈神) which still holds your energy together as a “ghost” or “Gui” (鬼). Therefore, a ghost is also called “Ling Gui” (靈鬼) meaning “spiritual ghost” or “Ling Hun” (靈魂) meaning “spiritual soul.”

From this you can see that Ling is the supernatural part of the spirit. It is believed that if this supernatural spiritual soul is strong enough, it will live for a long time after the physical body is dead and have plenty of opportunity to reincarnate. Chinese people believe that if a person has reached the stage of enlightenment or Buddhahood when he is alive, after he dies this supernatural spirit will leave the cycle of reincarnation and live forever. These spirits are called “Shen Ming” (神明), which means “spiritually enlightened beings,” or simply “Shen” (神), which here implies that this spirit has become divine. Normally, if you die and your supernatural spiritual soul is not strong, your spirit has only a short time to search for a new residence in which to be reborn before its energy disperses. In this case, the spirit is called “Gui” (鬼), which means “ghost.”

Buddhists and Daoists believe that when you are alive you may use your Jing and Qi to nourish the Shen (Yang Shen, 養神) and make your Ling strong. When this “Ling Shen” (靈神) is built up to a high level, your will is able to lead it to separate from the physical body even while you are alive. When you have reached this stage, your physical body is able to live for many hundreds of years. People who can do this are called “Xian” (仙), which means “immortal,” “god,” or “fairy.” Since “Xian” originated with the Shen, the “Xian” is sometimes called “Shen Xian” (神仙), which means “immortal spirit.” The “Xian” is a living person whose Shen has reached the stage of enlightenment or Buddhahood. After his death, his spirit will be called “Shen Ming” (神明).

The foundation of Buddhist and Daoist Qigong training is to firm your Shen, nourish it, and grow it until it is mature enough to separate from your physical body. In order to do this, the Qigong practitioner must know where the Shen resides, and how to keep, protect, nourish, and train it. It is also essential for you to know the root or origin of your Shen.

Your Shen resides in the Upper Dan Tian (i.e. brain). When you concentrate on The Third Eye, the Shen can be firmed. Firm here means to keep and to protect. When someone’s mind is scattered and confused, his Shen wanders. This is called “Shen Bu Shou She” (神不守舍), which means “the spirit is not kept at its residence.”

According to Qigong theory, though your Xin (Emotional Mind, 心) is able to raise up your spirit, this mind can also make your Shen confused, so that it leaves its residence. You must constantly engage your Yi (Wisdom Mind) to restrain and control your Shen at its residence.

In Qigong, when your Qi can reach and nourish your Shen efficiently, your Shen will be energized to a higher level and, in turn, conduct the Qi in its circulation. Shen is the force which keeps you alive, and it is also the control tower for the Qi. When your Shen is strong, your Qi is strong and you can lead it efficiently. When your Shen is weak, your Qi is weak and the body will degenerate rapidly. Likewise, Qi supports the Shen, energizing it and keeping it sharp, clear, and strong. If the Qi in your body is weak, your Shen will also be weak.

Once you know the residence of your Shen, you must understand the root of your Shen, and learn how to nourish it and make it grow. We have already discussed Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精), which is the essential life inherited from your parents. After your birth, this Original Essence is your most important energy source. Your Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) is created from this Original Essence, and it mixes with the Qi generated from the food you eat and the air you breathe to supply the energy for your growth and activity. Naturally, this mixed Qi is nourishing your Shen as well. While the Fire Qi will energize your Shen, Water Qi will strengthen the wisdom mind to control the energized Shen. The Shen which is kept in its residence by the Yi, which is nourished by the Original Qi, is called Original Shen (Yuan Shen, 元神). Therefore, the root of your Original Shen is traced back to your Original Essence. When your Shen is energized but restrained by your Yi it is called “Jing Shen” (精神), literally “Essence Shen,” which is commonly translated “Spirit of Vitality.”

Original Shen is thought of as the center of your being. It is able to make you calm, clear your mind, and firm your will. When you concentrate your mind on doing something, it is called “Ju Jing Hui Shen” (聚精會神), which means “gathering your Jing to meet your Shen.” This implies that when you concentrate, you must use your Original Essence to meet and lift up your Original Shen, so that your mind will be calm, steady, and concentrated. Since this Shen is nourished by your Original Qi, which is considered Water Qi, Original Shen is considered Water Shen.

For those who have reached a higher level of Qigong practice, cultivating the Shen becomes the most important subject. For Buddhists and Daoists the final goal of cultivating the Shen is to form or generate a Holy Embryo (Xian Tai, 仙胎) from their Shen, and nourish it until the spiritual baby is born and can be independent. For the average Qigong practitioner however, the final goal of cultivating Shen is to raise up the Shen through Qi nourishment while maintaining control with the Yi. This raised-up Shen can direct and govern the Qi efficiently to achieve health and longevity.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that your Shen and brain cannot be separated. Shen is the spiritual part of your being and is generated and controlled by your mind. The mind generates the will, which keeps the Shen firm. The Chinese commonly use Shen (spirit) and Zhi (will) together as “Shen Zhi” (神志) because

they are so related. In addition, you should understand that when your Shen is raised and firm, this raised spirit will firm your will. They are mutually related, and assist each other. From this you can see that the material foundation of the spirit is your brain. When it is said “nourish your Shen,” it means “nourish your brain.” As we discussed previously, the original nourishing source is your Jing. This Jing is then converted into Qi, which is led to the brain to nourish and energize it. In Qigong practice, this process is called “Fan Jing Bu Nao” (還精補腦), which means “to return the Jing to nourish the brain.”

Now you have grasped a clearer idea of Jing, Qi, and Shen, you can understand how these three treasures interact in Buddhist and Daoist Qigong practice. Next, we will explain the Daoist and Buddhist training procedures of how to use these treasures to reach the final Dao of spiritual enlightenment.

After more than fourteen hundred years of meditation training and accumulation of experience both Chinese Buddhist and Daoist societies agree that in order to reach the final goal of enlightenment or Buddhahood, you must follow four necessary steps of training:

- A. Refine the Essence and Convert it into Qi (Lian Jin Hua Qi) 練精化氣**
—One Hundred Days of Building the Foundation (Bai Ri Zhu Ji, 百日築基)
- B. Purify Qi and Convert it into Shen (Lian Qi Hua Shen) 練氣化神**
—Ten Months of Pregnancy (Shi Yue Huai Tai, 十月懷胎)
- C. Refine Shen and Return it to Nothingness (Lian Shen Huan Xu) 練神返虛**
—Three Years of Nursing (San Nian Bu Ru, 三年哺乳)
- D. Crush the Nothingness (Fen Sui Xu Kong) 粉碎虛空**
—Nine Years of Facing the Wall (Jiu Nian Mian Bi, 九年面壁)

You can see that the Dao of reaching enlightenment or becoming a Buddha requires years of training. It covers four stages of conversion training, first of which is the formation of a “spiritual baby embryo” (one hundred days of building the foundation) which is commonly called “Sheng Tai” (Holy Embryo, 聖胎) or “Ling Tai” (Spiritual Embryo, 靈胎). This is followed by ten months of nourishing and growing, three years of nursing, and finally nine years of educating this baby Shen until it matures and becomes independent. In Daoist and Buddhist Qigong training, it is believed that in order to reach the final goal of enlightenment and Buddhahood, you must first build up an independent spiritual energy body. After your physical body is dead, this spiritual body will continue to live eternally and will not re-enter the path of reincarnation.

After the Xi Sui Jing training secret was revealed to laymen, a change took place in the training. Because the final goal of enlightenment or Buddhahood was not the main reason laymen practiced, and because the final step of training was hard to understand and to reach, many Xi Sui Jing practitioners who were looking only for longevity considered that there were only the first three steps of training, and ignored the final step. For this reason, there are very few documents which can lead you to this final step. We will now discuss these four training stages in the next four sections.

Refine the Essence and Convert it into Qi 練精化氣. This first step is also called: “One Hundred Days of Building the Foundation” (Bai Ri Zhu Ji, 百日築基) Daoists always visualize the achievement of enlightenment first in terms of forming a “Spiritual Embryo” (Ling Tai, 靈胎) or “Holy Embryo” (Sheng Tai, 聖胎), and then its feeding, nursing, and education until it can be independent. For many Xi Sui Jing laymen practitioners who are looking only for longevity, this spiritual baby is considered a “baby elixir” which will lead them to longevity. It is believed that the healthy and harmonious interaction of Yin and Yang Qi is necessary to form this spiritual baby. Yin is considered the mother while Yang is considered the father. In order to make this happen, Yin and Yang Qi must be abundant, and both the mother (Yin) and father (Yang) must be strong enough to balance each other. In order to obtain abundant Yin Qi and Yang Qi in your body, you must learn the methods of building up these two Qis. In order to make Yin and Yang interact harmoniously, you must also learn how to adjust Kan (water) and Li (fire). Therefore, in this stage, you are leading both Yang and Yin Qi to Huang Ting (黃庭) (i.e. Yellow Yard), and causing them to interact harmoniously. This process is called “Kan and Li” (坎離) (Figure 1-22)

What is the Holy Embryo or Spiritual Embryo then? According to a Daoist document: “Baby Embryo means the golden elixir. To produce the golden elixir is to carry the baby embryo.”⁸ Elixir implies the Qi which is able to extend your life. Since elixir is precious like gold, it is commonly called “golden” elixir. Therefore, to establish a baby Embryo means to build up and to store the Qi at the Huang Ting cavity. It is also stated by the Daoist, Xue Dao Guang (薛道光), that: “What is the baby? It is the elixir. The elixir is unique and is the real sole Qi. It is the mother’s Qi of the heaven and the earth. Mother swallows the air and belongs to the five internal (organs) thus to yield the baby’s Qi. It is just like a cat keeping a mouse which cannot escape. The Qi of mother and son mutually love each other in the womb and finally combine and generate a baby. Therefore, it is said: ‘The sole Grand Ultimate contains the real Qi. The way of containing the real sole Qi is just like human carries embryo, when ten months have completed, then there is a birth.’”⁹ This saying implies that in order to generate life, you need the heaven Qi (Yang Qi) and the earth Qi (Yin Qi). When these two Qi combine and interact, life can be produced. A human is just like the heaven and the earth which need the interaction of the Yang

Qi and Yin Qi so the baby Embryo can be generated. That means in order to produce the golden elixir, you must learn how to absorb the Qi from food and air (Yang Qi or Fire Qi) and also the Qi from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) (Yin Qi or Water Qi). When this happens, the Qi can be stored to a high level and thus the foundation of longevity established.

From the scientific point of view, what you are doing is storing electric charge (i.e. Qi) in the Huang Ting, which has been recognized as the second human brain and is able to store charge.^{10,11} This second brain is connected with the brain in our head by the spinal cord (i.e. Thrusting Vessel). The spinal cord belongs to the human central nervous system, and is a highly electrically conductive tissue. Because of this, the top brain and the lower brain, though appearing to be two physically, act as one in function. The top brain is able to generate thinking (EMF Electromotive force), while the lower brain acts as a battery and supplies the charge to the entire body. Whenever EMF is generated, the charge (Qi) is led to activate the physical body and therefore the mind and Qi are manifested into physical action.

In order to have a strong and abundant Qi circulation and supply, you must have a concentrated and powerful mind from the top brain (high EMF) and a good battery which is able to supply the Qi to an abundant level in the lower brain. When these two brains are healthy and functioning harmoniously, you may use your mind to rebuild your immune system and extend your life significantly.

In addition, once you have an abundant Qi storage in Huang Ting, you can lead this Qi to the brain to nourish and activate more brain cells for functioning which can result in the raising of your Shen to a high level. That is what is meant by the “Holy Embryo” being formed and cultivated in the Huang Ting and then led to the brain where it matures. This is the second stage of training enlightenment, which will be discussed in the next section.

How is the Huang Ting able to store Qi and bear the Spiritual Embryo? Let us first analyze the Huang Ting. This cavity is also called “Yu Huan Xue” (Jade Ring

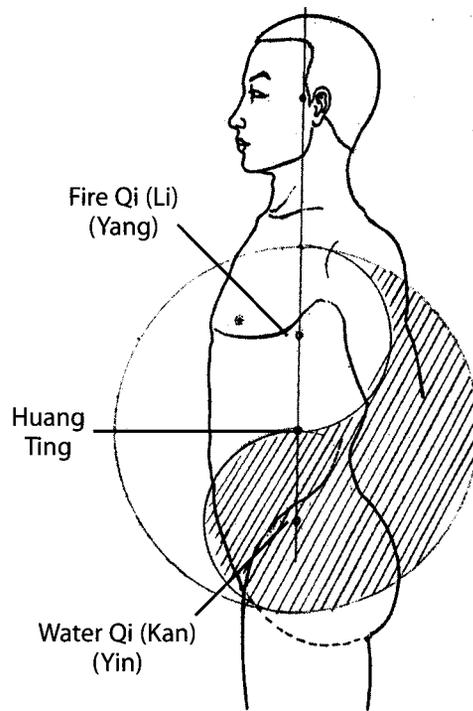


Figure 1-22. Kan and Li Interaction

Cavity, 玉環穴). This name was first used in the book, *Illustration of the Brass Man Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (*Tong Ren Yu Xue Zhen Jiu Tu*, 銅人俞穴針灸圖), by Dr. Wang, Wei-Yi (王唯一). The Daoist book *The Extra Comprehension of Wang Lu* (*Wang Lu Shi Yu*, 王錄識餘) said: “In the Illustration of the Brass Acupuncture and Moxibustion it was recorded (that) within the body’s cavities of viscera and bowels, there is a Jade Ring (Yu Huan, 玉環), (but) I do not know what the Jade Ring is.”¹² Later, the Daoist Zhang, Zi-Yang (張紫陽) explained the place in which the immortals form the elixir: “The heart is on the top, the kidneys are underneath, spleen is on the left, and the liver is on the right. The life door is in the front, the closed door is in the rear, they are connected like a ring, it is white like cotton with an inch diameter. It encloses the Essence and the refinement of the entire body. This is the Jade Ring.”¹³ Life door (Sheng Men, 生門) means “navel” which is the door to connect to the life of the fetus. The closed door (Mi Hu, 密戶) implies “Mingmen (Gv-4)” (命門) which is located between the L2 and L3 vertebrae.

From the point of view of Chinese medical science, the Huang Ting is connected with the Conception and Thrusting Vessels through Yinjiao (Co-7, 陰交). Through the Thrusting Vessel it is again connected with the top brain and with the Governing Vessel at the Huiyin (Co-1, 會陰). Since the gut is considered as the second brain which has a similar structure to the brain in the head, this area is able to store a great amount of charge (Qi).^{10,11} Furthermore, the Huang Ting (黃庭) (Yellow Yard) is located between the diaphragm (Middle Dan Tian), which is where the Yang (Fire) Qi is stored, and the Lower Dan Tian, where the Yin (Water) Qi is stored. In addition, we know from the Yi Jin Jing training that the fasciae in the Huang Ting area are able to store an abundance of Qi. This increases the amount of Qi available to the “Holy Embryo.”

The question remaining is, though the gut is considered as the second brain and has a similar structure to the brain in the head, how can this lower brain create a spiritual embryo? Though scientists today believe that the second brain has the capability of memory, they are not sure whether this brain is able to think. If this brain is unable to think, then no EMF can be generated. This implies that the Shen cannot be grown here and this place is only used to facilitate interaction between the Yang and Yin Qis, building them to a high level. Naturally, we do not know yet whether through this interaction of Yin and Yang a seed of “Holy Embryo” can be generated.

In Yi Jin Jing training you generate Qi by converting the Original Essence in the internal Kidneys. However, this process does not provide enough Qi for the Xi Sui Jing training. To remedy this lack, more Essence must be drawn from the external Kidneys (testicles or ovaries) through stimulation, and converted into Qi.

From the standpoint of modern medicine, part of the health benefit of Xi Sui Qigong comes from its use of self-stimulation to increase the production of hormones. Hormones are secretions of the endocrine glands, which include the testicles

and ovaries. They are complex chemical compounds which are transported by the blood or lymph, and they have powerful and specific effects on the functions of the body.

Hormones can stimulate activity, thinking, growth; they are directly related to the strength of your life force. They determine the length of a person's life, and whether he is healthy or sickly. They stimulate your emotions and lift your mood, or they depress you physically and emotionally. Traced back far enough, hormones are the very original source which stimulates man's thinking and ideas, and even generates the enthusiasm for energetic activity. If you know how to generate these hormones and use them properly, you can energize yourself to a degree quite impossible for the ordinary person.

Many important hormones can now be produced synthetically. However, you must understand that taking synthetic hormones is like taking vitamins: it is an unnatural and discontinuous process. However, if you generate a hormone within your own body, it is natural and continuous. In addition, when you produce the hormones yourself, your body is able to tune into and adjust to the gradual increase in production. However, if the hormones come from outside of your body, your body is subject to an abrupt change. This can produce side effects. Many hormones can be obtained from certain foods. However, these hormones will not be able to provide enough Qi to fill up the vessels. The Daoists say: "To nourish the body by using medicine is not as good as by eating food; eating food is not as good as being nourished by Qi."¹⁴

You can see that Xi Sui Qigong is a way of stimulating the production of hormones in the body. These hormones are then used to increase the quantity of Qi, which in turn is used to nourish the brain and raise the Shen of Vitality.

You can only develop a healthy spiritual baby when you have sufficient Qi. To form the embryo, you will need at least one hundred days of proper diet, accurate Kan and Li adjustment, correct stimulation of the sexual organ to increase the Essence (semen), and abstinence from sex in order to build up a strong Qi body combining Yin and Yang. In Xi Sui Jing Qigong, the process of refining Essence (semen) and converting it into Qi over the first one hundred days is considered the laying of the foundation. The process is called "hundred days to build the foundation" (Bai Ri Zhu Ji, 百日築基). The Spiritual Embryo will be healthy only if it has this foundation.

The testicle Essence (semen) is one of the main sources of human energy. When a person's semen is full, his vital energy is high and his life force is strong. When a man loses the balance between the production and the loss of his semen, his emotions will also lose their balance. This will cause his mental body to be depressed, resulting in the speedy degeneration of his physical body. When a person has normal semen or hormone production, he will have enough Essence to stimulate his

growth, thinking, and daily activities. According to the Xi Sui Jing, part of this Essence is converted into Qi and then transported to the brain. This Qi will stimulate the brain to do the thinking and energize the body for activity. When a man's semen production is insufficient, his brain will not obtain enough Qi nourishment and the Shen will be weakened in its governing of the Qi circulation in the body. This will result in sickness.

Therefore, the first step in Xi Sui Jing training for men is to increase the semen production and learn to convert this semen into Qi faster and more effectively than the body normally does. With the average mature man, the supply of semen will fill up naturally without any stimulation. It usually takes two to three weeks to replenish the supply of semen once it is empty. Whenever the semen and sperm are full, a hormone stimulates the brain and generates sexual desires. This hormone can sometimes energize a man and make him depressed, or impatient and inclined to lose his temper.

You should understand that the time needed for the semen to replenish itself varies from individual to individual. For example, if someone has sex frequently, his semen will be replenished faster. However, if a man refrains from sexual activity for a period of time, his testicles will start to function more slowly. If a man has sex too often, his semen level will be low most of the time, and this will affect the conversion of hormones into the Qi which is transported to the brain. In addition to this, the four Qi vessels in the legs receive most of their Qi from the conversion of semen. If you have too much sex you will find that your legs become weak because the Qi in these vessels is deficient. It is therefore advisable to control your sexual activity.

When a boy is growing, his body produces semen during his sleep from midnight until morning. This is because Qi circulation starts in the head (Baihui, Gv-20, 百會) and circulates down the front of the body, following the Conception Vessel, and reaches the Huiyin (Co-1, 會陰) cavity in the perineum at midnight. (The Huiyin and Baihui, which are connected by the Thrusting Vessel, are both major points of Qi flow at midnight). When this Qi circulation reaches the Huiyin, it will stimulate the genitals and interact with the Original Qi from the Dan Tian and generate semen Qi (Jing Qi, 精氣).

Young boys or healthy male adults usually have erections when they wake in the morning. This starts quite soon after birth. Of course, young boys cannot generate any sperm, and they do not have any sexual urge. Chinese medical society believes that once a boy is formed, his testicles continuously generate semen. This interacts with the Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) which resides at the Dan Tian and generates Semen Qi (Jing Qi, 精氣), which is transported to the brain (including the pituitary gland) to stimulate the boy's growth. When a boy's Yuan Qi is healthy and strong, the interaction of semen and Yuan Qi will also be effective and the boy will grow normally and be healthy. Once the boy reaches his teens, his testicles will also start

to generate sperm. Normally, more is produced than is needed for growth, so his Qi is full and abundant, and he is therefore healthy and strong.

It is interesting to note that, starting at midnight when you are sleeping and your entire body is relaxed, the Semen Qi from the testicles (or ovaries) will naturally start to nourish the brain and rebalance its energy. It is this rebalancing which generates dreams.

In Xi Sui Jing training, there are two general methods for stimulating semen production. One is Wai Dan, and uses physical stimulation, and the other is Nei Dan, and uses mental stimulation. The more the groin is stimulated, the more semen will be produced and the longer this organ will function normally. You must also learn how to convert this semen into Qi more efficiently than is normally done automatically by your body. If you do not effectively convert the excess semen into Qi, lead it to the brain, and spread it out among the twelve channels, the abundant semen will cause your sexual desire to increase and your emotions to lose their balance.

Theoretically, the method of Essence-Qi conversion is very simple. You lead the Qi from the four vessels in the legs upward to the Huang Ting cavity and from there to the brain. This causes the Qi in the four leg vessels to become deficient, and more Essence must be converted to replenish the supply. In this case, you are “digesting” or “consuming” the extra Essence which is generated. The process of leading the Qi upward is called “Lian Qi Sheng Hua” (練氣昇華), which means “train the Qi to sublimate.” Because the Qi is an energy form, when it is led upward, it is like the water molecules sublimated upward from ice. When the Qi is led upward and used to nourish the brain, it is called “Huan Jing Bu Nao” (還精補腦), which means “return the Essence to nourish the brain.”

In the beginning you might not be able to convert the semen into Qi efficiently. However, the more you practice the better it will become. Generally speaking, there are two major styles of semen conversion: Buddhist and Daoist. Buddhists emphasize mainly the Nei Dan conversion process, which is generally much slower than that of the Daoists, who in addition to the Nei Dan also train Wai Dan conversion. Buddhist priests are not allowed to get married. However, they still have sexual desires, which occur naturally because of the body’s production of hormones and semen. In order to eliminate their desire, they found the way of converting the semen into Qi and using this Qi to energize the brain and reach Buddhahood. In Nei Dan conversion training, the Yi and the breathing are the keys to leading the Qi upward. With the coordination of the posture and some controlling movements at the Huiyin and anus, the Qi can be led upward to the Huang Ting and brain.

In addition to the Nei Dan practice, Daoists also discovered several Wai Dan conversion methods. The theory remains the same, for leading the Qi in the vessels of the legs upward to the Huang Ting and brain. Generally speaking, Wai Dan methods are faster. As mentioned previously, the Daoists use primarily Wai Dan

methods of testicle stimulation to increase the semen production and Wai Dan Essence-Qi conversion. The exercise for stimulating semen production is called “Gao Wan Yun Dong” (辜丸運動) (Testicle Exercises) or “Chi Lao Huan Ji Yun Dong” (遲老返機運動) (Slowing the Aging and Return the Functioning Exercises). Remember, only when you have enough semen will you be able to convert it into Qi more effectively than the average person can. The more semen you have, the more Qi you can convert.

Purify Qi and Convert it into Shen 練氣化神—Ten Months of Pregnancy (Shi Yue Huai Tai, 十月懷胎). After 100 days of the first stage of building the foundation, the Spiritual Embryo is formed in the Huang Ting. This is the seed from which the baby grows. Now, in this second stage, you will need ten months of pregnancy (28 days for each Chinese month). During these ten months you must continue to provide purified Qi for the baby, just as a mother supplies nutrition and oxygen to the embryo. During these ten months you must train to convert the semen into Qi more efficiently while the Spiritual Embryo is growing continuously. If the conversion process is insufficient, the embryo will wither and die before its birth, or else will be born unhealthy, and may not continue to grow well. During this stage, you are growing the Embryo into a complete baby that has its own life.

Theoretically, in the previous stage you learned how to lead the Yin and Yang Qi to the Huang Ting and make them interact harmoniously. The Spiritual Embryo was formed from this interaction. In this second stage, you are continuing to build up your Qi in the Huang Ting. Normally, it will take you ten months of Qi building to reach a high level of storage. Only then, in the third stage of the training, will you have enough Qi to activate the extra brain cells and increase the functioning of the brain. When you have done this, you can raise up your Shen to a higher level.

While you are carrying the Spiritual Embryo, you must also do one important thing. As the Embryo is growing, the Shen in this Embryo is also being formed. Therefore, in this second stage of training, in addition to the Qi nourishment, you also need to lead your Shen to this embryo. It is like a mother whose Shen and concentration must be in the Embryo while it is growing in order to obtain a spiritually healthy baby. In this stage, the mother’s habits and what she thinks will be passed on to the baby.

This means that in this stage, with the mother’s help, the Spiritual Embryo will also grow its own Shen. That is why this stage is called “Purifying the Qi and converting it into Shen.” Remember, only when the Embryo has its own Shen can it be born as a healthy, whole being. The Daoist Li, Qing-An (李清菴) said: “Shen and Qi combine to originate the super spiritual quality. Xin (心) and breath are mutually dependent to generate the Holy Embryo.”¹⁵ That means that in order to grow a Holy Embryo you must first learn to combine your Shen and Qi in the Huang Ting. Only then will the Holy Embryo have a supernatural, spiritual quality. Xin is your

emotional mind, and the breathing is the strategy of the training. Only when you concentrate all of your emotion and coordinate it with your breathing in this Holy Embryo will it be able to grow and mature.

Many Qigong practitioners believe that once the Embryo is formed, it should be moved upward to the Upper Dan Tian to grow. As a matter of fact, it does not matter where your Embryo grows. First you must have plenty of Qi, then you must learn how to use this Qi to nourish the embryo, and finally, you must help the Embryo to build up its own Shen. As long as you are able to store an abundance of Qi to activate and energize your brain cells and raise up your Shen, where the Embryo grows is not important. It is said in a Daoist document, *Real Commentaries of the Golden Elixir* (金丹真傳), that: “When the elixir is accomplished in ten months, the Holy Embryo is completed. (At this time,) the real person will appear.”¹⁶ After you have meditated for ten months and the Qi is abundantly stored in the Huang Ting, you then lead the Qi upward to nourish your brain. When this happens, the mask on your face drops off. You are facing your true self. The real you with truth. This is the stage of self-recognition.

Refine Shen and Return it to Nothingness 練神返虛—Three Years of Nursing (San Nian Bu Ru, 三年哺乳). After you have carried the Spiritual Embryo for ten months, it is mature enough for birth. This means that the Qi you are storing in the Huang Ting is strong enough, and your Shen has helped this Embryo to build up its own Shen. In this third stage of training you lead this Embryo upward to the Upper Dan Tian to be born. According to the experience of many people, the Upper Dan Tian (brain) is the place, through the Yintang (M-HN-3, 印堂) cavity (The Third Eye), where you can sense and communicate with natural energy and the spirit world. This place is called “Shen Gu” (神谷) (Spiritual Valley) in Qigong, because the physical structure of this place looks like the entrance to a deep valley formed by the two lobes of the brain. Also, when you sense or communicate with the natural energy, it seems to be happening in a deep valley which is able to reach the center of your thinking and also far beyond what you can see.

According to science today, we understand less than 12% of the functions of the brain. This means that the brain contains many mysteries which today’s science still cannot explain. I believe that the valley formed by the two brain lobes is the key to the length of brain waves. Energy resonates in this valley, and is transmitted outward like waves from the antenna of a radio station. I believe that the Upper Dan Tian or third eye is the gate which allows our thoughts to be passed to others, and also allows us to communicate with nature.

If a person can activate a larger percentage of his brain cells through Qigong, he will probably increase the sensitivity of his brain to a wider range of wavelengths. He may be able to perceive more things more clearly, and he may have a greatly heightened sensitivity to natural energy. He may even be able to sense other peo-

ple's brain waves, and know what they are thinking without oral communication. At this level, when your Qi is abundant and your concentration very high, it is also possible to use your mind and Qi to cure people. This is the stage of self-awareness and awakening.

If my hypothesis is right, then the greatest obstacle to advancing your training, once you are able to lead the Qi to activate the brain cells, is learning how to open the gate of The Third Eye. Physically, beneath the skin is the skull, and underneath it is the frontal sinus. Both the skull and the skin can block much of the energy which is emitted from or received by the brain. This is why this gate is considered closed. We now know that bones are semi-conductors. This means that, through meditation (i.e. concentration), we are able to build up a significant potential difference (EMF) between the brain and outside of the head. Once this potential difference has reached the "threshold" level, the bone will become a conductor. When this happens, the energy in your brain can communicate with the outer world without blockage. In higher stages of spiritual Qigong this gate is called "Xuan Guan" (玄關), which means "tricky gate." When the Qi is condensed in this gate to open it up through concentration, the process is called "Kai Qiao" (開竅), or "opening the tricky gate." According to the Chinese Qigong society, once this gate has opened, it remains open.

Another gate is located at the top of your head. It is called "Baihui" (Gv-20) (百會) in acupuncture or "Ni Wan Gong" (泥丸宮) in Qigong. This gate is also called "Gu Shen" (谷神), which means "Valley Spirit." This is another place where your brain can communicate with natural energy. However, Chinese Qigong does not consider it the spiritual center, but regards it as a gate which is able to exchange Qi with nature. This gate is commonly used to absorb heaven Qi (from the sun and stars) and earth Qi (Earth's magnetic field) to nourish the body.

If you are able to understand this discussion, then you will not be confused by the third stage of enlightenment Qigong training. In the third stage, you lead the abundant Qi to the brain to activate more of the unused brain cells and increase the brain's working efficiency. In addition, you are using the abundant Qi through concentration, focusing, and meditation to open the gate. This means that the spiritual baby is born in the Upper Dan Tian.

After you have opened this gate and have given birth to the spiritual baby, you must nurse it. Nursing means to watch, to take care of, and to nourish continuously. This process in enlightenment or brain washing Qigong practice is called "Yang Shen" (養神), or "to nurse the Shen." You can see that in this stage you are continuously nursing the baby as it grows stronger and stronger. In other words, you are increasing the Qi there so that you can sense nature more easily. When you have reached this stage, since you are training your Shen to sense nature, it will gradually become used to staying with the natural energy and it will slowly forget

the physical body. Since the natural spirit cannot be seen, it is nothingness. Nothingness also refers to the absence of emotional feelings and desires. This is why this stage of training is called “Refining Shen and Returning it to Nothingness.” Since your spiritual body originated from physical and emotional nothingness, in this training, you are returning to nothingness. The Buddhists call this “Si Da Jie Kong” (四大皆空), or “Four Large are Empty.” This means that the four elements (earth, fire, water, and air) are absent from the mind so that you are completely indifferent to worldly temptations.

When your spiritual baby is born, you will need to nurse it for at least three years. Just like a real baby, it needs to be protected and nurtured until it can be self-sufficient. The spiritual baby needs to stay near the mother’s body to stay alive, so if it travels, it cannot go too far. It is just like a two or three year old baby gradually familiarizing itself with its new environment. Normally, when you have reached this stage, you have approached the first step of enlightenment or Buddhahood.

Crushing the Nothingness 粉碎虛空—Nine Years of Facing the Wall (Jiu Nian Mian Bi, 九年面壁). At this stage you begin to see the spiritual world as the more real one. Crushing nothingness means destroying the illusion which connects the physical world with the spiritual plane. According to Buddhism, your spirit cannot separate from your physical body completely because it is still connected to the human world by emotional feelings and desires. Only if you are able to free yourself from all of these bonds of human emotions and desires will your Shen be able to separate from the physical body and be independent.

The final target of a monk is to reach enlightenment or become a Buddha. In order to become a Buddha, he must continue to develop his Shen until it can be independent, and exist even after the physical body dies. When a monk has reached this level his Qi can energize his brain so strongly that it interacts with the energy (electrical charges) in the air, and generates a glow around his head. In fact, this glow or halo may even occur in earlier training stages. This glow around the head is frequently shown in pictures of the Buddha, especially when he is shown meditating in the dark. This is identical to the glow, or halo, shown in pictures of Western saints.

In order to reach this level, the spiritual baby must grow stronger and be neutral. It is called “nine years of facing the wall.” When you face the wall, you will overcome the temptation of external things, and you can calm down more easily. During these nine years of meditation your spiritual baby learns how to live in the natural energy and continue to grow even when the physical body is dead.

This stage is called “Lian Shen” (練神), or “train the Shen.” At this time your Shen receives its education from the natural energy. Of course, this normally takes more than twelve years. In fact, the Buddhists believe that it usually takes many lifetimes. You strengthen your Baby Shen in every lifetime, and if you continue to train, one day you can reach the level of enlightenment. However, there are also many

Buddhists and Daoists who believe that the entire training depends on the individual's understanding. They believe that if a person could really understand the training process, he would be able to reach enlightenment in virtually no time at all. I am inclined to agree with these people. I have found that in virtually every area of endeavor, if a person knows the principles and studies them, he will find ways to reach the goal in a far shorter time than those who do not think and ponder about what they are doing.

To conclude this section, I would like to point out that what this book can teach you is how to do the first two stages of enlightenment or brain washing Qigong training, which can give you a long and healthy life. There are many documents about the first two stages of training, but very little is known about the last two stages of enlightenment training. However, I believe that if your desire is sincere and you keep your mind on your goal, you will understand what you need to do in order to reach the next level. Remember: *no one can understand you better than yourself.*

1.6 FIVE REGULATINGS 五調

No matter what kind of Qigong you practice, either Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹) or External Elixir (Wai Dan, 外丹), there are normally five regulating processes involved in reaching the final goal of practice. These regulating processes are: regulating the body (Tiao Shen, 調身), regulating the breathing (Tiao Xi, 調息), regulating the emotional mind (Tiao Xin, 調心), regulating the Qi (Tiao Qi, 調氣), and regulating the spirit (Tiao Shen, 調神). These five regulatings are commonly called “Wu Tiao” (五調).

Before discussing them you should first understand the word Tiao (調) which I translate as “regulating.” Tiao (調) is constructed of two words, Yan (言) which means “speaking” or “negotiating” and Zhou (周) which means “to be complete,” “to be perfect,” or “to be round.” Therefore, the meaning of Tiao means to adjust or to tune up until it is complete and harmonious with others. It is just like tuning a piano so it can be harmonized with others. Tiao means to coordinate, to cooperate, and to harmonize with others by continuing adjustment. That means all of the five items, body, breathing, mind, Qi, and Shen, need to be regulated with each other until the final harmonious stage is reached.

The key to regulating is through self-feeling. You should know that *feeling is the language of the mind and the body.* Without feeling, we will not know if there is anything wrong with the body. The deeper and the more sensitively you are able to feel, the more profoundly you are able to regulate. Conversely, the deeper you are able to regulate, the more profoundly you can feel. Naturally, it will take a lot of effort and time to practice until your feeling can be profound and your regulating can reach the finest stage. This kind of inner feeling training is called Gongfu of self-internal-

observation (Nei Shi Gongfu, 內視功夫) (i.e. internal feeling or awareness). The higher your Gongfu is, the deeper and more refined you are able to harmonize with others.

At the beginning of regulating, your mind is absorbed in regulating, to make the regulating happen. Therefore, it is not natural and smooth. The final stage of regulating is “regulating without regulating.” In Chinese Qigong society, it is said: “The real regulating is without regulating.”¹⁷ It is just like when you are learning how to drive a car, your mind is on the road, the steering wheel, the accelerator, the clutch, etc. This is the stage of regulating. However, after you have driven for a long time, your mind does not have to be regulating. In this stage, you are driving without driving. Everything will happen naturally and smoothly. It is the same for all five regulatings in Qigong. You must keep practicing until regulating is unnecessary. When this happens, your feeling can be profound.

Next, we will review these five regulatings briefly. We will also point out the importance of mutual coordination and harmonization. For more detail about these five regulatings, you may refer to the book, *The Root of Chinese Qigong*, published by YMAA.

1.6.1 Regulating the Body (Tiao Shen, 調身)

If the posture in meditation practice is incorrect, the body will be tense and this will affect the smooth Qi circulation and also disturb the mind. “(When) shape (i.e. body posture) is not correct, then the Qi will not be smooth. (Conversely, when) the Qi is not smooth, the Yi (i.e. Wisdom Mind) will not be at peace. (When) the Yi is not at peace, then the Qi is disordered.”¹⁸

From this, you can see that the purposes of regulating the body are:

1. **To find the most natural, relaxed, and comfortable posture or position for meditation.** This will allow the Qi to flow freely, with the breathing natural and smooth, and with the mind relaxed and focused, so the Shen can be raised up to a higher level.
2. **To provide the best conditions for self-internal-feeling.** When your physical body is regulated correctly, your feeling can reach to a deep and profound level. Your judgment will be more accurate. The efficiency of your mind-body communication will increase to a high level. It is through this profound feeling that your mind is able to lead the Qi to circulate effectively in the body.
3. **To coordinate and harmonize the physical center and mental center.** By using the Yi (意) (Wisdom Mind) and correct feeling, you can bring your physical center and mental center to a high level of coordination and harmony.

1.6.2 Regulating the Breathing (Tiao Xi, 調息)

When you have relaxed your body to the stage of *regulating without regulating*, then you should pay attention to the breathing. Breathing is considered as the strategy in Qigong practice. When the breathing methods are correct, the mind can lead the Qi efficiently and effectively. Therefore, Qigong breathing methods have been studied and practiced since ancient times. In many cases, the methods were kept top secret in each style. For example, “Embryonic Breathing” (Tai Xi, 胎息) is the crucial key to storing Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). However, the actual training techniques have only been passed down orally. Since breathing is the main subject of this book, I will explain in more detail the general concepts of regulating the breathing, including its purpose, theory, and some techniques in this section.

Purposes of Regulating the Breathing

1. **To take the oxygen in sufficiently and smoothly, and also to expel the carbon dioxide efficiently.** Approximately one trillion (10^{12}) cells die every day in a healthy person.¹⁹ In order to slow down the aging process, the same number of new healthy cells must be produced each day. We also know that oxygen is one of the necessary elements in the production of the new cells. Without ample supply of oxygen, the new cells constructed will be deformed or unhealthy. In addition, dead cells in the body must be excreted to prevent problems in the body. The whole job of supplying sufficient oxygen and bringing out the dead cells (i.e. carbon) falls to our respiratory system. Therefore, if you are able to inhale and exhale deeply, you will have reached this goal which allows the smooth replacement of the cells.
2. **To serve the strategic purpose in Qigong practice of regulating the body’s Yin and Yang.** It is well known that breathing is Kan (water, 坎) and Li (fire, 離), and able to adjust the body’s Yin and Yang. Inhalation can make the body more Yin, while exhalation can make the body more Yang. Therefore, the methods of how to breathe correctly have become one of the major subjects of study in Chinese Qigong society.
3. **To coordinate and harmonize with the body, the mind, the Qi, and the Shen.** Since breathing is one of the five important regulatings in which a Qigong practitioner must reach a profound level of practice, it plays an important role in coordination and harmonization. For example, concentrating during a deep profound inhalation can make you more calm and the Shen can be more condensed. If you focus during exhalation, the body’s energy can be raising, the mind will be more aroused and Shen can

be raised. In addition, with correct breathing, the Qi can be led by the mind to the desired place more efficiently.

Breathing and Qigong

First let us analyze how Qi circulation relates to your breathing. As mentioned earlier, there are eight Qi vessels (Mai, 脈) which function like reservoirs, and twelve primary Qi channels (Jing, 經) which function like rivers in your body. In addition, there are millions of tiny secondary channels called “Luo” (絡) branching out from the twelve channels to the surface of the skin to generate a shield of Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣). This Qi is responsible for hair growth and for defending against negative outside influences. These tiny channels also enter into the bone marrow (Sui Qi, 髓氣) (i.e. Marrow Qi) to keep it healthy so the blood cells can be produced properly.

Generally speaking, the Qi's circulation happens naturally and automatically in people who do not have Qigong training. However, an experienced Qigong practitioner can use his mind, with the coordination of breathing, to generate an EMF (Electromotive Force) to control the Qi circulation more efficiently. Normally, when the average person exhales, he expands the Qi and leads it from the primary channels to the skin, and the body becomes more Yang (Li). When he inhales, he draws in the Qi and leads it from the primary channels to the bone marrow, and the body becomes more Yin (Kan) (Figure 1-23). When inhalation and exhalation are balanced, the Yin and Yang will be balanced.

As you get older, the length of your breath becomes shorter and shorter, and less Qi is led to the skin and the bone marrow. The Qi starts to stagnate in the skin and the bone marrow, and the skin starts to wrinkle, the hair turns gray or falls out. In addition, fewer blood cells are produced, and these are not as healthy as those produced when you were young. Since the blood cells carry nutrition and oxygen to the entire body, problems start to occur. In other words, you get sick more often, and start to age faster.

You can see that the first key or secret to maintaining your youth is learning how to regulate your breathing. This enables you to control Kan and Li, and consequently the Yin and Yang of your body. Next I would like to summarize how these Kan and Li affect the body's Yin and Yang.

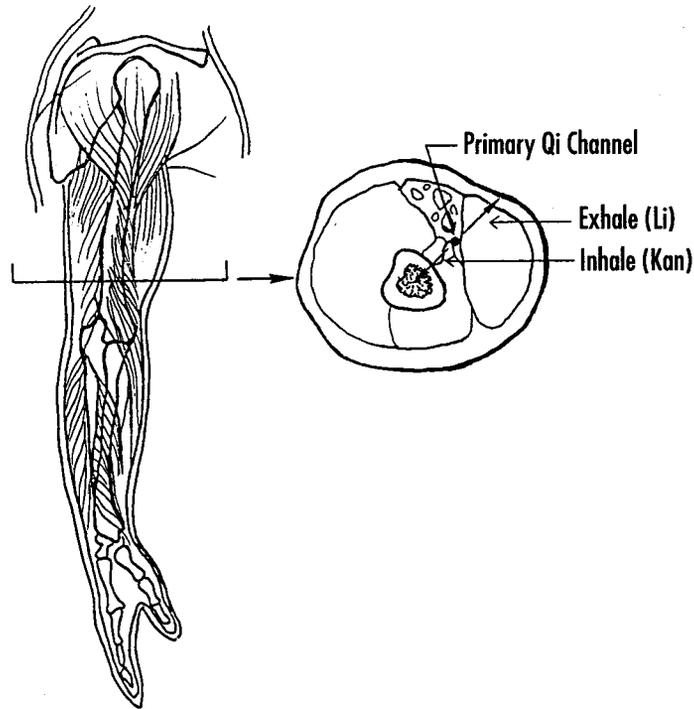


Figure 1-23. The Expansion and Condensing of Qi during Breathing

GENERAL RULES OF BREATHING'S KAN-LI AND YIN-YANG

Kan-Li	Method	Consequence
Kan	Inhalation	Yin
Li	Exhalation	Yang
Kan	Inhale then Hold the Breathing	Yin
Li	Exhale then Hold the Breathing	Yang
Kan	Soft, Slow, Calm, and Long Breathing	Yin
Li	Heavy, Fast, and Short Breathing	Yang
Kan	Normal Abdominal Breathing (Buddhist Breathing)	Yin
Li	Reverse Abdominal Breathing (Daoist Breathing)	Yang

Yin and Yang are relative, not absolute. After defining a reference standard or level, they can then be compared with each other. Yin: Cold, Calm, Physical Body Relaxed and Qi Body Energized. Yang: Hot, Excited, Physical Body Tensed and Energized.

Breathing Methods

1. Normal Breathing (Pin Chang Hu Xi, 平常呼吸)

“Normal Breathing” is also called “Chest Breathing” (Xiong Bu Hu Xi, 胸部呼吸) in which the breathing behavior is normally controlled by emotion. First you should learn how to regulate your normal chest breathing, inhaling and exhaling smoothly with the lungs relaxed. The mind must concentrate on the practice until it is neutral, calm, and peaceful. Then you will find that the breathing can be long and deep and the body can remain relaxed. When you have done this, the heart beat will slow down. You may practice in any comfortable position.

You should practice until the “real regulating” has been reached. “Real regulating” means “regulating without regulating” (無調而自調). When this happens, you will be practicing your breathing all the time since you have built up a natural habit for your breathing. You should understand that the most powerful and the best result of Qigong practice is to bring the practice as a habit into your life-style.

2. Normal Abdominal Breathing (Zheng Fu Hu Xi, 正腹呼吸)

“Normal Abdominal Breathing” is also commonly known as “Buddhist Breathing” (Fo Jia Hu Xi, 佛家呼吸). After you have completed the above training, you then learn how to control your abdominal muscles and coordinate them with the breathing. When you inhale, it expands, and when you exhale, it withdraws. You should practice until the entire process becomes smooth and the entire body remains relaxed. Naturally, your mind must first concentrate on your abdomen at the beginning in order to control the abdominal muscles. After practicing for some time, you will find the entire breathing process becoming natural and smooth. This means that you are now ready to build up Qi at the Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田) (i.e. Qihai, Co-6, 氣海).

Once you have reached this level, you should then coordinate your breathing with the movements of your Huiyin (Co-1, 會陰) (Perineum) and anus. When you inhale, relax the Huiyin and anus, and when you exhale hold them up (Figure 1-24). Remember, you are gently holding up the Huiyin and anus, not tightening them. When you hold them up, they can still remain relaxed. If you tighten them up, you will impede the Qi circulation. When you tense them, you also cause tension in the abdomen and stomach, which can generate other problems. At the beginning, naturally you will need to use your mind to control the muscles of the abdomen. However, with practice, you will realize that your mind does not have to be there to make it happen. That means you are regulating it without regulating. When you have reached this stage, you will feel a wonderful comfortable feeling in the area of the Huiyin and anus. You will also feel that the Qi is led more strongly to the skin than when you did Chest Breathing. It will feel as though your entire body is breathing with you.

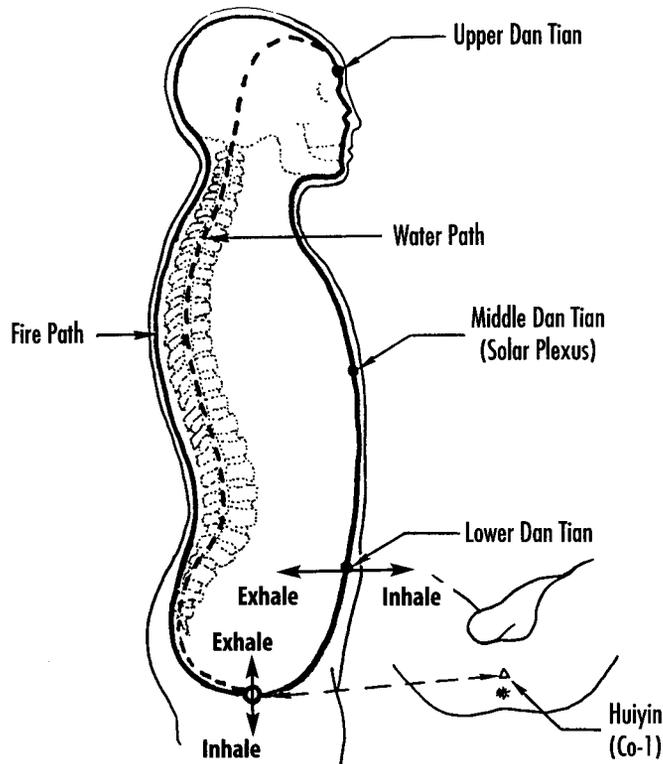


Figure 1-24. Normal Abdominal Breathing

Normal Abdominal Breathing

Neutral (inhalation and exhalation equal length)

Yin —Inhalation (Abdomen Expands, Huiyin Pushed Out Gently)

Yang —Exhalation (Abdomen Withdraws, Huiyin Held Up Gently)

Body Yin (inhalation longer than exhalation)

—Inhalation (Abdomen Expands, Huiyin Pushed Out Gently)

—Exhalation (Abdomen Withdraws, Huiyin Relaxed)

Body Yang (exhalation longer than inhalation)

—Inhalation (Abdomen Expands, Huiyin Pushed Out Gently)

—Exhalation (Abdomen Withdraws, Huiyin Held Up Strongly)

3. Reverse Abdominal Breathing (Fan Fu Hu Xi, Ni Fu Hu Xi,

反腹呼吸·逆腹呼吸)

“Reverse Abdominal Breathing” is also commonly called “Daoist Breathing” (Dao Jia Hu Xi, 道家呼吸). After you have mastered Buddhist Breathing, you should then start this breathing. It is called Reverse Abdominal Breathing because the movement of the abdomen is the reverse of Buddhist Breathing, in other words, the

abdomen withdraws when you inhale and expands when you exhale (Figure 1-25). Relatively speaking, Buddhist breathing is more relaxed compared with Daoist breathing which is more aggressive. As a result, Daoist breathing can make the body more Yang (tensed and excited), while Buddhist breathing makes the body more Yin (calm and relaxed).

Many people today falsely believe that the reverse breathing technique is against the Dao, or nature's path. This is not true. If you observe your breathing carefully, you will realize that we use reverse breathing in two types of situations.

First, when we have an emotional disturbance, we often use reverse breathing. For example, when you are happy and laugh with the sound "Ha, Ha, Ha..." (哈) you are using reverse breathing. While you are making this sound, your stomach or abdominal area is expanding. When this happens, your exhalation is longer than your inhalation, your Guardian Qi expands, and you become hot and sweaty. This is the natural way of releasing the excess energy in your body caused from excitement or happiness.

Also, when you are sad and you cry, making a sound of "Hen" (哼) while inhaling, your abdominal area is withdrawn. When this happens, your inhalation is longer than your exhalation, your Guardian Qi shrinks, and you feel cold and chilly. This is the natural way of preventing energy loss from inside your body. When you are sad, your Shen and your body's energy are low.

The second occasion in which we use reverse breathing is when we intend to energize our physical body, for example when pushing a car or lifting some heavy weight. In order to exert strenuous effort, you first must inhale deeply, and then exhale while pushing the object. If you pay attention, you will again see that you are using reverse breathing.

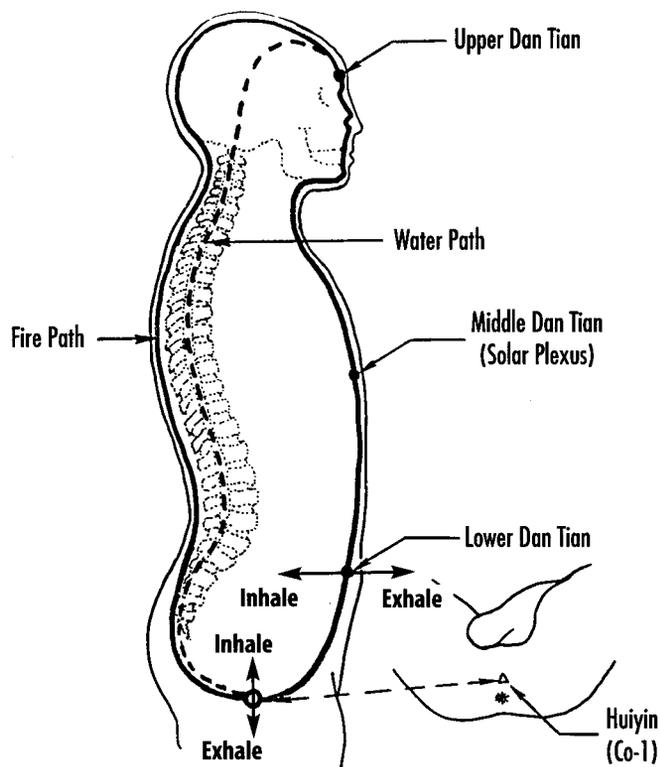


Figure 1-25. Reverse Abdominal Breathing

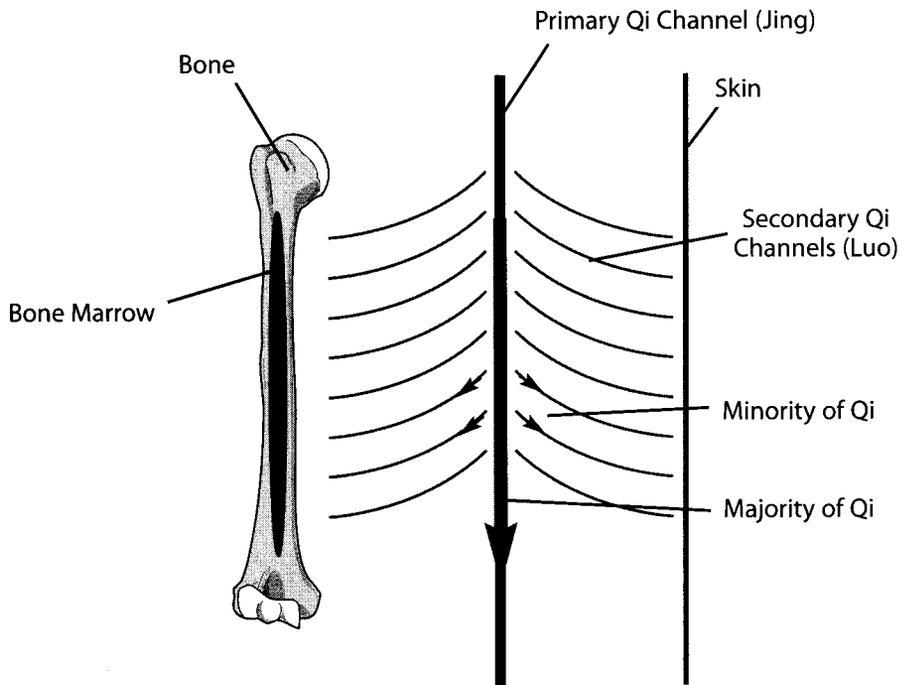


Figure 1-26. In Normal Abdominal Breathing, a Majority of the Qi Circulates in the Primary Qi Channels

From the above discussion, we can generally conclude that when we are disturbed emotionally, or when we have a focused intention in our mind, for example to energize our physical body, we use reverse breathing naturally.

After you have practiced for a while, you may discover that you can now lead the Qi to the skin more efficiently when you exhale than with the Buddhist method. Not only that, you may also discover that you are able to lead the Qi to the bone marrow. To help you understand this more clearly, let us take a comparison of the Normal Abdominal Breathing with the Reverse Abdominal Breathing and see how the Qi can be led in these two different breathing strategies.

In Normal Abdominal Breathing, the majority of Qi circulates in the primary Qi channels (Jing, 經) which connect the internal organs to the extremities. Some Qi also spreads out through the secondary Qi channels (Luo, 絡) and reaches the skin and bone marrow (Figure 1-26). Since the majority of Qi is not led away from the primary Qi channels, the physical body is not energized and therefore the body remains relaxed. Therefore, Normal Abdominal Breathing is able to bring a beginning practitioner to a state of deep relaxation. Normal Abdominal Breathing (Kan) is able to make the body Yin, while Reverse Abdominal Breathing (Li) will cause the body to be Yang.

However, in Reverse Abdominal Breathing, the majority of Qi has been led side-

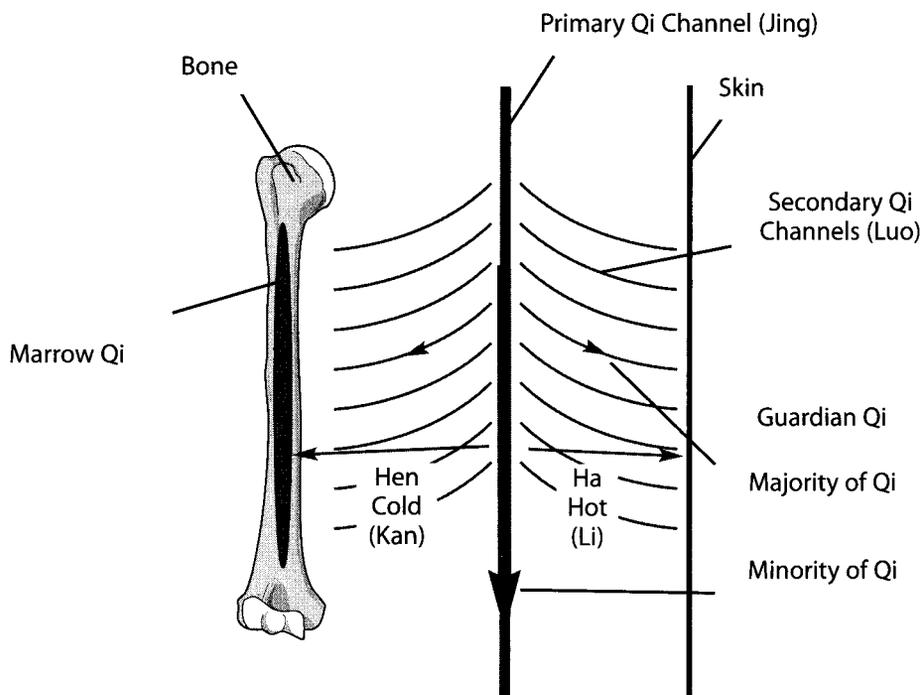


Figure 1-27. In Reverse Abdominal Breathing, a Majority of the Qi is Led to the Skin Surface and Bone Marrow

ways through the secondary Qi channels to the skin and also to the bone marrow, with the minority of Qi circulating in the primary Qi channels (Figure 1-27). As mentioned earlier, normally these Qi circulating behaviors are influenced by the emotional mind or intentional mind. Generally, patterns of Qi circulation related to the mind can be distinguished according to the breathing and emotional behavior. When you are excited and generate a sound of “Ha,” exhalation is longer than inhalation. The Qi is led outward strongly to the skin surface from the primary Qi channels, the muscles are energized and you sweat. The Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) is strengthened and this will result in your body’s becoming more Yang. However, if you are scared or sad while making the Hen sound, your inhalation will be longer than your exhalation. The Qi is led inward to the marrow from the primary Qi channels and the Guardian Qi is weakened. You will feel cold. Naturally, this will result in the body’s being more Yin.

From this brief discussion, you can see that skin breathing (or body breathing) (Ti Xi, Fu Xi, 體息·膚息) can be done much more effectively and efficiently through Reverse Abdominal Breathing. Naturally, the marrow breathing (Sui Xi, 髓息) can be reached more aggressively through Reverse Abdominal Breathing as well. Next, let us summarize some important concepts of Reverse Abdominal Breathing.

Reverse Abdominal Breathing **(Emotionally Disturbed or the Mind has Intention of Yin or Yang)**

Neutral (inhalation and exhalation equal length)

Yin —Inhalation (Abdomen Withdraws, Huiyin Held Up Gently)

Yang —Exhalation (Abdomen Expands, Huiyin Pushed Out Gently)

Body Yin (inhalation longer than exhalation)

—Inhalation Longer (Abdomen Withdraws, Huiyin Held Up Firmly)

—Exhalation (Abdomen Expands, Huiyin Relaxed)

Body Yang (exhalation longer than inhalation)

—Inhalation (Abdomen Withdraws, Huiyin Held Up Gently)

—Exhalation (Abdomen Expands, Huiyin Pushed Out Firmly)

4. Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息)

Embryonic Breathing has always been a huge subject in Qigong practice. This is because it is the breathing method that allows you to store the Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). In other words, through Embryonic Breathing, you are able to charge your bio-battery to a high level. Then your vital energy will be raised, the immune system strengthened, and the physical body can be re-conditioned. However, the most important aspect of Embryonic Breathing is that once your Qi is brought up to a higher storage level, you are able to raise the Qi up through the spinal cord (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to nourish the brain and raise up the Shen. This is the crucial key to spiritual enlightenment. Not only that, Embryonic Breathing is also a crucial key to skin breathing and marrow breathing that is closely related to our immune system and longevity. We will discuss this topic in detail in Chapter 6.

5. Skin—Marrow Breathing (Fu Sui Xi, 膚髓息)

“Skin Breathing” (Fu Xi, 膚息) is sometimes called “Body Breathing” (Ti Xi, 體息). Actually, body breathing involves breathing with the entire body, not just the skin. That means when you exhale you lead the Qi to the muscles and the skin, and when you inhale you lead the Qi to the marrow and the internal organs. Once you have reached a profound level, you should feel that your entire body is transparent to Qi. That means you feel your physical body disappear.

In fact, Skin-Marrow Breathing is closely related to Embryonic Breathing. When the Qi is led to the Real Lower Dan Tian, you are also leading the Qi to the bone marrow and when the Qi is led to enhance and expand the Qi in the Girdle Vessel, you are also leading the Qi to the skin. Since Skin-Marrow Breathing is related to Embryonic Breathing, we will discuss it together with Embryonic Breathing in Chapter 6.

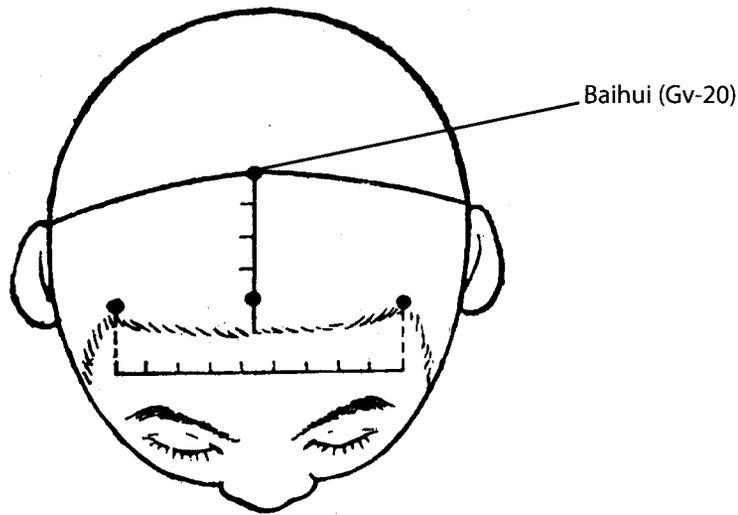


Figure 1-28. The Baihui (Gv-20) Cavity

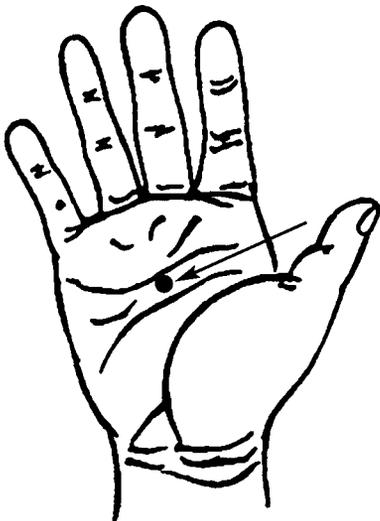


Figure 1-29. The Laogong (P-8) Cavity

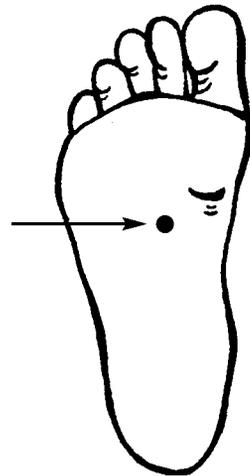


Figure 1-30. The Yongquan (K-1) Cavity

6. Five Gates Breathing (Wu Xin Hu Xi, 五心呼吸)

The five gates or five centers are the head (including the Upper Dan Tian or The Third Eye and Baihui, Gv-20, 百會) (Figure 1-28), the two Laogong (P-8, 勞宮) cavities on the palms (Figure 1-29), and the two Yongquan (K-1, 湧泉) cavities on the soles of the feet (Figure 1-30). Beginners use the Baihui gate on the crown, from

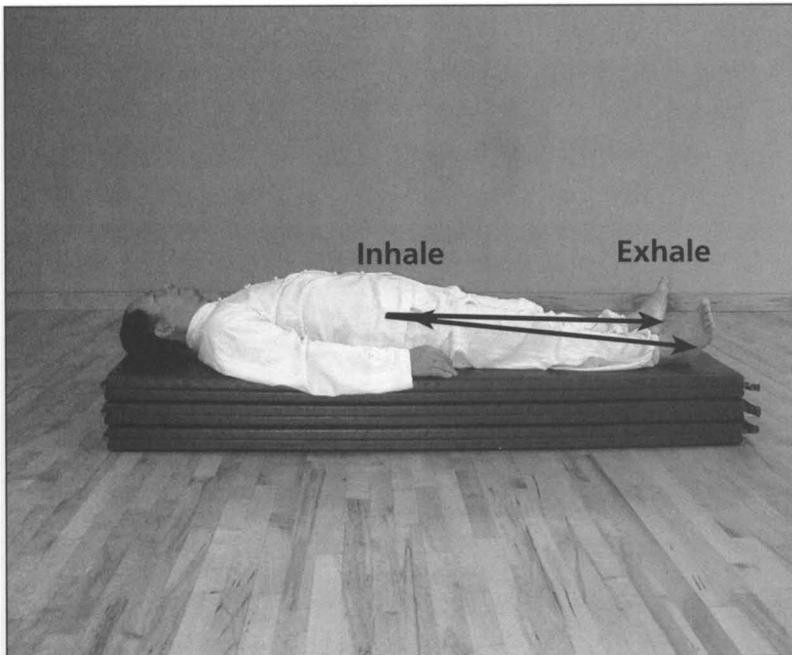


Figure 1-31. Yongquan Breathing with Normal Abdominal Breathing

where it is easier for them to communicate with the natural Qi. Later, the Upper Dan Tian (third eye) will be used instead. When you practice, you first learn Yongquan breathing and then add two Laogong to become Four Gates Breathing. Once you have included the Baihui in your breathing, it is classified as one type of Spiritual Breathing.

Therefore, after you have learned how to build up the Qi at the Lower Dan Tian, you will learn how to coordinate your breathing and lead the Qi to the Yongquan cavities on the bottom of the feet. In this practice, you may choose any desired position. If you wish to practice Yongquan breathing (湧泉呼吸) in a more relaxed way, you may simply lie down and use Normal Abdominal Breathing. When you inhale, you use your mind to lead the Qi from the Yongquan to the Lower Dan Tian and when you exhale, you lead the Qi from the Lower Dan Tian to the Yongquan cavities (Figure 1-31). Naturally, when you inhale, the abdomen is expanded while the Huiyin (Co-1, 會陰) cavity is gently pushing out and when you exhale, the abdomen is withdrawn while the Huiyin cavity is gently held up. Even though the mind is involved in this practice, relaxation remains the major concern. The mind is not aggressively involved in leading the Qi.

However, if you wish to lead the Qi to the the Yongquan strongly, then the intention is strong, and naturally Reverse Abdominal Breathing is more effective. Daoist Qigong practitioners and Chinese martial artists favor this practice. The best posture for this is standing. First inhale, and use your mind to lead the Qi from the

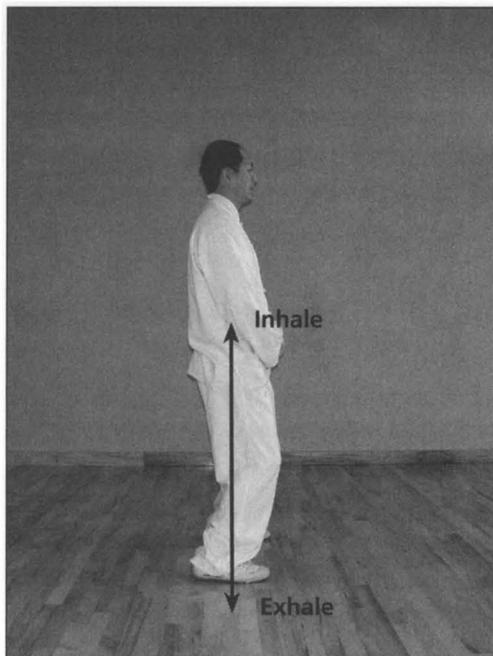


Figure 1-32. Yongquan Breathing with Reverse Abdominal Breathing

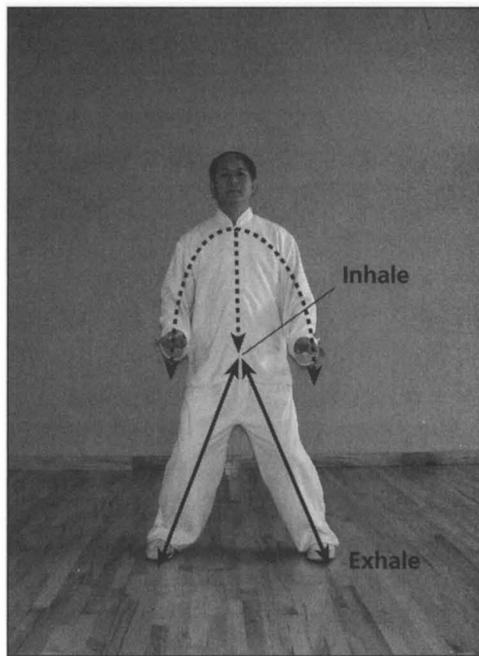


Figure 1-33. Four Gates Qi Breathing

Yongquan cavities to the Lower Dan Tian, and when you exhale, your mind leads the Qi to the Yongquan cavities while slightly squatting down and imaging your are pushing your feet down into the ground (Figure 1-32). Naturally, in this practice, when you inhale, the abdomen is drawn inward while the Huiyin cavity is held up, and when you exhale, the abdomen expands while the Huiyin cavity is pushed out.

Yongquan cavity breathing is also called “Sole Breathing” (Zhong Xi, 踵息) as described by the well-known Daoist scholar, Zhuang Zi (莊子), during the Chinese Warring States Period (戰國, 403-222 B.C.). He said: “The ancient truthful persons (i.e., persons who have attained the Dao), ... their breathing was deep and profound. The real persons use the soles to breathe while the laymen use the throat to breathe.”²⁰ From this, you can see that Yongquan breathing has been practiced for more than two thousand years. From medical Qigong, it is well known that Yongquan breathing is one of the most effective breathing methods to regulate abnormal Qi levels in the three Yin organs: Liver, Kidneys, and Spleen.

After you have practiced the Yongquan cavities breathing for a long time, and have reached the real regulating, then you should add the Laogong breathing at the center of your palms. These two gates are used to regulate the heart and lungs. Again, you can use either Normal Abdominal Breathing or Reverse Abdominal Breathing. When you inhale, you lead the Qi from the four gates to the Lower Dan Tian, and when you exhale, you lead the Qi from the Lower Dan Tian back to the four gates (Figure 1-33).

By now, you may have realized that four gates breathing is actually a common breathing method for Grand Qi Circulation (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天). Once you are able to reach a profound level of four gates breathing, then you learn the fifth gate. This is also commonly known as “Spiritual Breathing” (Shen Xi, 神息) and will be discussed next.

7. Spiritual Breathing (Shen Xi, 神息)

There are two definitions of Spiritual Breathing. One is the harmonization and unification of the Shen and the Breathing in Embryonic Breathing so the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived. The other is the so-called “Fifth Gate Breathing,” which is used to raise up the Spirit of Vitality so that Four Gates Breathing can reach its maximum efficiency. The first kind is commonly used for Marrow/Brain Washing, which aims for spiritual enlightenment. The second is generally used to increase the manifestation of the physical body for Muscle/Tendon Changing practice, and is commonly used in martial arts society. Since we are going to discuss the Spiritual Breathing in Part II and III of this book, we will not explain too much here. Instead, we will briefly discuss the “Fifth Gate Breathing” in this sub-section.

“Fifth Gate Breathing” (Di Wu Xin Hu Xi, 第五心呼吸) is also called “Baihui Breathing” (百會呼吸), or “Upper Dan Tian Breathing” (Shang Dan Tian Hu Xi, 上丹田呼吸). This means breathing through The Third Eye. This is the crucial key to raising up the Spirit of Vitality.

Once you have reached a profound level of Four Gates Breathing, you will then learn how to lead the Qi upward through the spinal cord (Thrusting Vessel, Chong Mai, 衝脈) to nourish the brain and energize it to a high level of energy. When this happens, the Shen can be raised and the energy potential reaches a high level (Figure 1-34). When this happens, physical power can be manifested to its maximum efficiency. If you are interested in this ancient practice, you should refer to the book, *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

When you have reached the level of spiritual breathing, it implies that you have already regulated your body, breathing, mind, and Qi, and are now in the process of regulating the Shen. This means your Qigong practice and the search for spiritual enlightenment has reached the final stage in approaching maturity. It is said in the

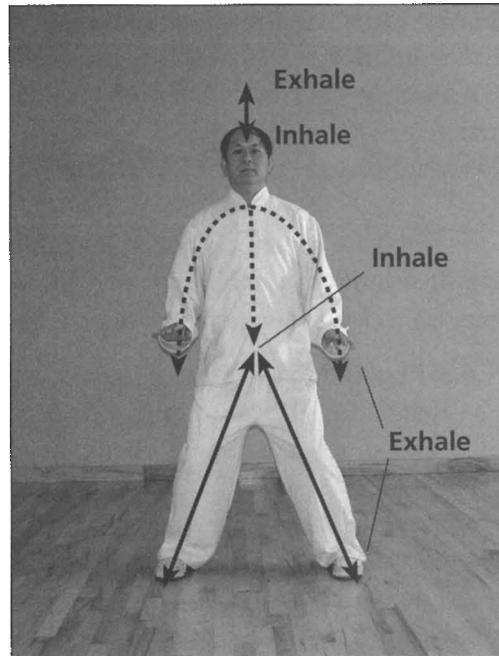


Figure 1-34. Five Gates Qi Breathing

book, *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命圭旨全書): “What is spiritual breathing? It means the maturity of cultivation.”²¹ That means the cultivation of the interaction of Kan (water) and Li (fire) has reached the stage of “regulating without regulating.” In this case, all the cultivations have become natural.

There are some other breathing methods trained in Daoist Qigong such as Turtle Breathing (Gui Xi, 龜息) and Hibernation Breathing (Dong Mian Xi, 冬眠息), but we will not discuss them here.

1.6.3 Regulating the Mind (Tiao Xin, 調心)

Regulating the mind means to regulate and control the Emotional Mind (Xin, 心). This practice has always been the most difficult subject to understand and train in Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) practice. Here you are dealing with your own mind. Everyone has his own thinking and emotional disturbance. Thus, it is also the most difficult subject to explain.

The methods of regulating the mind have been widely studied, discussed, and practiced in all Chinese Qigong societies, which include scholar, medical, religious, and martial arts groups. In this section, we will study the conclusions of these four schools. We will define the mind, and the purposes of regulating the mind. Then, we will discuss the thinking process from the Buddhist point of view. Finally, we will analyze the methods of regulating the mind.

Two Minds—Xin and Yi 心·意. To regulate the mind is actually to regulate the “heart” (Tiao Xin, 調心). The Chinese believe that the “heart” is closely related to our emotional thinking and reaction.

As explained before, in Chinese society, it is commonly recognized that we have two minds. The one mind that is related to our emotional feeling is called “Xin” (心) (heart). This mind is Yang and makes you confused, scattered, depressed, and excited. The other mind, which is related to our rational and logical thinking is called “Yi” (意) (intention). This mind is Yin and makes you calm, concentrated, and able to feel and ponder deeply. The Chinese word “Yi” (意) is constructed of three words: “立” on the top means “to establish,” “曰” in the middle means “to speak,” and “心” at the bottom means the “heart.” From this you can see that the meaning of Yi is “to establish communication (an opinion) with the emotional mind under control.” This means logical thinking and judgment.

Purposes of Regulating the Mind 調心之目的. There are many different purposes or goals for regulating the mind. These purposes can be varied from one school to another. For example, the Qigong practitioners in scholar and medical Qigong societies are aiming for a calm, peaceful, and harmonious mind so the emotional mind will not disturb the body’s Qi circulation. As discussed earlier, it is believed that our thinking can seriously influence the normal healthy Qi circulation of the

body. For instance, if you are happy and excited, the Qi status in your heart will be too Yang and can trigger a heart attack. If you are angry, the Qi level in your liver will be abnormal and affect the liver's healthy functioning. In the same way the Qi circulation in kidneys is related to fear, while that of the lungs is related to sadness. Therefore, if you are able to regulate your emotional mind to a harmonious and peaceful state, you will be healthy.

However, for Daoist and Buddhist religious groups, in addition to regulating the emotional mind to a calm and peaceful state, they are also aiming for Buddhahood and enlightenment. Therefore, once they have controlled the emotional mind and developed their wisdom mind to a profound stage, they will ponder and search for the meaning of life and of nature.

Finally, the martial arts Qigong practitioners aim to raise up the Spirit of Vitality and build up a highly concentrated mind to develop a sense of enemy. This is critical in battle. While your mind is calm and clear, your Shen must be raised up to a state of high alertness.

However, it does not matter what goals each school is aiming at, the basic training rules and principles remain the same. In order to reach their goals, they must follow the same training path. To conclude, the purposes of regulating the mind are:

1. To harmonize the body and the mind.

In order to have a calm meditative mind, you must first regulate the condition of your physical body. When your body is tense and energized, your mind will be excited and breathing will be faster. Therefore, the body and the mind must coordinate and harmonize with each other. This is called "The balance of the body and the Xin" (Shen Xin Ping Heng, 身心平衡). *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命主旨全書) said: "(When) the body is not moving, then the Xin will be peaceful. (When) the Xin is not moving (disturbing), then the Shen can abide by itself."²² Therefore, the first step in regulating the mind is to calm the body. Once the body is calm, the mind can then be calm. When the emotional mind is calm, then the wisdom mind can function efficiently. Only once the mind is calm and peaceful, can the Spirit of Vitality be raised.

2. To harmonize the breathing and the mind.

As mentioned earlier, to regulate the emotional mind is to learn how to use the wisdom mind to control the function of the emotional mind. In Chinese Qigong society, the emotional mind (Xin) is compared to an ape, while the wisdom mind (Yi) is compared to a horse. It is commonly said "Xin (is) an ape, Yi (is) a horse" (Xin Yuan Yi Ma, 心猿意馬). An ape is not powerful, but unsteady and disturbing, and generates confusion and excitement. However, a horse, though powerful, can yet be calm, steady and controllable.

In Chinese Qigong society, through thousands of years of studying the method of regulating the mind, it is understood that in order to lead an ape into a cage and

restrain it, you need a banana. This banana is in control of the breathing. As long as you are able to concentrate your mind on your breathing, sooner or later your emotional mind will be restrained and calm down. That means when your breathing is long, slender, soft, and calm, your mind will be calm. Naturally, in order to make your breathing long, slender, soft, and calm, you must also keep your mind calm. Both the mind and breathing mutually affect each other. They must work together harmoniously in order to reach a high mental state of meditation. Therefore, it is said that “The Xin and the breathing mutually rely on each other” (Xin Xi Xiang Yi, 心息相依).

The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament (性命圭旨全書) said: “To conform with the real person’s (i.e. person who has reached the real truth or Dao) deep profound breathing, then the Xin and the breathing can be relying on each other mutually. (When) the breathing is regulated, the Xin can then be calm.”²³ This short paragraph clearly states that in order to have a calm emotional mind, you must first regulate your breathing. The way of regulating the breathing is to conform with the real person’s breathing methods. The real people (i.e. Zhen Ren, 真人) are those who have already reached the real truth of the Dao.

It was also explained in the book, *The Questions From A Buddhist Guest About Listening to the Heart* (聽心齋客問), “The Xin has been relying on the affairs and objects for a long time; once separated from its residence, it cannot be independent. Therefore, (we must) use the Gongfu of regulating the breathing to restrain this Xin. The Xin and the breathing can then mutually rely on each other. The word of regulating is also not to use the Yi. It is only a thought of one inhalation and one exhalation. Once the Xin has separated from its residence, then it is (free) without others and without self. In this case, there is no breathing which can be regulated. Only (keep the breathing) soft and continuous as if it is existing and not existing (i.e. regulating without regulating). After a long time, it will be become proficient naturally.”²⁴ This paragraph explains that our emotional mind is attracted to human affairs and the objects around us, and is influenced by them. When this happens, the emotional mind will be confused and unsteady, and consequently cannot be independent. The way to restrain this emotional mind is to regulate the breathing until the emotional mind and the breathing are mutually dependent on each other. When you regulate the breathing, you should not have an intention (Yi). Should you have this intention, your mind would cause tension in the breathing. Simply pay attention to the breathing. After you have practiced for a period of time, you can breathe softly, naturally, smoothly, and continuously. When you have reached this stage, the Xin will be staying at its residence without disturbance.

3. Use the mind to build up, to store, and to lead the Qi’s circulation.

In religious and martial arts Qigong groups, one of the main goals of practicing

Qigong is using the mind to build up the Qi, to store it, and also to lead its circulation. In order to build up and store Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田), you must practice Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息). The crucial key to this breathing is keeping your mind in this Qi residence and center. Once your mind is away from this center, your Qi will be led away from it and consumed. Therefore, the Qi will never build up and store in the body to a higher level. That is why it is said: “Keep the Yi at the Dan Tian” (Yi Shou Dan Tian, 意守丹田). This is the practice of storing the Qi.

Once you have stored Qi to an abundant level, you learn how to use your mind to lead the Qi. It is said: “Use the Yi to lead the Qi” (Yi Yi Yin Qi, 以意引氣). Normally, in Nei Dan practice, first you learn to lead the Qi to circulate in the Conception (Ren Mai, 任脈) and Governing Vessels (Du Mai, 督脈) to complete Small Circulation (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天). After this, you learn to lead the Qi to the extremities, skin, bone marrow, and also the brain for Grand Circulation (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天). Since these are the main subjects of this book and the next book we will not discuss them further here.

4. To raise up the Spirit of Vitality for enlightenment.

To Buddhists and Daoists, the final goal of Qigong practice is to reach enlightenment or Buddhahood. Once you have learned how to store the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you then lead it upward following the Thrusting Vessel (spinal cord) (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to the brain to nourish the Shen. The goal is to re-open The Third Eye. It is believed that since we learned to lie and cheat in order to protect our secrets behind a mask, through thousands of years, we closed our third eye so that other people are unable to see the truth. Therefore, we have lost the power of telepathy and communication with natural Qi and Shen. In order to re-open this Third Eye, we must first be truthful to the point where there is nothing to hide. Then, we learn how to accumulate the Qi in the front of the brain. From the past experience, The Third Eye can be re-opened.

In practice, in order to raise up the Shen to an enlightened level, you must first regulate your Xin until it has reached an extremely calm state. When you are in this state, your mind is clear and not wandering. It is said in the book, *Dao Scriptures* (道藏) that: “The Xin is the master of the entire body, the commander of a hundred spirits. (When it is) calm, then the wisdom is generated, (when it is) acting, then confusion is originated. Its complacency (goal of steadiness) and confusion are within the movement and the calmness.”²⁵

1.6.4 Regulating the Qi (Tiao Qi, 調氣)

Various Qigong schools have different purposes for regulating the Qi. To the medical Qigong group, regulating the Qi means: 1. Improving the Qi circulation, thereby maintaining health; 2. Removing the existing Qi stagnation in the body (healing); 3. Bringing the Qi circulation in the internal organs to a harmonious and balanced state.

To the scholar Qigong group, regulating Qi means: 1. Calming down the excitement due to the manifestation of Qi; and 2. Bringing the Qi in the internal organs to a harmonious and balanced state.

To the martial Qigong group, regulating the Qi means: 1. Improving the flow of Qi to the desired area for higher efficiency and stronger physical manifestation; 2. Enhancing the level of Qi circulation so the manifestation of Qi can reach a higher level (i.e. power); and 3. Increasing the Qi storage in the Lower Dan Tian and also the Qi vessels.

However, to the religious Qigong group, regulating the Qi includes many goals: 1. Producing extra Qi at the False Lower Dan Tian (Jia Xia Dan Tian, 假下丹田); 2. Storing the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田); 3. Leading the Qi to circulate in the Conception and Governing Vessels (i.e. Small Circulation); 4. Increasing the Qi level in the Qi vessels; 5. Enhancing the strength of Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) and expanding it to a thicker level (i.e. strengthen the immune system); 6. Washing the bone marrow and maintaining the healthy function of bone marrow (i.e. longevity); 7. Achieving the Grand Circulation (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天) of the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Jing, 經) to condition the sensitivity of the entire body; 8. Exchanging Qi with partners and the natural environment (i.e. Grand Circulation with nature); 9. Leading the Qi upward through the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to nourish the brain for spiritual enlightenment; and finally, 10. Reunifying the human spirit and Qi with the natural spirit and Qi (i.e. Unification of Heaven and Human).

From this, you can see that the coverage of regulating the Qi in religious society, especially Daoist, has a much wider variety depending on the level of cultivation. This is also the main reason that religious Qigong has been recognized as the highest level in Qigong society. Embryonic Breathing is one of the practices in this society that teaches you how to produce the Qi at the False Lower Dan Tian and also how to store it at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Only if a practitioner is able to comprehend the profound theory and grasp the keys of practice, can he then proceed to other Qi regulating practices. That is the reason why Embryonic Breathing is considered to be the root or essence of Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹) practice.

Naturally, both theoretically and practically, in order to reach a highly efficient level of Qi regulation, you must already have regulated the body, breathing and mind to a profound level. As mentioned earlier, regulating the body, regulating the breathing, and regulating the mind, these three cannot be separated. They are mutually related and interact with each other. Only when these three are harmoniously coordinated can the Qi be led by the clear and calm mind.

Since regulating the Qi is the main goal of Qigong practice, each purpose of regulating the Qi mentioned above is a huge subject for discussion. For example, it would take a few books just to cover regulation of Qi in any of the schools such as

medical Qigong, scholar Qigong, and also martial Qigong societies. The coverage of regulating the Qi in the religious group is even much larger and deeper than any of the other three groups. Therefore, you should keep your mind open and continue to search for the training theory and methods. This is the way of searching for the Dao. Chinese call these people “Xun Dao Zhe” (尋道者), meaning “Dao Searcher.”

In this book, we will cover only those practices related to Embryonic Breathing. Through these practices, you will have built up a firm foundation for all the other practices.

1.6.5 Regulating the Spirit (Tiao Shen, 調神)

In general, there are four major tasks in regulating your spirit (Shen, 神): 1. Learning how to raise your Shen; 2. How to keep it at its residence and strengthen it; 3. How to coordinate it with your breathing; and finally, 4. How to use your Shen to direct and manifest your Qi effectively. All of these are called “Lian Shen” (練神) by Daoist Qigong practitioners. Lian (練) means to refine, to train, or to discipline. In religious Qigong, there is another ultimate goal in regulating the Shen, and that is to train it to be independent enough to leave the physical body (i.e. spiritual immortality)

1. Raising up the Shen (Yang Shen, 養神)

Yang (養) means to nourish, to raise, or to nurse. Yang Shen has been the main task for scholars and Buddhists in their training to regulate the Shen. Shen needs to be nourished by Qi. Normally, the Fire Qi which comes from food and air is able to raise up the Shen easily, however, this Fire Qi also increases emotional disturbance and therefore leads the Shen away from its residence. Using your Yi, which is nourished by the Water Qi, to raise up your Shen is harder. However, if you are able to do it, this Shen can be stronger and more concentrated than when you use the Fire Qi. In Qigong practice, you are learning how to adjust your Xin and Yi to raise up your Shen. If you are able to use your Xin and Yi properly, your Shen will be raised but not excited, and it can remain at its residence.

Learning how to raise up the Shen the right way is almost like raising a child. You need a great amount of patience and perseverance. One way to raise a child is to help him restrain his attraction to the seven emotions and six desires. Another way is to let him maintain contact with his human nature, yet educate him and help him to develop his wisdom so that he can make clear judgments. It is a long process, and demands a lot of understanding and patience. In Qigong, raising the Shen is not a question of increasing your emotional excitement. This would scatter the Yi, and your Shen would become confused and lose its center. Yang Shen training builds a strong center for your Shen, and helps the Shen take control over a larger part of your life.

2. Keeping Shen in its Residence and Training it (Shou Shen Yu Lian Shen, 守神與練神)

After raising your Shen, you must learn how to keep it at its residence and train it. As with a child of a certain age, you must be able to keep his mind in the family instead of straying outside and running wild. Then you can educate him. In Qigong training, to keep and train the Shen includes four major steps:

A. To Protect the Shen (Shou Shen, 守神)

“Shou” (守) means “to keep and to protect.” The very beginning of the training involves learning how to keep your Shen at its residence. While it is relatively easy to raise your Shen, it is much harder to keep it in its residence. In Shou Shen training, in order to keep the Shen in its residence you must use your regulated mind to direct, to nurse, to watch, and to keep the Shen there. You must be patient and control your temper (regulate your mind). You can see, therefore, that the first step in regulating your Shen is to regulate your Xin (Emotional Mind) and Yi (Wisdom Mind). If you lose your patience and temper, you will only make the child want to leave home again. Only when you have regulated your Xin and Yi will you be able to guard and keep your Shen effectively.

B. To Firm the Shen (Gu Shen, 固神)

“Gu” (固) means “to solidify and to firm.” After you can keep your Shen in its residence, you then learn how to firm and solidify it. Gu Shen means to train your Shen to stay at its residence willingly. After you are able to control your child in the house, you must make him want from his heart to stay. Only then will his mind be steady and calm. Naturally, in order to reach this stage, you will need a lot of love and patience to educate him until he understands how important it is for him to stay home and grow up normally and healthily. Qigong training operates on the same principle. In order to do this, your mind must be able to regulate all emotional thoughts. Only then will your Shen be able to stay in its residence in peace.

C. To Stabilize the Shen (Ding Shen, 定神)

“Ding” (定) means “to stabilize and to calm.” When you have brought your child into the stage of peace, he will not be as excited and attracted to outside emotional distractions. In regulating your Shen you must learn to calm down the Shen so that it is energized but not excited. Then the mind will be peaceful and steady.

D. To Focus the Shen (Ning Shen, 凝神)

“Ning” (凝) means “to concentrate, to condense, to refine, to focus, and to strengthen.” You can see from the above three processes that keeping, firm-

ing, and stabilizing are the foundations of the cultivation of your Shen. It is like a child who is able to stay at home willingly with a calm and steady mind. Only then will you be able to teach and train him. In Qigong, once you have passed these three initial steps, you will learn to condense and to focus your Shen in a tiny spot. The “condensing the Shen” stage is where you can train the Shen to a higher spiritual state. When the Shen is focused in a tiny point, it is like a sunbeam which is focused through a lens. The smaller the point, the stronger its beam.

3. Combining Shen with the Breathing

After the Shen has been trained to a high degree, you can put it to work. The first assignment for your Shen is coordination with your breathing. Remember, in Qigong training your breathing carries out your strategy. When this strategy is directed by your Shen, it can obtain maximum results. This is called “Shen Xi Xiang Yi” (神息相依), which means “the Shen and the breathing are mutually dependent.” In Qigong training, this is called “Shen Xi” (神息) which means “Shen breathing.” At this stage, your Shen and breathing have united into one. When you have accomplished this, your Qi will be led most efficiently. Naturally, this is not an easy task. In order to reach this stage, you must have regulated your body, breathing, and mind.

4. Combining Shen with Qi

The last stage of regulating Shen involves learning to use the Shen to direct the circulation and distribution of Qi in the most efficient way. In Qigong society, this stage is called “Shen Qi Xiang He” (神氣相合), which means “the Shen and Qi combine together.” In a battle, if the Shen of the soldiers is kept high, their fighting ability and efficiency will be increased, and the strategy will be carried out more thoroughly.

In Chapter 3, you will see that there are many ancient documents discussing the “regulation of the Shen.” The reason for this is that in order to reach the final goal of Embryonic Breathing, other than “regulating the breathing” and “regulating the mind,” it is “regulation of the breathing” which plays the important role of reaching a successful Embryonic Breathing practice.

1.7 MUSCLE/TENDON CHANGING AND MARROW/BRAIN WASHING QIGONG

易筋經與洗髓經氣功

Embryonic Breathing is the root and essence of the Internal Elixir Qigong (Nei Dan Qigong, 內丹氣功) practice. From this root, the physical body (Yang) and the energy body (Yin) can be cultivated and developed. The physical body includes the tissue such as skin, muscle, tendon, ligament, bone, marrow, etc. The Qi body sup-

plies the energy to the physical body to maintain life. This includes nourishing the brain to generate thought (mental action).

Often however, Chinese people view the Yin body as the mental body instead of the energy body. In this case, Qi is considered to be neutral, supplying the energy to the physical body and also to the brain for mental activity. Since the thought is connected and associated with spiritual cultivation, commonly the spiritual body is considered as the Yin body in Chinese religious societies. The physical body is called “Ming” (命) which means “life” while the spiritual body is called “Xing” (性) which means “human temperament.” Human temperament (or human nature) implies the natural spirit which we were born with.

Muscle/Tendon Changing Qigong and Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong is a religious Qigong training which was passed down by an Indian monk, Da Mo, in a Chinese Buddhist monastery, the Shaolin Temple (少林寺). Da Mo’s classic emphasizes that in order to achieve spiritual enlightenment, we must have a strong and long physical life which will allow us to have more time for spiritual cultivation. Therefore, Muscle/Tendon Changing Qigong teaches a practitioner how to condition his physical body. Not only that, in order to reach the final goal of spiritual enlightenment, you must also have abundant Qi to nourish the brain to promote the brain’s function to a higher level. When this happens, then spiritual enlightenment can be reached. In one of the prefaces to Da Mo’s classic, there is a section about this:

The Xi Sui Jing says a man’s body (is) touched by love and desire, and formed with shape, contaminated by sediment and dirtiness. If you wish to cultivate the real meaning of Buddhism, (Shen) moving and stopping at will, (then) the five viscera and six bowels, four limbs and hundreds of bones must be completely washed clean individually. (When they are) pure and (you) are able to see the calmness and peace, then (you) can be cultivated and enter the domain of Buddhahood. (If you) do not cultivate this (way), (obtaining the Dao) will not have foundation and origin. Read till here, then know that the believers thought that “acquiring the marrow” was not a comparison.

洗髓經者，謂人之生，感於愛慾，一落有形，悉皆滓穢；欲修佛諦，動障真如，五臟六腑，四肢百骸，必先一一洗滌淨盡，純見清虛，方可進修，入佛智地，不由此經進修，無基無有是處；讀至此，然後知向者所謂得髓者，非譬喻也。

The Yi Jin Jing says that outside of the bone and marrow, under the skin and meat (i.e. muscles), (there is) nothing but the tendons and vessels which connect the entire body and transport the blood and Qi. All of these are post-birth body, (and) must be promoted (i.e. trained); borrow them to cultivate the real (Dao). If you do not assist and promote them, (you will) see weakening and withering immediately. (If you) see (this training) as ordinary (training), how could you reach the final goal? (If you) give up and do not train them, then there is no strength for cultivation, and nothing can be achieved.

易筋者，謂髓骨之外，皮肉之內，莫非筋聯絡周身，通行血氣，凡屬後天，皆其提挈，借假修真，非所贊勸，立見頹靡，視作泛常，曷臻極至？舍是不為，進修不力，無有是處；讀至此，然後知所謂皮肉骨者，非譬喻，亦非漫語也。

From these two paragraphs, you can see that Muscle/Tendon Changing is for physical life while Marrow/Brain Washing is for spiritual life. This concept was very important to the religious Qigong meditators. The main ultimate goal of both Buddhist and Daoist study is to reach Buddhahood or enlightenment. According to their theory, it would normally take hundreds of lifetimes to cultivate your Shen and gradually reach the final destination. Therefore, if you have a long life in each life time, then you will have a longer period for cultivation. This is most critical especially as the best period for spiritual cultivation is after the age of forty. This is because normally before you are thirty, you are still looking for the meaning of your life and your mind is still learning how to fit in and survive in the new environment. During this period, the Shen of your new life is not yet mature enough to establish contact with the Pre-Birth Shen. If you die before you are thirty, you will only have a short period of time to cultivate your Shen to a higher level. However, if you are able to live long, then you will have a long time to promote your Shen to a higher level. That means the longer life you have, the better your Shen is able to develop. Naturally, you have also become wiser.

From the section quoted, it seems the concept of longevity has been well understood by the Daoists but not by many of the Buddhists. Daoists believed that both physical body and spiritual body are equally important and should be cultivated together. It is called “dual cultivation of spiritual virtue (human temperament) and physical life” (Xing Ming Shuang Xiu, 性命雙修) in Daoist society. This is not the case in Buddhist society. In fact, many Buddhists believed that our physical body is only used temporarily for the Shen to reside there. For them, spiritual cultivation is more important than physical cultivation, and spending time building up physical strength is a waste of time.

Kan and Li in Yi Jin Jing and Xi Sui Jing. When you try any style of Qigong, you must balance Yin and Yang by controlling Kan (坎) (water) and Li (離) (fire). For example, when you practice Taijiquan, you learn the slow meditative physical movements that are Li, which may cause your body to become too Yang. You must also learn still meditation, which is Kan and neutralizes the excessive Yang. Again, in the moving Taijiquan forms, there is also Kan and Li adjustment. While the moving is Li which causes Yang, the calm mind is Kan, and it may neutralize the Yang. In still meditation, while the stillness of the physical body is Kan and causes Yin, the Qi must be actively led by the mind to circulate in the body. This is Li and results in

Yang, which balances the Yin. This means that in all of the Qigong practices, if there is Yin, there must be Yang to balance it, and vice versa.

It is the same with the Yi Jin Jing and Xi Sui Jing training. They are based on this Yin and Yang concept. *The Yi Jin Jing is Li because it generates Qi and manifests it as physical strength (muscle/tendon changing), thus generating Yang. The Xi Sui Jing is Kan, because it utilizes and stores the Qi in the marrow/brain and generates Yin.* The Yi Jin Jing deals with the muscles/tendons and skin, which are visible externally, while the Xi Sui Jing deals with the marrow and brain, which must be felt internally. While the Yi Jin Jing training emphasizes the physical body, the Xi Sui Jing training focuses on the spiritual body. Therefore, Yin and Yang are balanced and coexist harmoniously.

In the Yi Jin Jing, the physical stimulation and exercises are considered Li, and cause the body to become Yang, while the still meditation of the Small Circulation is Kan, which counterbalances the Li and makes the body more Yin. Again, in the physical stimulation Li training, external strength is Li while internal mental strength is Kan. In still meditation, the physical body is still and is Kan, while the Qi moving inside and led by the mind is Li.

The same theory prevails in Xi Sui Jing training. The physical stimulation to increase the Original Essence production is Li, while the techniques of internal cultivation which are used to lead the Qi to the marrow and brain are Kan.

You can see from this discussion that the basic key to successful Qigong training is Yin and Yang balance, and the trick to reaching this goal is Kan and Li adjustment. Once you understand this fundamental theory, you will not have too much difficulty understanding the foundation of Qigong practice.

If you are interested in knowing more about Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong, please refer to the book: *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

1.8 SMALL CIRCULATION, GRAND CIRCULATION, AND ENLIGHTENMENT MEDITATION 小周天、大周天、與仙道悟真靜坐

In order to understand the relationship between Embryonic Breathing and various spiritual meditations in the next section, I would like to review three of the most important Daoist meditation practices: Small Cyclic Heaven Meditation (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) (Small Circulation or Microcosmic Meditation), Grand Cyclic Heaven Meditation (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天) (Grand Circulation or Macrocosmic Meditation), and Divine Enlightenment Meditation (Xian Dao Wu Zhen Jing Zuo, 仙道悟真靜坐).

Let us first discuss the three common Qi paths in spiritual Qigong meditation practice (Figure 1-35). From this discussion, it will be easier for you to grasp the definitions of Small Circulation, Grand Circulation, and also Enlightenment Medita-

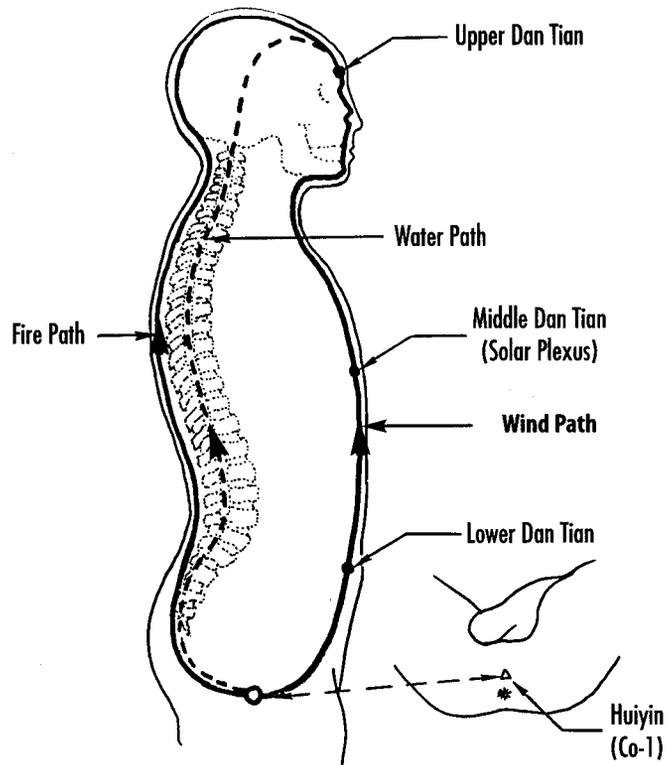


Figure 1-35. The Fire, Water and Wind Paths of Qi Circulation

tion. Naturally, each of these three paths has its own training theory, purposes, and methods.

1.8.1 Three Meditation Paths

Fire Path (Small Circulation Meditation) (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天)

This Fire Path is also commonly known as Small Cyclic Heaven or Small Circulation Meditation. In Fire path circulation once you build up an abundance of Qi in your Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) through Abdominal Breathing, then you use your mind to lead the Qi down to the Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) following the natural Qi circulation of the Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) and then upward along your back by following the natural Qi circulation of the Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈). Finally lead the Qi down to complete the cycle.

The purposes of this meditation are to bring the Qi in these two Qi reservoirs up to a higher level, and also to improve the flow of the Qi circulation. When the Qi is able to circulate in these two vessels smoothly and strongly, then the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Jing, 經) can be regulated efficiently. This can therefore strengthen your physical body and enhance your Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣). However, it also

energizes your physical body and makes your body more Yang. This is because the Fire Path is the natural Qi circulation path. When you use your mind to lead the Qi to circulate in this natural path, you are enhancing the Qi circulation. From this, you can see that the Fire Path meditation is Li (離) (fire) which generates the vital force and fire in the body. We will discuss this subject in the next book: *Small Circulation Meditation*.

Water Path (Enlightenment Meditation) (Xiao Dao Wu Zhen Jing Zuo,
仙道悟真靜坐)

To those meditation practitioners whose goal is enlightenment or Buddhahood, this Water Path is recognized as a main core of the meditation practice. Though this path is also considered as one of the Grand Circulation practices, it is far deeper than many other Grand Circulation practices. To help you grasp it better, I will summarize those common Grand Circulation practices later in this section.

The Water Path is the hardest but most effective method of Kan (坎) (water) to neutralize the body's Yang. This is the method of Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong (Xi Sui Jing, 洗髓經). It focuses the training on the "Central Energy Line." This line is known as Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (spinal cord). In Water Path training, the Qi is led by the mind from the Real Lower Dan Tian directly upward through the Thrusting Vessel to nourish the brain. When the brain is nourished to a higher level, the Shen can be raised to a higher level for enlightenment. From this, you can see that the Water Path makes you calm physically and mentally, leads the Qi inward to the center of the body (marrow), and also to the brain for nourishment. Since the bone marrow is the factory of the white and red blood cells, when the Qi is abundant in the marrow, the production of blood cells will be normal and healthy. Red blood cells are the carriers of oxygen and nutrients required for cellular metabolism. When cellular replacement is smoothly carried out, the degeneration process of your physical body will slow down. Therefore, marrow washing Qigong is the key to longevity. In addition, when the white blood cells are abundant and healthy, the immune system will be strong. The Water path Qigong meditation is for enlightenment or Buddhahood. We will discuss this subject in the future book: *Grand Circulation and Enlightenment Meditations*.

Wind Path (Kan-Li Meditation) (Kan-Li Jing Zuo, 坎離靜坐)

This Wind Path is considered to be a reversed Small Circulation. In the Wind path, the Water Qi accumulated in the Real Lower Dan Tian is led by the mind to circulate in the path which exactly reverses the path of the Fire Path Qi circulation. There are many reasons for this Wind Path Qi circulation. First, through reversing the natural Qi circulation, it is able to cool down your over excited mental and physical body. This is because when you practice the Wind Path Qi circulation, you are slowing down the natural Qi circulation. Second, through it you can lead the Water

Qi from the Real Lower Dan Tian upward to cool down the Fire Qi accumulated in the Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田) (diaphragm). In this way, the mental and physical body can also be cooled down. This process is commonly called “Kan-Li.” However, to Enlightenment Meditation practitioners, the Wind Path is crucial for them to conceive a Spiritual Embryo (Ling Tai, 靈胎) at the Huang Ting (黃庭) cavity located between the Middle Dan Tian and Real Lower Dan Tian. In this practice, as mentioned earlier, the Water Qi is led upward to meet the Fire Qi which is also led downward from the Middle Dan Tian and meet each other at the Huang Ting. This process is also called “Kan-Li” (坎離) which causes the interaction of the Yin and Yang. From this Yin-Yang interaction, with the focussed attention of the Shen, a new Spiritual Embryo can be produced.

1.8.2 What is Grand Circulation? 何謂大周天？

The original meaning of Grand Circulation implies the natural Qi circulation between the heavens and the earth. Later, this concept was adapted for meditation and became the Grand Circulation meditation. This is because the head is considered as “heaven” while the abdominal area is considered as “earth.” Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) (Perineum) is considered as “sea bottom” (Hai Di, 海底). Like Small Circulation, as long as you are alive, Grand Qi Circulation always exists. The purpose of Grand Circulation meditation is to enhance the Qi circulation for different reasons. Next, we will discuss the different general concepts of Grand Circulation. A detailed theory and methods of practice will be discussed in the book: *Grand Circulation and Enlightenment Meditation*.

Self Grand Circulation Meditation 自我大周天靜坐

The main purposes of Self Grand Circulation meditation is learning how to use the mind to transport the Qi to any place of the body. Naturally, first you must build up a sensitive feeling for the entire body from the surface to deep inside. If you are not able to feel the body, how would you able to lead the Qi there? Therefore, the deeper the state your meditative mind is able to reach, the more profound the achievements you can aspire to.

Once you are able to feel the body precisely and clearly, you can lead the Qi to the tiniest place inside the body for self-healing. If your Qi is strong, you may also use your Qi to heal or nourish other people. This kind of healing is commonly called “Qi Massage” (Qi An Mo, 氣按摩) or “External Qi Healing” (Wai Qi Liao Fa, 外氣療法). To Chinese martial artists, the purpose of Grand Circulation meditation is learning how to lead the Qi to energize the body to a maximum and efficient stage. Consequently, the Shen can be raised to a higher state of alertness and the power manifested can reach its maximum.

Next, we will briefly explain some of the common Self Grand Circulation meditation practices.

A. Self Primary Qi Channel Circulation Meditation 十二經大周天靜坐

The main purpose of this Grand Circulation is to enhance the Qi circulation in the 12 primary Qi channels. When the Qi circulation in these channels increases, the 12 internal organs will become stronger and healthier. Not only that, the Qi distributed to the arms and legs will also be stronger, that means the physical body will be stronger.

B. Joints Grand Circulation Meditation 關節大周天靜坐

The purpose of the Joints Grand Circulation Meditation is learning how to use the mind with the coordination of the breathing to lead the Qi to circulate between the joints. This includes the circulation in the primary channels and also in the bone marrow. If you are able to do so, you can transport the Qi from one section of your body to another section as you wish. Naturally, you will also be able to lead the Qi to the bone marrow for nourishment (marrow washing).

C. Four Gates Breathing Circulation 四心呼吸大周天靜坐

As explained earlier, Four Gates Breathing is one of the Grand Circulations in Qigong practice. The purpose of Four Gates Breathing Circulation is learning how to use the mind with the coordination of the breathing to lead the Qi from the Real Lower Dan Tian to the four gates, two “Laogong” (P-8) (勞宮) (Labor’s Palace) and two “Yongquan” (K-1) (湧泉) (Gushing Spring). This breathing technique can be effectively practiced through still meditation.

From Chinese medicine, it is understood that these four cavities are the main gates which regulate the Qi level of the heart and the kidneys. When Qi can be led to these four gates strongly and smoothly, not only will the body be healthy, but the power generated from the limbs will also be stronger. For this reason, Four Gates Meditation practice has become one of the crucial practices in Chinese martial arts, especially in internal arts. Four Gates Breathing practices have been discussed in the books: *The Essence of Taiji Qigong*, *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, and *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, published by YMAA.

D. Skin/Marrow Breathing Circulation 膚髓息大周天靜坐

The purpose of Skin/Marrow Breathing Circulation is to expand the abundant Qi to the surface of the skin, to enhance and expand your “Guardian Qi” (Wei Qi, 衛氣), and also to condense and store your extra

Qi into the bone marrow to strengthen the storage of the “Marrow Qi” (Sui Qi, 髓氣). When the Guardian Qi is strong, your immune system will function efficiently, and you will not get sick easily. When the Marrow Qi is strong, the function of the bone marrow in blood cell production will be normal and healthy, and you can slow down the aging process. If you are interested in this subject, please refer to the book: *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

Grand Circulation Meditation with a Partner 雙修大周天靜坐

If you are able to store the Qi abundantly in your Real Lower Dan Tian and are also capable of using your mind to lead the Qi to circulate strongly in your body, then you may use your Qi to nourish or to heal other people. Not only that, through this practice, two healthy persons are able to nourish each other and raise up the Shen of training significantly. In Daoist Qigong practice, this Qi exchange practice is called “Dual Cultivation” (Shuang Xiu, 雙修). To many Daoists, dual cultivation practice is one of the most effective ways to speed up the process of spiritual enlightenment. To Qigong healers, dual cultivation is the best way of cultivating the Qi mutually, and the most efficient way of training Qi exchange with another person. In fact, dual cultivation is the foundation of Qi healing.

There are many ways of dual cultivation Qi exchange practice. It begins with basic palm Qi exchange to a deep and profound central Qi exchange. We will discuss this subject in more detail in the book: *Grand Circulation and Enlightenment Meditation*.

Grand Circulation Meditation with Great Nature 天人合一 大周天靜坐

A. *Grand Circulation Meditation with the Earth* 地人大周天靜坐

The main purpose of this practice is to extend your Qi beyond your body and exchange Qi with the surrounding natural objects such as the earth, trees, animals, or even the air. It is believed that all natural objects around us, especially living things, also have Qi. If you know how, you are able to use them to regulate and harmonize the Qi circulation in your body. Not only that, it is also possible for you to absorb Qi from around you and bring your Qi level to a higher level. In China, trees are the most common objects used for the purpose of regulating Qi.

The difference of this Qi exchange from the Qi exchange with a human partner is that these objects do not have the mind or the mind is weak and therefore, they are not able to use their mind to lead their Qi to handle the Qi exchange with you.

B. Grand Circulation Meditation with the Heavens 天人大周天靜坐

Grand Circulation Meditation with the Heavens is also called the “Fifth Gate” meditation. The purpose of the Grand Circulation with Heaven is to try to reach the final spiritual unification between the human and the universe. This is called “Tian Ren He Yi” (天人合一) (unification of the heaven and the human). In order to reach this stage, you must first learn how to lead the Qi upward along the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to the brain to nourish and energize it to a higher energy state. In order to do so, you must learn the Water Path mentioned earlier. When this happens, the Shen will grow and The Third Eye can be re-opened. This stage is called “enlightenment” (Wu Zhen, 悟真). Once you have opened The Third Eye, there is no obstacle to communication between your brain and the surrounding energy. Suddenly, you are able to comprehend many things which cannot be understood by others. You are able to communicate with other humans or animals without speaking. Your telepathic capability will return. Through this meditation, you will comprehend the meaning of life and of nature.

1.9 DEFINITION OF EMBRYONIC BREATHING 胎息之定義

Before you study and practice Embryonic Breathing, you must first know what it is. How is it defined, and how is it related to spiritual cultivation in Qigong society? Only then can you have a better understanding of what goal you are aiming for. Without knowing this, the entire practice will be in vain and meaningless.

According to the available ancient documents, there are two Embryonic Breathings defined. One is to *search for the spiritual center and Qi center and then unite Shen and Qi together at the Lower Dan Tian*. These two centers are the two polarities of a human energy body. After you have located them, then you will bring the Shen (神) (Spirit) down to meet and unite with the Qi at the Qi center (Real Lower Dan Tian) (Figure 1-36). Thus you have returned to the Wuji state of life (the origin of life). Since this place (Real Lower Dan Tian or Center of Gravity) is the place where the fetus is conceived, you are searching for the beginning formation of your fetus life. Once you have returned to this Wuji state, you have returned your being to nature.

The earliest document in which the concept of this Embryonic Breathing was propounded is Lao Zi's *Dao De Jing (Classic on the Virtue of the Dao)* (老子·道德經). In Chapter 16 of *Dao De Jing*, it says: “Approaching the nihility (nothingness or emptiness) to its extremity and maintaining the calmness with sincerity. Millions of objects (lives) are in actions which allow me to observe their cyclic repetitions. Though there are so many objects, each individual must repeatedly return to its root (origin). When it returns to the root, it means ‘calmness.’ When it is calmed, then it

means ‘repetition of a life.’ When the life repeats, it means ‘constant natural routine.’”²⁶ From this document, we can see that the purpose of this kind of Embryonic Breathing is to trace back the root of our lives and to observe and understand the cyclic repetition of nature. That means to “return our spiritual being to the Wuji state (無極) (No Extremity or neutral state) of human life, and thus be able to reach the origin of our human spiritual nature.”

Therefore, the first step in reaching this Embryonic Breathing is to regulate the Shen through the cultivation of the mind to its empty (neutral) state. When this happens, the Shen will be able to find its center and stay at its residence. Without reaching this neutral spiritual state, we will remain locked in the human emotional matrix. Consequently, our mind will not be clear and calm enough to see through the origin or root of the spiritual nature. In addition, without this calm and peaceful mind, we will not be able to lead the Qi to its residence (Real Lower Dan Tian) and preserve it there. From this, you can see that the very beginning of Embryonic Breathing is searching for *the spiritual origin located in the center of the brain (Upper Dan Tian) and also the Qi origin located at the center of physical gravity (Real Lower Dan Tian)*.

To regulate the Shen, it is said in Chapter 6 of *Dao De Jing*, that: “The Valley Spirit (Gu Shen, 谷神) does not die, then it is called ‘Xuan Pin’ (玄牝). The door (key) of reaching this ‘Xuan Pin’ is the root of heaven and earth (nature). It is very soft and continuous as if it is existing. When it is used, it will not be exhausted.”²⁷ Shen is called “Valley Spirit” (Gu Shen, 谷神) because it resides at the “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) (The space between the two hemispheres of the brain). “Xuan Pin” (玄牝) means “the marvellous and mysterious Dao, the mother of creation of millions of objects.” That means the goal of regulating the Shen is to keep it at the Spiritual Valley, the Shen residence.

Once you have firmed and condensed your Shen to a high level, then you lead this Shen down to meet and unite with the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, the very

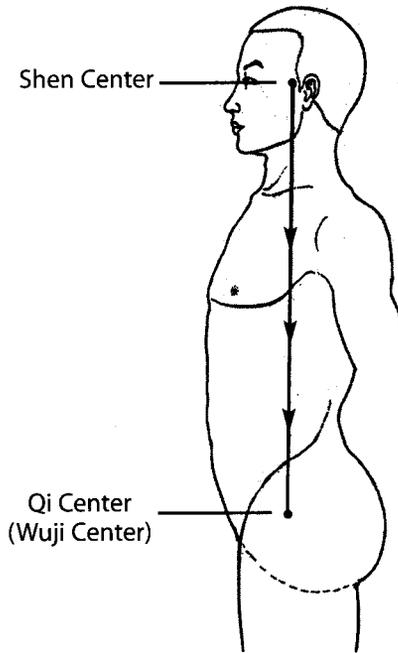


Figure 1-36. Unification of Shen and Qi at the Wuji Center

origin of your life, so you can return your being to its origin. In order to reach this final goal, other than firming the Shen at the “Spiritual Valley,” you must also know how to find the root of the Qi (bio-battery) so you are able to conserve it. In addition, in order to attain longevity and reach the goal of spiritual enlightenment, you must also learn to increase the quantity of Qi stored at the Qi residence (Real Lower Dan Tian or Second Brain).

This means breathing softly, slenderly, and deeply like a newborn baby. That is why it is said in Chapter 10 of *Dao De Jing* that: “When bearing and managing the Po (魄) (Vital Spirit) and embracing (maintaining) it to a state of singularity (singleness) (Bao Yi, 抱一), can it be not separating (from its residence)? When concentrating the Qi to reach its softness, can it be as (soft as) a baby? When cleansing the thought to reach its purity, can it be no flaw?”²⁸ The Daoist document, *Ling Jian Zi's Dao Yin Zi-Wu Recording* (靈劍子導引子午記注), said: “What is Embryonic Breathing? It is a method of Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi, 抱一) (Wuji center) and keeping it in the neutral state.”²⁹

We can summarize that Embryonic Breathing means to *regulate the mind and Shen to their calm and concentrated state and also to preserve and regulate the Qi at the Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level, then unite the Shen and Qi so as to return the being to its origin.* Embryonic Breathing has always been a huge subject in Chinese Qigong practice, because it is the breathing method which allows you to store the Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian. In other words, through Embryonic Breathing, you are able to charge your bio-battery to a high level. Then your vital energy will be raised, the immune system will be strengthened, and the physical body can be reconditioned. However, to Buddhists and Daoists, the most important part and final goal of Embryonic Breathing is to achieve enlightenment or Buddhahood.

According to Buddhist and Daoist documents, the definition of Embryonic Breathing is to conceive a Spiritual Embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎) at the Huang Ting (黃庭) cavity. When this Spiritual Embryo is matured, then lead it up to the Upper Dan Tian for its birth (re-open The Third Eye). In order to reach this goal, you must first build up a high level of Water Qi (Shui Qi, 水氣) (Original Qi) storage at the Real Lower Dan Tian. You will then lead this Qi upward, and Fire Qi (Huo Qi, 火氣) (Post-Heaven Qi) from the Middle Dan Tian downward, so they meet at the Huang Ting (黃庭) cavity. This process is called “intercourse of dragon and tiger” (Long Hu Jiao Gou, 龍虎交媾) which means “the interaction of Yin and Yang”, commonly called “Kan-Li” (坎離). This will result in the conception of life. Then, you will lead the Shen downward to meet this life until a new Shen can develop on this conceived embryo. This process is called “Mutual Dependence of Mother and Son” (Mu Zi Xiang Yi, 母子相依). “Mother” means “Qi” and “Son” means “Shen.” Once this happens, a Spiritual Embryo can be conceived (Figure 1-37).

When this Spiritual Embryo has become matured, it will be led upward through Chong Mai (衝脈) (spinal cord) to nourish the brain. When the energy level has reached a high level, the “Heaven Eye” (天眼) (Third Eye) can be re-opened.

1.10 EMBRYONIC BREATHING AND CULTIVATION OF DAO

胎息與修道

In this section, I would like to put what I have understood about the relationship between Embryonic Breathing and spiritual cultivation into two charts. Almost all of the concepts are compiled and concluded from the ancient documents which are translated and commented upon in Chapter 3. Therefore, if you do not understand these two charts after you have read and pondered them, do not be disappointed. These two charts are placed here to summarize the entire concept of spiritual cultivation relations and procedures. After you have read through the entire book, you should return back to these two charts. When the time comes, you will see that everything has come to make logical sense. In fact, I highly recommend you to refer back to these two charts while you are reading through the entire book.

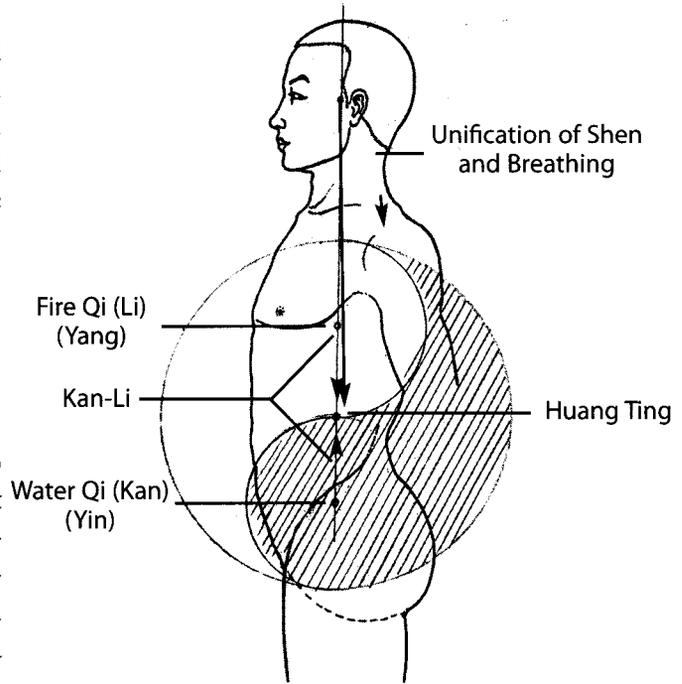


Figure 1-37. Conceiving the Spiritual Embryo

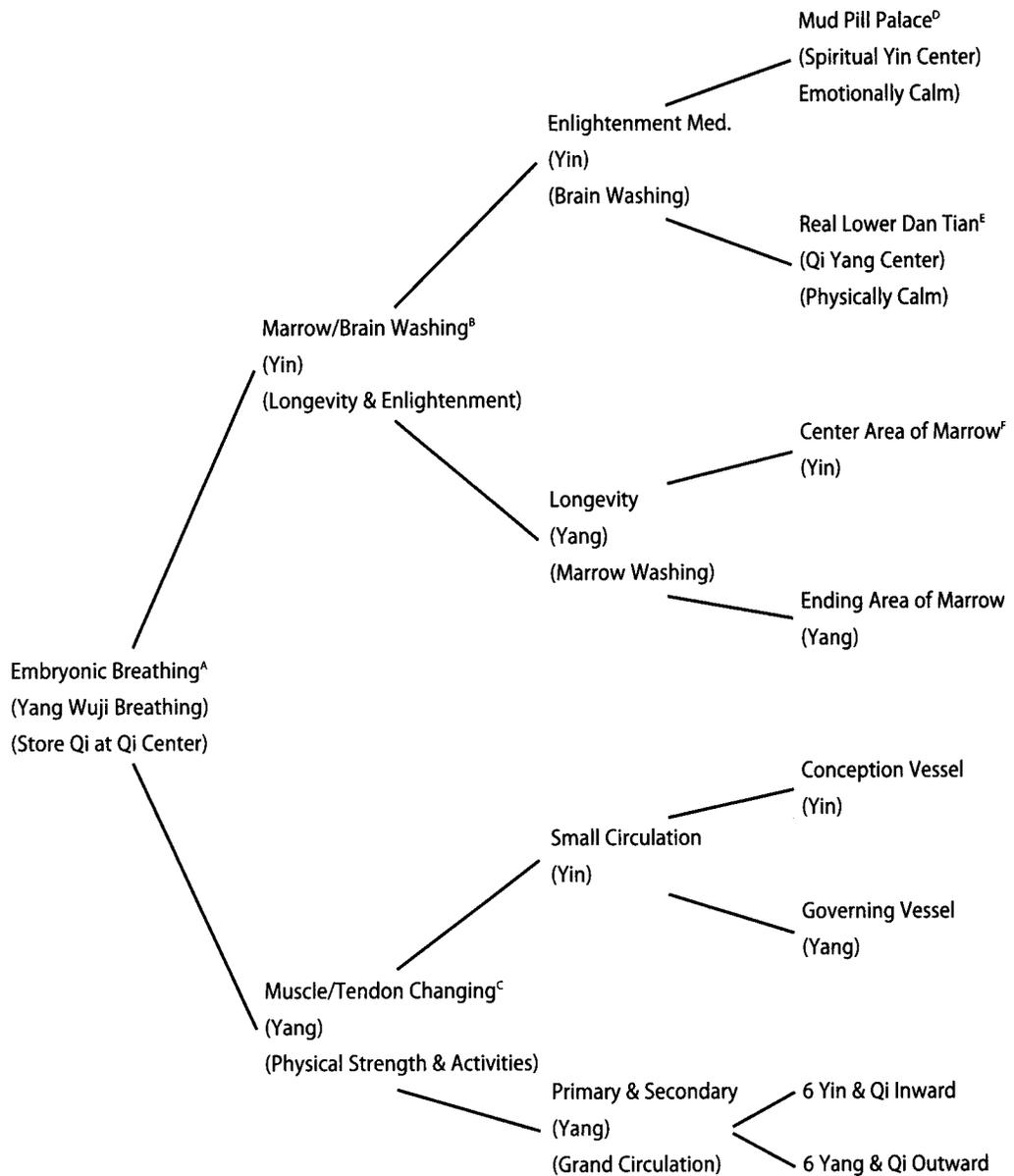


Table 1-2. Yang Physical Cultivation Chart

^Through Embryonic Breathing, the Qi is stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level. Since this Qi storage is used to manifest physical life and Shen, it is considered Yang. That is why it is called “Yang Wuji Center.” The way to reach this goal is to bring the concentrated Shen downward to the Real Lower Dan Tian so the mind can stay there. This is called the “harmoni-

- nization of the Shen and the Qi" (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合). When this happens, the mind is calm, the Shen is condensed, and the Qi is stored. When the Qi is stored to an abundant level, it can be used to wash the marrow/brain (Yin) and also to condition the physical body (Yang).
- ^bThrough marrow/brain washing, spiritual enlightenment can be achieved (Yin), as well as longevity (Yang). When the Qi is led upward through the spinal cord (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to the brain, the brain Qi status can reach a higher level. Consequently, the sensitivity to spiritual vibration (i.e. spiritual resonant energy) will be enhanced. In addition, when the Qi is led inward to the bone marrow (i.e. blood cell factory), longevity can be attained.
- ^cThrough muscle/tendon changing, physical health and strength can be improved. This includes the practice of Small Circulation (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) through circulation of Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren, Du Mai; 任·督脈) (Yin). The Qi can be led to the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經) to nourish the internal organs and also to countless Secondary Qi Channels (Luo, 絡) (Yang) (Grand Circulation) for nourishing skin (Yang) (Qi outward) and marrow (Yin) (Qi inward). Remember, when the Qi is led outward from the primary Qi channels to the skin, the Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) (immune system) will be enhanced. When the Qi is led inward from the primary Qi channels to the bone marrow (Sui Qi, 髓氣), production of blood cells is enhanced.
- ^dThe Mud Pill Palace (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮) located at the center of the Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷) (i.e. site of pineal and pituitary glands) is the spiritual Yin center and the residence of the Shen. When the Shen is kept here, it can be focused and the mind can be calm and concentrated. When the Shen is led away from this center, then Qi will be manifested and Shen turns into Yang. Please refer to Chapter 2 for more discussion.
- ^eThe Real Lower Dan Tian is the Qi Yang center where the Qi is produced and stored. It is understood that through the absorption of the food essence and the exercises of the abdominal area, Qi can be produced in the body. When the Qi is kept at this center, it is not led out and manifested. Therefore, the physical body can be relaxed.
- ^fIn a piece of long bone, the center of the bone marrow area is considered as Yin while the ending of the bone marrow area is considered Yang. Normally, due to the manifestation of Qi at the ends of the bone (joint areas), the Qi is depleted faster and marrow degenerates here first. However, from the point of view of physical manifestation, the center of the bones and muscles are Yang while the ligaments and tendons at the joints area are considered as Yin. The electric conductivities of tendons and ligaments are higher than that of the midsection of muscles. In addition, the central area of bone (Yang) is stronger than that of the ending area (Yin) (Figure 1-38). This can be seen in that the structure of the central area of a long bone is more compact and stronger than that of the ending area.

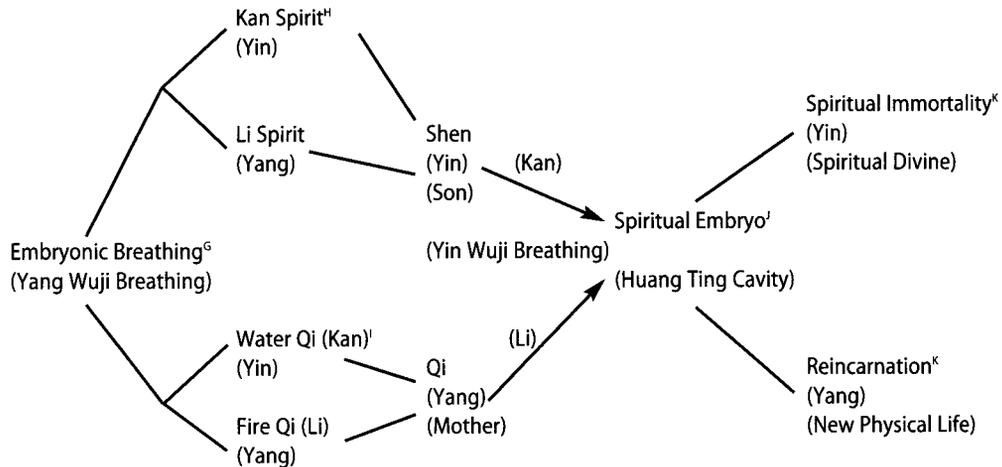


Table 1-3. Yin Spiritual Cultivation Chart

^cWhen you have achieved Embryonic Breathing (Yang Wuji Breathing), your mind is calm, Shen is focused, physical body relaxed, and the Qi stays at its residence (Real Lower Dan Tian). From this, you have returned to the beginning of life.

^hIn order to conceive your Spiritual Embryo, you must first cultivate and harmonize your Yang Shen and Yin Shen. Too much of Yin Shen (Kan, 坎), though your Shen is condensed, your physical manifestation of life will be weak and mentally you will be depressed. However, too much of Yang Shen (Li, 離), though your physical life is strong due to strong Qi manifestation, your mind will be scattered, excited, and emotionally disturbed. The key to raising up the Shen with good control is to maintain Shen strong while focused. That means both Yin and Yang Shen must harmonize and balance with each other.

ⁱIn addition, in order to conceive a Spiritual Embryo, you must also have an abundant Qi storage. To conceive a new spiritual life, you need to let the Water Qi (Shui Qi, 水氣) from the Real Lower Dan Tian interact with the Fire Qi (Huo Qi, 火氣) from the Middle Dan Tian. Water Qi is also called “Original Qi” (Yuan Qi, 元氣), or “Pre-Heaven Qi” (Xian Tian Qi, 先天氣). Fire Qi is also called “Post-Heaven Qi” (Hou Tian Qi, 後天氣). When you move the Fire Qi downward and Water Qi upward and unite them at the Huang Ting cavity (黃庭) (inner area behind navel), it is called “Kan and Li” (坎離) or “Small Tripod and Furnace” (Xiao Ding Lu, 小鼎爐). Huang Ting is a tripod while the Real Lower Dan Tian is a furnace (Figure 1-39).

^jThe final stage of conceiving a Spiritual Embryo at the Huang Ting cavity is to unite the Shen in the head with the Qi at the Huang Ting. In order to do so, you must move your Shen downward from your Upper Dan Tian. This process is again called Kan (坎) (water) and Li (離) (fire). Kan means the Shen (son) at your Upper Dan Tian while the Li is the Qi (mother) at the Huang Ting. This process is also called “Large Tripod and Furnace” (Da Ding Lu, 大鼎爐) (Figure 1-40).

^kOnce the Spiritual Embryo is conceived, you will need nine months of pregnancy. This Spiritual Embryo is then led upward to be born through the Heaven Eye (Tian Yan, 天眼) (The Third

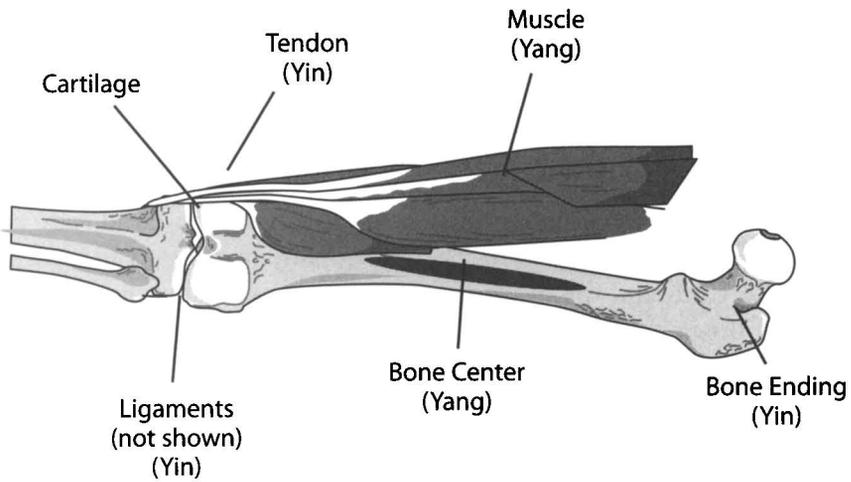


Figure 1-38. The Yin and Yang Status of a Section of Limb

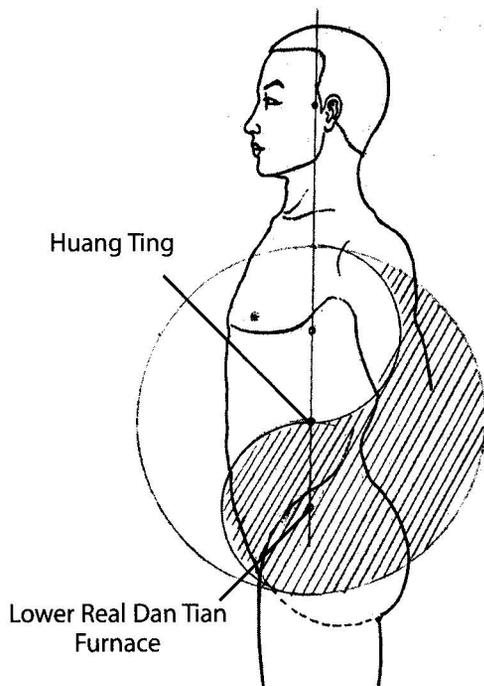


Figure 1-39. Small Tripod and Furnace

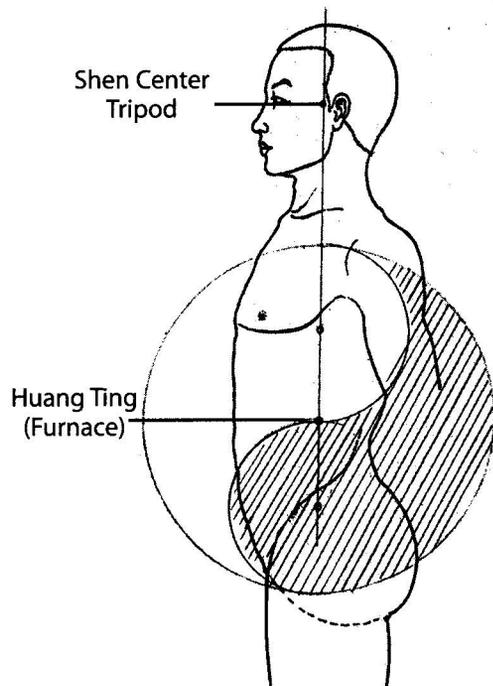


Figure 1-40. Large Tripod and Furnace

Eye). Once the spiritual baby is born, then you will need three years of nursing and finally nine years of facing the wall (spiritual independence training). Once the Shen has gained its independence, you will have an eternal spiritual life. This spiritual life can either remain in a spiritual form or re-enter into a physical life through reincarnation.

1.11 ABOUT THIS BOOK 關於這本書

Qigong science and knowledge is just like a huge garden which contains everything in this nature both on the material side and the spiritual side. Since we have never had a detailed map of this garden, we have been wondering about ourselves and nature. In the past, each Qigong master, through a lifetime of pondering and experience, has discovered some of the passages which could lead us to a new understanding of this spiritual garden. Therefore, many mysterious hidden places which manifest the truth and the beauty of nature were gradually discovered. They therefore passed down their understanding and experience either through teaching students or through writing. Though each one of these writings may provide us with only a little information about how to reach a tiny area of the garden, it had taken a Qigong master's lifetime to obtain this information. That means each piece of information written down is a road sign which could lead us to the possible way to find our goal—the true face of this garden. When much of this knowledge is combined, we can obtain a map of this Qigong garden. Through pondering the structure of nature, and also from the information obtained from the map, we are able to conclude a possible theory which might take us to the places of the Qigong garden where nobody has ever gone before. It will probably take humans many thousands of years of effort to obtain a detailed map of this nature.

However, what we have accomplished so far is only limited information about the material nature and very little is known about the spiritual nature. For this reason we are still wondering and confused about the meaning of our life and of nature. Naturally, we are still very far away from full understanding of nature.

In order to improve ourselves both materially and spiritually, we need an open mind which can allow us to set ourselves free from the traditional brainwashing and bondage (matrix). Therefore, we *should be unafraid to face the challenge, and willing to accept the truth and the mistakes we have already committed*. Only then, will we be able to create our dream of the future correctly.

Once we have created this correct attitude, then we can think with an open mind. Even though nobody is able to prove it, we should dare to make an assumption and formalize a possible theory and explanation. Naturally, most of this is generated from the imaginary mind. From this assumed theory, we will then try to prove it. If the result has been proven wrong, then we go back to modify the theory and try again. This is no different from Einstein or any other great physicists who assume their theory first and later their followers try to prove it. The attitude of study and research is *dare to dream, dare to accept the challenge, and dare to accept the fact or truth*.

When you read this book, if you have a different cultural and knowledge background, you must keep reminding yourself to keep your mind open. If you are interested in cultivating your mind and Shen, this book is a necessary book that can provide you with a firm and solid foundation for the ultimate goal of spiritual enlightenment cultivation.

When you read this book, you will see that many explanations originate from my personal understanding and are based on my scientific background. I cannot guarantee what I have assumed about the theory in the explanation is completely correct. However, through these theories and assumptions, I am able to offer you a possible logical and scientific explanation for the experience of the past. It is quite possible that once humans have understood this subject better, someone may step in to modify or even completely change my theory. That is the natural course and attitude of scientific study. After the assumed theory has been tested repeatedly, we can confirm what is correct and what is wrong. When the theory is proven correct, the map will become clear. From the correct guidance of the map, we can create and advance further.

Next, you should understand that all of the theory and methods of practice introduced in this book originated only from the study of Chinese sources. If you are wise, you should also keep your mind open and study the same subject from other different cultures. Only then will you have a different angle of viewing the same topic which could therefore lead you to a clear and wise judgment. This is especially true for spiritual cultivation. We are still at the beginning stage of understanding this subject. Any source or past experience could offer you a piece of more information and direct you to a better path of reaching the goal. Therefore, this book is not an authority on this subject. This book can only offer you one angle of viewing this subject.

You should always remember that even though we cannot prove the existence of the spirit in this universe with today's infant science, it does not mean it does not exist. We should keep our minds open and continue our pondering and research. Only then will we be able to untie the knot and open the gate of spiritual science which has been experienced by humans in all different cultures in the past.

Once you have understood the theory and the practice of this book, you should then learn how to adopt it into your thinking and living. Only then will you be able to reunite the feeling originated from both material and spirit.

In the second chapter of this Part I, I will offer you a possible scientific theoretical foundation of Embryonic Breathing. When you read this chapter, you should always remember that the theoretical foundation in this practice is just like a map which could lead you to the final goal. Therefore, you should study this map and understand it clearly first. If you rush into the practice without comprehending the theory of the practice first, you may enter the wrong path and become confused. Next, in Part II, precious related ancient documents will be translated and commented on. Since this Part II is the main core of this book, you should always return to it, read and ponder every sentence written. Remember that these road signs are the keys to lead you to the correct path of pondering and practice. Finally, the actual training method of Embryonic Breathing will be introduced in Part III.

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Theoretical Foundations of Embryonic Breathing

胎息之理論基礎

2.1 INTRODUCTION 介紹

Before discussing the theory of Qigong, let us first analyze the Chinese concept of the Dao (道). Dao has been commonly translated as the “Natural Way.” How then do we define the “Natural Way?”

First, it is stated in *Yi Jing* (易經) (*Book of Change*) (1122-1115 B.C.) that: “One Yin and one Yang is called Dao.”¹ From this statement, we can see that the fundamental concept of Dao is the coexistence of Yin and Yang aspects of nature. Later, this concept was re-defined by Lao Zi (老子) (604-531 B.C.). In his book *Dao De Jing* (*Classic on the Virtue of the Dao*) (道德經), Chapter 42, he stated: “Dao begets one, one produces two, two generates three, and from three derive millions of objects.”² From this, you can see that Dao is the *natural occurrence (cause)* or *force* which creates the first single object from emptiness and later this object (i.e. Wuji State of No Discrimination) divides into two aspects, and continues to derive into millions of objects and lives.

In addition, Lao Zi in Chapter 25 of *Dao De Jing* (道德經) states: “There is an undiscriminating thing formalized (in the space), (born) before the heaven and the earth (Yang and Yin). Extremely quiet and extremely few, existing alone and without change, repeat with cycle without end, it is able to be the mother of heaven and earth. I do not know its name and forceful wording as Dao.”³ This explains that Dao existed even before the heaven and the earth were discriminated. The Dao exists quietly and alone, and does not change its original virtue. When the Dao made the Wuji (無極) (No Extremity or No Discrimination) derive into Yin and Yang, the pattern of opposing forces or aspects (polarities) came into existence and the natural cycles formalized. This derivation from Wuji into Yin and Yang is the origin of millions of things and therefore, is the mother of lives.

He held the Dao responsible for all creation of life. Therefore, he said Dao is: “the most mysterious of the mysterious, and is the door (origin) of all marvelousness.”(Chapter 1)⁴ Also: “When the Dao is born, natural virtues are raised, objects are formalized, and the natural state will be completed.”(Chapter 51)⁵ This implies that millions of variations of nature are derived from the Dao. Once this natural pattern is completed, then the natural cycles are established and repeated. Therefore, in order for humans to fit in this nature, Lao Zi believes: “Human copies the earth, the earth patterns the heaven, the heaven models after the Dao, the Dao follows the natural.”(Chapter 25)⁶ This passage explains that it does not matter how big such as heaven, or how small such as human or any insect, all follow the same energy pattern and the same Dao. Dao follows nature.

From these statements, we can conclude that Dao is the major force in nature, which creates from nothing a single object, and from this single object, it divides into Yin and Yang. When Yin and Yang interact with each other harmoniously, millions of lives are created and derived. It is said in *Huai Nan Zi* (淮南子): “Dao begins from one, one does not beget, therefore dividing into Yin and Yang. When Yin and Yang harmonize with each other, the millions of objects are born.”⁷

In addition, Lao Zi points it out the variation from Wuji to Yin and Yang can be both ways. That means Wuji can derive into Yin and Yang Two Polarities (or Poles) and the Yin and Yang Two Polarities can be united and become Wuji. That implies the influence of the Dao is not only one way. He said in Chapter 1 of *Dao De Jing* (道德經): “Nothing, is the beginning of the Pre-Heaven (Wuji state); having, is the mother of millions of objects (Yin and Yang). Always keep nothingness, so to observe the marvelousness (of nature). Always having, so observe the returning (recycling or ending) of millions of objects.”⁸ This means the Dao is from nothing to something, and also from something to nothing, always changing from one to the other. Dao is the natural force which makes all of these occurrences. That is why the Dao was later re-defined as: “the oppositional consistent rules which divide the object of matter from one into two and re-unify the objects from two to one.”⁹

If we trace back the oldest Chinese philosophy which relates to the development of nature, especially human, *Yi Jing* (易經) (*Book of Changes*; 1122-1115 B.C.) can be said to be the first book that offers a detailed and clear discussion. It was from this book that the Dao (natural way) of the nature was followed by Chinese people.

From *Yi Jing*, it is said:

Yi Great Biography said: “Ancient person, Bao-Xi, was a king of the heaven and the earth. Look up to observe (different) phases (variations) of heaven, and look down to inspect the rules (patterns) of the earth. Behold the behavior of birds and animals (living styles) and its relationship with the earth. Close, use own body (to experiment) and far, adopt the phenomenon of the object’s (variations). Then, begin to create Bagua (trigram) which is used to transport (understand) the

virtue of the (natural) spirit and the divine, and also to classify the behaviors of the millions of objects.”

易大傳曰：“古者包羲氏之王天下也。仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地。觀鳥獸之文，與地之宜。近取諸身，遠取諸物。於是始作八卦，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情。”

Bao-Xi (包羲) (2852-2737 B.C.) was the ruler of China. The heaven and the earth means the kingdom. According to *Yi Jing*, after Bao-Xi carefully observed the natural cyclic patterns and the behaviors of natural lives (both plants and animals), he created the Eight Trigrams (Bagua, 八卦) which can be used to interpret and to trace the patterns of nature. Since then, the theory of trigrams has significantly influenced Chinese culture.

From these statements, we can see that *Yi Jing* was written based on the understanding of nature by observing its routine cycles. From this, the Yin and Yang theory was developed.

Therefore, it is also said in *Yi Jing*:

Therefore, Yi (Change) has Taiji (Grand Ultimate), and thus begets Two Polarities (Yin and Yang). Two Polarities produce Four Phases. Four Phases give rise to Bagua (Eight Trigrams). Bagua is able to define good or bad luck (fortune), (from) good or bad luck, the great career (creations of variation of nature) is created.

是故易有太極，是生兩儀，兩儀生四象，四象生八卦，八卦定吉凶，吉凶生大業。

From this statement, you can understand that it is because there is a Taiji (太極) (Grand Ultimate), that there is change. Without Taiji, there is no change. Through Taiji, the Two Polarities are created from Wuji (無極) (No Extremity) and with the influence of Taiji, the Two Polarities again derive into Four Phases (Si Xiang, 四象). Again, Four Phases produce the Eight Trigrams (Bagua, 八卦). From Eight Trigrams, the natural cyclical patterns can be calculated. From this, good or bad fortune can be calculated (predicted). Therefore, in order to be prosperous in your business, you must follow the natural patterns of good luck and avoid those of bad luck. From here, you can see that all of the derivations originate from Taiji. Therefore, Taiji is the Dao or the natural force which makes division and unification happen.

In a Daoist classic, *Records of Recent Pondering* (近思錄), it is said:

Wuji begets Taiji, (when) Taiji moves (initiates an action), the Yang is born; (when) movement reaches its extremity, again calm; (when) calm, generates the Yin. (When) calmness reaches its extremity, again moving. One moves and one calm, mutually as the root (origin of generation). Yin and Yang are discriminated and the Two Polarities are completed.

無極生太極，太極動而生陽，動極復靜；靜而生陰，靜極復動。一動一靜，互為其根，分陰分陽，兩儀至焉。

It is through the action of this repeated Yin and Yang cycle that the millions of lives are begotten. The originating force of this Yin and Yang division is called Taiji. An ancient Daoist classic, *Glossary Talking of Zhu Zi* (朱子語類), said: "What is called Taiji, is what is the root of the millions things in heaven and earth."¹⁰

Later, Taiji was again interpreted and clarified by Wang, Zong-Yue (王宗岳) (c. 1750 A.D.). In *Taijiquan Classic*, he said:

What is Taiji? It is generated from Wuji and is a pivotal function of movement and stillness. It is the mother of Yin and Yang. When it moves (in action), it divides. At rest it reunites.

太極者，無極而生，動靜之機，陰陽之母也。動之則分，靜之則合。

From this statement, you can see that Taiji is neither Wuji nor Yin and Yang, but the natural force or Dao which makes the divisions and unifications happen (Figure 2-1). It is the cause and origin of all life's creation and death. It is the way of the natural cycle.

From the above, we can see that the origin of Chinese culture was based on the philosophy of Taiji and Yin-Yang theory. This has therefore become the traditional empirical foundation for the development of Chinese culture. Naturally, this also includes Qigong.

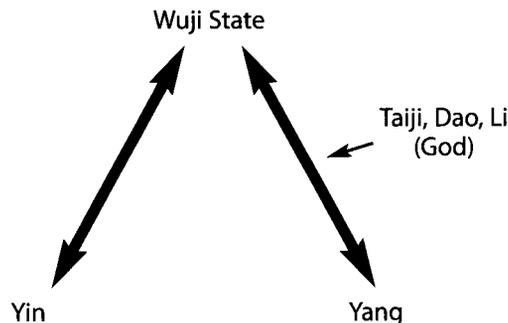


Figure 2-1. The Meaning of Taiji

When the Yin and Yang theory is applied to Qigong, the first important goal of Qigong practice is the harmony and balance of Yin and Yang (Yin Yang Xie Tiao, 陰陽諧調). In order to reach this harmonious stage of balance, you must know the method of adjusting Yin and Yang, namely the methods and theory of Kan (坎) (Water) and Li (離) (Fire). Therefore, you should comprehend the meaning of the Yin and Yang, and Kan and Li thoroughly, which has been discussed in Chapter 1.

When these Yin-Yang and Kan-Li theories are applied to human health, the physical body is considered as Yang while the mental and spiritual bodies are considered as Yin. In order to have a healthy and long life, you must not only be concerned with your physical health but also with your spiritual condition. Mental and spiritual condition are the foundation of life. Though they cannot be seen, they are the origins and the causes of the physical manifestation. When this foundation is firm and strong, the manifestation of life can be strong. Therefore, the methods of reaching health and longevity is the cultivation of both mental body and physical body. It is called “dual cultivation of the human nature and life” (Xing Ming Shuang Xiu, 性命雙修). Here, human nature (temperament) means the internal nature, or the original human sense and spirit (mental mind) which has been carried with us since we were born. Life here means the physical life which is limited.

When you know how to adjust yourself into a harmonious state of both internal and external, it is called “balance of the body and mind” (Shen Xin Ping Heng, 身心平衡). Once you have gained this balance, then you will be able to live long, which allows you to have a longer time for your spiritual cultivation. Spiritual cultivation is considered the way of reaching enlightenment or Buddhahood, the final goal or meaning of human life.

Today, it is very fortunate for us that we have developed our material science to a level in the last centuries which allows us to explain and verify many inexplicable happenings in the past. Nevertheless, many mysteries and unknowns remain, and we are still waiting for further understanding from the scientific point of view. We are in the most exciting and challenging era in which the ancient mysterious experience can finally be resolved by today's science.

The theory is just like a map of a city which is able to direct you to the correct path and reach the final goal. Practice is the action of transportation which allows you to reach the target. From this, you can see that a correct theory is a crucial key to reaching the goal. If the theory is wrong, all of the actions can be in vain.

Fortunately, the documents passed down which were written by thousands of Qigong experts from their lifetime experiences, have provided us with many road signs. Each of these signs has offered a tiny piece of information about the whole map. When all of these pieces of information are gathered and compiled, many useless ones will be put aside while others have become the crucial keys drawing the map.

I am just like someone putting together a puzzle. In front of me, there are thousands of puzzle pieces that have been revealed to us about Qigong practice. Some of them are useful and very valuable, while many others may mislead you to the wrong path. From my collections, I try to make judgments and choose those which are useful and related to the subjects. From many years of compiling, understanding, and studying, I will finally be able to make the hidden map of Qigong appear. Though it is not as detailed as I would like it to be, nevertheless, I have obtained a clear direction for reaching my goal, without being afraid of confusion or of getting lost.

After so many years of study and research, I deeply realize that a clear and detailed map is necessary for those people who are interested in the study of the Dao of Qigong. However, it is not easy to accomplish this great giant job by myself in a single life time. There are a few reasons:

1. Since there are thousands of abundant ancient documents which need to be translated, interpreted, and explained, we will first need a group of qualified Chinese scholars who are not only familiar with the Qigong practice, but are also masters of ancient Chinese writing. If a person does not have these two requirements, he or she will not be able to understand some special terminology used in ancient Qigong society.
2. In addition, we will also need a group of experienced Qigong practitioners who are able to translate these ancient documents into other languages with the correct meaning. Naturally, this is not an easy task since a Chinese word can convey many different meanings depending on where, how, and when it is used.
3. We will need a group of modern open-minded scientists and medical experts who are able to offer their opinions of these ancient practices. This group will not only challenge and try to verify the ancient experience, but also offer the possible scientific explanation of the remaining mysteries.

In order to reach this goal, we will need a foundation with strong financial support. In this foundation, all of the experts both of mastering the past and present should sit together and discuss every subject of Qigong practice. From these conferences, the information will be compiled, studied, researched, experimented, and finally presented to the public. Naturally, it is not an easy task. Without governmental support or the interest of scholar society, it will be a hard and almost impossible path for anyone to accomplish this huge project alone.

In this chapter, I will try to explain many mysteries in Qigong practice based on my personal limited scientific background. Naturally, all of these possible explanations still need to be verified. However, before scientists are able to verify them, these remain the most probable explanations.

In the second section of this chapter, a possible scientific explanation and definition of Qi and Qigong will be given. In addition, the relationship between respiration, Qigong, and health will be discussed. To help a beginner understand the documents of Embryonic Breathing, the definition of the three Dan Tians will be offered. Then, I will offer a theoretical and scientific understanding of Embryonic Breathing in Section 2-3. Finally, I will summarize the meaning and purposes of meditation in Section 2-4.

2.2 HUMAN QIGONG SCIENCE 人類氣功科學

In this section, I would like to interpret Chinese Qigong from a scientific point of view. However, since modern science has just begun to accept the Eastern Qigong concepts, there is still a long way for Western science to go before reaching a profound understanding of this subject. All of the explanations in this section are based on my personal understanding of science, and also from the available information already published. In order to have a reasonable and satisfactory explanation, many theoretical assumptions are given. Naturally, when you read this section, you should use your logical and scientific mind to make a wise judgement and a neutral mind to understand the subject. You should also always place a doubt in your mind about all of these assumptions and explanations. Only in the future when we have verified all of the theories discussed in this section, can we then trust it fully.

In this section, first I would like to explain the concept of Qi and Qigong from the modern scientific point of view. After this, a hypothetical human electric network will be given to compare to the ancient Chinese medical concept. Then, we will define the human bio-battery both from the traditional Chinese concept and also in view of Western scientific discoveries.

A Modern Definition of Qi 氣之現代定義. It is important that you know about the progress that has been made by modern science in the study of Qi. This will keep you from getting stuck in the ancient concepts and level of understanding.

In ancient China, people had very little knowledge of electricity. They only knew from acupuncture that when a needle was inserted into acupuncture cavities, some kind of energy other than heat was produced that often caused a shock or a tingling sensation. It was not until the last few decades, when the Chinese people were more acquainted with electromagnetic science, that they began to recognize that this energy circulating in the body, which they called Qi, might be the same thing as what today's science calls "bioelectricity."

It is understood now that the human body is constructed of many different electrically conductive materials, and that it forms a living electromagnetic field and circuit. Electromagnetic energy is continuously being generated in the human body through the biochemical reaction in food and air assimilation, and circulated by the electromotive forces (EMF) generated within the body.

In addition, you are constantly being affected by external electromagnetic fields such as that of the earth, or the electrical fields generated by clouds. When you practice Chinese medicine or Qigong, you need to be aware of these outside factors and take them into account.

Countless experiments have been conducted in China, Japan, and other countries to study how external magnetic or electrical fields can affect and adjust the body's Qi field. Many acupuncturists use magnets and electricity in their treatments. They attach a magnet to the skin over a cavity and leave it there for a period of time. The magnetic field gradually affects the Qi circulation in that channel. Alternatively, they insert needles into cavities and then run an electric current through the needle to reach the Qi channels directly. Although many researchers have claimed a degree of success in their experiments, none has been able to publish any detailed and convincing proof of the results, or give a good explanation of the theory behind the experiment. As with many other attempts to explain the *How* and *Why* of acupuncture, conclusive proof is elusive, and many unanswered questions remain. Of course, this theory is quite new, and it will probably take a lot more study and research before it is verified and completely understood. At present, there are many conservative acupuncturists who are skeptical.

To untie this knot, we must look at what modern Western science has discovered about bioelectromagnetic energy. Many reports on bioelectricity have been published, and frequently the results are closely related to what is experienced in Chinese Qigong training and medical science. For example, during the electrophysiological research of the 1960s, several investigators discovered that bones are piezoelectric; that is, when they are stressed, mechanical energy is converted to electrical energy in the form of electric current.¹¹ This might explain one of the practices of Marrow Washing Qigong in which the stress on the bones and muscles is increased in certain ways to increase the Qi circulation.

Dr. Robert O. Becker has done important work in this field. His book *The Body Electric*¹² reports on much of the research concerning the body's electric field. It is presently believed that food and air are the fuels which generate the electricity in the body through biochemical reaction. This electricity, which is circulated throughout the entire body by means of electrically conductive tissue, is one of the main energy sources which keep the cells of the physical body alive.

Whenever you have an injury or are sick, your body's electrical circulation is affected. If this circulation of electricity stops, you die. But bioelectric energy not only maintains life, it is also responsible for repairing physical damage. Many researchers have sought ways of using external electrical or magnetic fields to speed up the body's recovery from physical injury. Richard Leviton reports: "Researchers at Loma Linda University's School of Medicine in California have found, following studies in sixteen countries with over 1,000 patients, that low-frequency, low-inten-

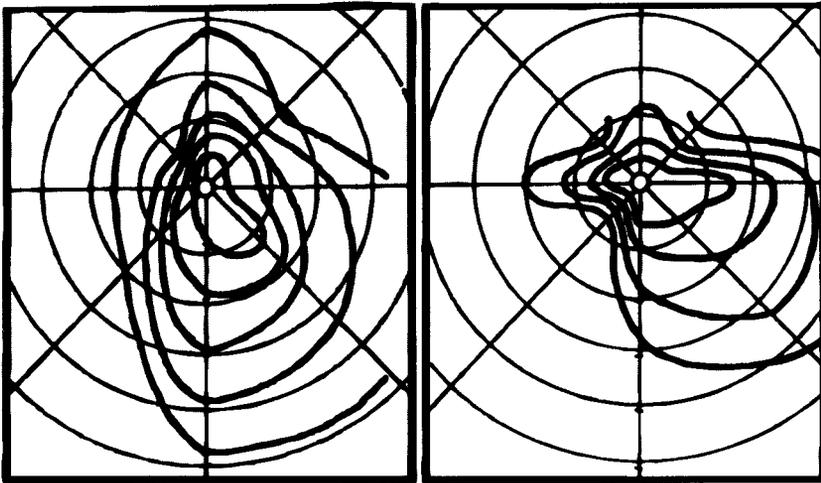


Figure 2-2. Electric Conductivity Maps of the Skin Surface over Acupuncture Points

sity magnetic energy has been successful in treating chronic pain related to tissue ischemia, and has also worked in clearing up slow-healing ulcers, and in 90 percent of patients tested, raised blood flow significantly.”¹³

Mr. Leviton also reports that every cell of the body functions like an electric battery and is able to store electric charge. He reports that: “Other biomagnetic investigators take an even closer look to find out what is happening, right down to the level of the blood, the organs, and the individual cell, which they regard as ‘a small electric battery.’”¹³ This has convinced me that our entire body is essentially a big battery which is assembled from millions of small batteries. All of these batteries together form the human electromagnetic field.

Furthermore, much of the research on the body’s electrical field relates to acupuncture. For example, Dr. Becker reports that the conductivity of the skin is much higher at acupuncture cavities, and that it is now possible to locate them precisely by measuring the skin’s conductivity (Figure 2-2).¹² Many of these reports prove that the acupuncture which has been done in China for thousands of years is reasonable and scientific.

Some researchers use the theory of the body’s electricity to explain many of the ancient “miracles” which have been attributed to the practice of Qigong. A report by Albert L. Huebner states: “These demonstrations of body electricity in human beings may also offer a new explanation of an ancient healing practice. If weak external fields can produce powerful physiological effects, it may be that fields from human tissues in one person are capable of producing clinical improvements in another. In short, the method of healing known as the laying on of hands could be an especially subtle form of electrical stimulation.”¹¹

Another frequently reported phenomenon is that when a Qigong practitioner has reached a high level of development, a halo would appear behind and/or around his head during meditation. Halos are commonly seen in paintings of Jesus Christ, the Buddha, and various Oriental immortals. Frequently the light is pictured as surrounding the whole body. This phenomenon may again be explained by the body electric theory. When a person has cultivated their Qi (electricity) to a high level, the Qi may be led to accumulate in the head. This Qi may then interact with the oxygen molecules in the air, and ionize them, causing them to glow.

Although the link between the theory of *The Body Electric* and the Chinese theory of Qi is becoming more accepted and better proven, there are still many questions to be answered. For example, how actually does the mind generate an EMF (electromotive force) to circulate the electricity in the body? Is bioelectricity circulating in the animal body a DC or an AC current? How is the human electromagnetic field affected by the multitude of other electric fields that surround us, such as radio wiring or electrical appliances? How can we readjust our electromagnetic fields and survive in outer space or on other planets where the magnetic field is completely different from Earth's? You can see that the future of Qigong and bioelectric science is a challenging and exciting one. It is about time that we started to use modern technology to understand the inner energy world which has for the most part been ignored by Western society.

A Modern Definition of Qigong 氣功之現代定義. If you now accept that the inner energy (Qi) circulating in our bodies is bioelectricity, then we can formulate a definition of Qigong, based on electrical principles.

Let us assume that the circuit shown in Figure 2-3 is similar to the circuit in our bodies. Unfortunately, although we now have a certain degree of understanding of this circuit from acupuncture, we still do not know in detail exactly what the body's circuit looks like. We know that there are Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Qi rivers) (Shi Er Jing, 十二經) and Eight Vessels (Qi reservoirs) (Ba Mai, 八脈) in our body. There are also thousands of small Qi channels (Luo, 絡) which allow the Qi to reach the skin and the bone marrow. In this circuit, the twelve internal organs are connected and mutually related through these channels. Finally, there is a Dan Tian (丹田) (Elixir Field) (bio-battery) which produces and stores the Qi.

If you look at the electrical circuit in the illustration, you will see that:

1. The Qi channels are like the wires which carry electric current.
2. The internal organs are like the electrical components such as resistors and solenoids.
3. The Qi vessels are like capacitors, which regulate the current in the circuit.
4. The Dan Tian is like a battery, which stores the charge and provides the EMF in the circuit.

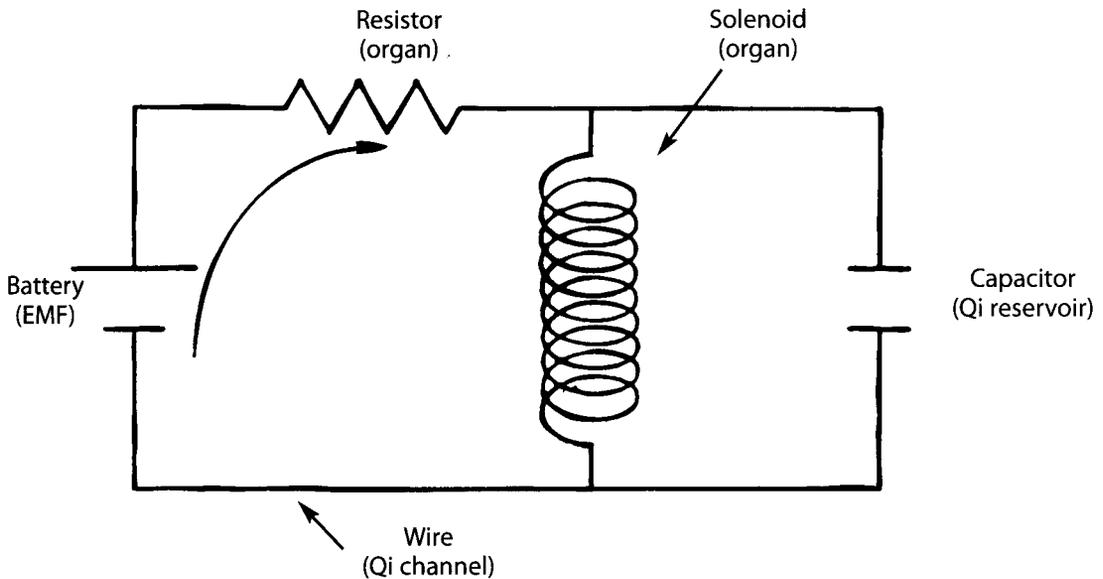


Figure 2-3. The Human Bioelectric Circuit is Similar to an Electric Circuit

How do you keep this electrical circuit functioning most efficiently? Your first concern is the resistance of the wire which carries the current. In a machine, you want to use a wire which has a high level of conductivity and low resistance; otherwise heat may be generated and the wire may melt. Therefore, the wire should be of a material like copper or perhaps even gold. In your body, you want to keep the current flowing smoothly. This means that your first task is to remove anything which interferes with the flow and causes stagnation. Fat has low conductivity, so you should use diet and exercise to remove excess fat from your body. You should also learn how to relax your physical body, because this opens all of the Qi channels. This is why relaxation is the first goal in Taijiquan and many Qigong exercises.

Your next concern in maintaining a healthy electrical circuit is the components—your internal organs. If you do not have the correct level of current in your organs, they will either burn out from too much current (Yang) or malfunction because of a deficient level of current (Yin). In order to avoid these problems in a machine, you use a capacitor to regulate the current. Whenever there is too much current, the capacitor absorbs and stores the excess, and whenever the current is weak, the capacitor supplies current to raise the level. The eight Qi vessels are your body's capacitors. Qigong is concerned with learning how to increase the level of Qi in these vessels so that they will be able to supply current when needed, and keep the internal organs functioning smoothly. This is especially important as you get older when your Qi level is generally lower.

In addition, in order to have a healthy circuit, you must be concerned with the components themselves. If any of them are not strong and of good quality, the entire

circuit may malfunction. This means that the final concern in Qigong practice is how to maintain or even rebuild the health of your internal organs. Before we go any further, we should point out that there is an important difference between the circuit shown in the diagram and the Qi circuit in our bodies. This difference is that the human body is alive, and with the proper Qi nourishment, all of the cells can be regrown and the state of health improved. For example, if you are able to jog about three miles today, and if you keep jogging regularly and gradually increase the distance, eventually you will easily be able to jog five miles. This is because your body rebuilds and readjusts itself to fit the circumstances.

This means that, if we are able to increase the Qi flow through our internal organs, they can become stronger and healthier. Naturally, the increase in Qi must be slow and gradual so that the organs can adjust to it. In order to increase the Qi flow in your body, you need to work with the EMF (electromotive force) in your body. If you do not know what EMF is, imagine two containers filled with water and connected by a tube. If both containers have the same water level, then the water will not flow. However, if one side is higher than the other, the water will flow from that container to the other. In electricity, this potential difference is called electric potential difference or electromotive force. Naturally, the higher the EMF is, the stronger the current will flow.

You can see from this discussion that the key to effective Qigong practice is, in addition to removing resistance from the Qi channels, learning how to increase the EMF in your body. Now let us see what the sources of EMF in the body are, so that we may use them to increase the flow of bioelectricity. Generally speaking, there are six major sources:

- 1. Natural Energy.** Since your body is constructed of electrically conductive material, its electromagnetic field is always affected by the sun, the moon, clouds, the earth's magnetic field, and by the other energies around you. The major influences are the radiation of the sun and moon, the moon's gravity, and the earth's magnetic field. These affect your Qi circulation significantly, and are responsible for the pattern of your Qi circulation since you were formed. We are now also being greatly affected by the energy pollution generated by modern technology, such as electromagnetic waves generated by radio, TV, microwave ovens, computers, and many other devices.
- 2. Food and Air.** In order to maintain life, we take in food and air essence through our mouths and noses. These essences are then converted into Qi through biochemical reaction in the chest and digestive system (called the Triple Burner in Chinese medicine). When Qi is converted from the essence, an EMF is generated that circulates the Qi throughout the body.

Consequently, a major part of Qigong is devoted to getting the proper kinds of food and fresh air.

3. **Thinking.** The human mind is the most important and efficient source of bioelectric EMF. Any time you move to do something you must first generate an idea (Yi, 意). This idea generates the EMF and leads the Qi through the nervous system to energize the appropriate muscles to carry out the desired motion. The more you can concentrate, the stronger the EMF you can generate, and the stronger the flow of Qi you can lead. Naturally, the stronger the flow of Qi you lead to the muscles, the more they will be energized. Because of this, the mind is considered the most important factor in Qigong training.
4. **Exercise.** Exercise converts the food essence (fat) stored in your body into Qi, and therefore builds up the EMF. Many Qigong styles have been created which utilize movement for this purpose.
5. **Converting Pre-Birth Essence into Qi.** The hormones produced by our endocrine glands are referred to as “Pre-Birth Essence” or “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精) in Chinese medicine. They can be used to regulate the biochemical reaction which converts the food or fat into Qi. Hormones acts as catalysts in our body’s biochemical reaction process (metabolism). Thus, hormones are able to stimulate the functioning of our physical body, thereby increasing our vitality. Balancing hormone production when you are young and increasing its production when you are old are important subjects in Chinese Qigong.
6. **Artificial Stimulation.** The enhancement or the adjustment of the Qi circulation can also be done artificially. In fact, this is the basic theory of Chinese medicine such as acupuncture and Qigong massage. From external artificial Qi stimulation, the Qi can be brought to a state of balance, thus preventing or curing the sickness.

From the foregoing, you can see that within the human body, there is a network of electrical circuitry. In order to maintain the circulation of bioelectricity, there must be a battery (or power supply) wherein to store and supply charge. Where then, is the battery in our body?

Chinese Qigong practitioners believe that there is a place that is able to store Qi (bioelectricity). This place is called the Dan Tian (丹田) (Elixir Field). According to such practitioners, there are three Dan Tians in the human body. One is located at the abdominal area, one or two inches below the navel, called the “Lower Dan Tian” (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田). The second is in the area of the lower sternum which is connected to the diaphragm, and is called the “Middle Dan Tian” (Zhong Dan Tian,

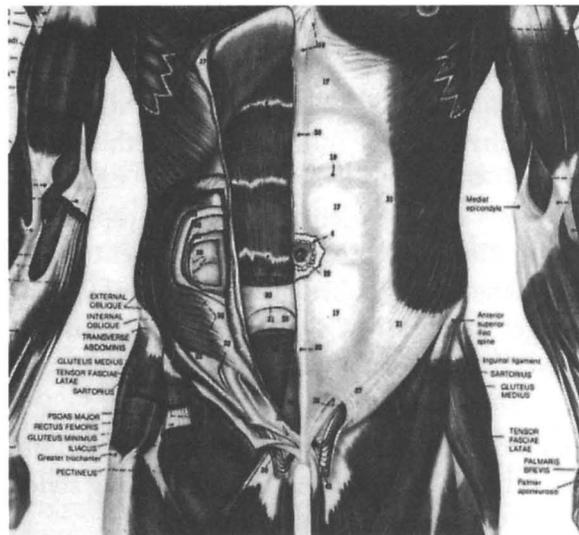


Figure 2-4. Anatomic Structure of the Abdominal Area

中丹田). The third is the center of the brain, which connects to the lower center of the forehead (or The Third Eye), and is called the “Upper Dan Tian” (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田). In fact, often the entire brain is considered to be the Upper Dan Tian.

The Lower Dan Tian is considered to be the residence of the Water Qi, or the Qi which is generated from the “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精). Therefore, Qi stored here is called “Original Qi” (Yuan Qi, 元氣). According to Chinese medicine, in this same area there is a cavity called “Qihai” (Co-6) (氣海), which means “Qi ocean.” This is consistent with the conclusions drawn by Qigong practitioners, who also call this area the “Lower Dan Tian” (Lower Elixir Field). Both groups agree that this area is able to produce Qi or elixir like a field, and that here the Qi is abundant like an ocean.

In Qigong practice, it is commonly known that in order to build up the Qi to a higher level in the Lower Dan Tian, you must move your abdominal area (Lower Dan Tian) up and down through abdominal breathing. This kind of up and down abdominal breathing exercise is called “Qi Huo” (起火) and means “start the fire.” It is also called “back to childhood breathing” (Fan Tong Hu Xi, 返童呼吸). Normally, after you have exercised the Lower Dan Tian for about ten minutes, you will have a feeling of warmth in the lower abdomen, which verifies the accumulation of Qi or energy. Therefore, Daoists called the abdominal area the “Dan Lu” (丹爐) which means the “elixir furnace.”

Theoretically and scientifically, what is happening when the abdominal area is moved up and down? If you look at the structure of the abdominal area, you will see that there are about six layers of muscle and fasciae sandwiching each other in this area (Figure 2-4). In fact, what you actually see is the sandwich of muscles and fat

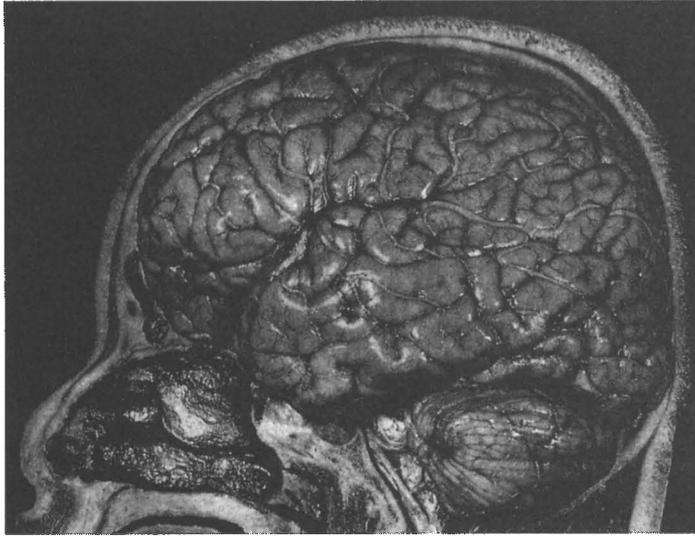


Figure 2-5. The Upper Dan Tian—The Human Brain

accumulated in the fasciae layers. When you move your abdomen up and down, you are actually using your mind to move the muscles, not the fat. Whenever there is a muscular contraction and relaxation, the fat slowly turns into bioelectricity. When this bioelectricity encounters resistance from the fasciae layers, it turns into heat. From this, you can see how simple the theory might be for the generation of Qi. Another thing you should know is that, according to our understanding today, fat and fasciae are poor electrical conductors, while the muscles are relatively good electrical conductors.^{11,12,13} When these good and poor electrical materials are sandwiched together, they act like a battery. This is why, through up and down abdominal movements, the energy can be stored temporarily and warmth generated.

However, understanding Dan Tians is not a simple task. In fact, they are more complicated than most people thought. Next, we will discuss the “Three Dan Tians” (San Tian, 三田) more clearly.

Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田). Generally, the entire brain is considered to be the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田). We already know that the brain and the spinal cord are considered to be the central nervous system, in which the electrical conductivity is highest in our body. If we examine the brain’s structure, we can see that it is segregated by the arachnoid mater (mater is a kind of membrane in the body; “arachnoid mater” is a delicate membrane of the spinal cord and brain, lying between the “pia mater” and “dura mater”) into separate portions (Figure 2-5). It is reasonable to assume that these materials are tissue of low electrical conductivity. If the good conductors have been sandwiched by poor conductive material, then this system is able to store some electricity. However, we should also know that the brain does not produce Qi but consumes a great amount of it. From

Western science, we already know that each brain cell consumes at least twelve times more oxygen than other cells. Since in the biochemical reaction, oxygen is proportional to the production of energy (Qi) in the body, it is reasonable to assume that each brain cell also consumes at least twelve times more Qi than regular cells.

Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田) Next, let us examine the structure of the Middle Dan Tian area. This is located at the lower section of the sternum, which is connected to the diaphragm (Figure 2-6). We know that the diaphragm is a membranous muscular partition separating the abdominal and the thoracic cavities. It functions in respiration and is a good electrically conductive material. On the top and the bottom of the diaphragm there are the fasciae, which isolate the internal organs from the diaphragm. We

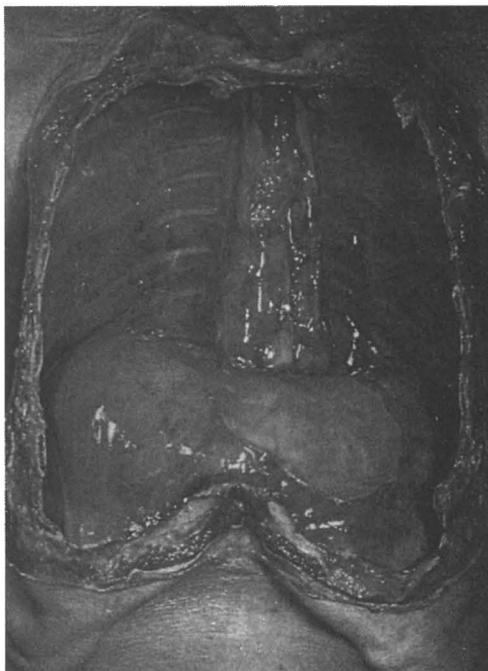


Figure 2-6. The Middle Dan Tian is Connected to the Diaphragm

see once again a good electrical conductor isolated by a poor electrical conductor. That means that it is capable of storing electricity or Qi. Since this place is between the lungs and the stomach, and they absorb the Post-Birth Essence (air and food) and convert it into energy, the Qi accumulated in the Middle Dan Tian is classified as Fire Qi (Huo Qi, 火氣). In other words, the Qi converted from the contaminated air and food can affect Qi status and make it Yang. Naturally, this Fire Qi can also agitate your emotional mind. Some documents believe that the heart is the Middle Dan Tian. However, it makes more sense that the diaphragm is the Middle Dan Tian since it is able to store Qi. I personally believe that the “heart” is related to our emotion. Our emotion is associated with the air and food we absorb. Thus, the heart is related to the Qi status in the Middle Dan Tian but not to the Middle Dan Tian itself.

False Lower Dan Tian and Real Dan Tian (Jia Xia, Zhen Dan Tian; 下假·真丹田). Through nearly two thousand years of experience, Daoists have said that the front abdominal area is not the Real Dan Tian, but is in fact a “False Dan Tian” (Jia Dan Tian, 假丹田). Their argument is that, although this Lower Dan Tian is able to generate Qi and build it up to a higher level, it does not store it for a long time. This is because it is located on the path of the Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈), so that whenever Qi is built up to a higher energy state, it will circulate in the Conception and

Governing Vessels (Ren and Du Mai, 任·督脈) This Lower Dan Tian therefore cannot be a battery as we understand the term. A real battery should be able to store the Qi to an abundant level. Where then, is the “Real Lower Dan Tian” (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田)? We will discuss the Real Lower Dan Tian later. Now, let us first clarify the function of the False Lower Dan Tian (Jia Xia Dan Tian, 假下丹田).

False Lower Dan Tian (Jia Xia Dan Tian, 假下丹田) As mentioned earlier, through abdominal movement coordinated with breathing, the fat accumulated at the abdominal area can be converted into Qi. This kind of abdominal exercise is called “back to childhood breathing” (Fan Tong Hu Xi, 返童呼吸). Consequently, the amount of Qi can be increased in the body. From this, we see something at variance from the ancient teachings. It is said that through abdominal breathing, the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) can be converted into Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣). Today, we know that Original Essence is hormones. If we look closely, we can see that the Qi is actually converted from the fat stored in the abdominal area. Fat is the extra food essence stored in our bodies for an emergency. Fat is a material which has been filtered by the liver and has a very high content of calories. Therefore, it can be converted into Qi efficiently.

We can trace this back to a very long time ago, before humans knew how to raise cattle and grow food. At that time, we were no different from other animals. When we had food we ate a lot and when we did not have food, we starved. However, like animals, we did not die in a short time from starvation. This is because the body has different places to store the extra food essence (fat) in the body. When we lack food, this extra food essence will be converted naturally into energy and supply our needs. The abdominal area is the main area for the storage of fat. There are six layers of muscles and six layers of fasciae mutually sandwiched between each other. Wherever there are fasciae, there is a stagnation of Qi and blood circulation, and consequently fat can be deposited. Through abdominal exercises, this fat can be converted into Qi efficiently.

From this we can see that it is not Original Essence (hormones) which is converted into Qi. However, due to the hormones’ function, the Qi can be converted from food essence or fat stored in the body more efficiently. This is simply because the hormones act as catalysts in the body’s biochemical reaction. One of the possible causes of increasing hormone production through the abdominal up and down exercises, is the stimulation of islets of Langerhans in the pancreas.

Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) Daoists teach that the Real Lower Dan Tian is at the center of the abdominal area, at the physical center of gravity located in the large and small intestines (Figure 2-7). Now, let us analyze this from two different points of view.

First, let us take a look at how life begins. It starts with a sperm from the father entering an egg from the mother, thus forming the original human cell (Figure 2-8).¹⁴

This cell next divides into two cells, then four cells, etc. When this group of cells adheres to the internal wall of the uterus, the umbilical cord starts to develop. Nutrition and energy for further cell multiplication is absorbed through the umbilical cord from the mother's body. The baby keeps growing until it develops a more mature body. During this nourishing and growing process, the baby's abdomen is moving up and down, acting like a pump drawing in nutrition and energy into his or her body. Later, immediately after birth, air and nutrition are taken in from the nose and mouth through the mouth's sucking action and the lungs' breathing. As the child grows, it slowly forgets the natural movements of the abdomen. This is why the abdomen's up and down movement is called "back to childhood breathing."

Think carefully: if your first human cell were still alive, where would it be? Naturally, this cell has already died a long time ago. It is understood that approximately one trillion (10^{12}) cells die in a human body each day.¹⁵ However, if we assume that this first cell is still alive, then it should be located at our physical center, that is, our center of gravity. If we think carefully, we can see that it is from this center that the cells could multiply evenly outward until the body was fully constructed. In order to maintain this even multiplication physically, the energy or Qi must be centered at this point and radiate outward. When we are in an embryonic state, this is the center of gravity and also the Qi center. As we grow after birth, this center remains.

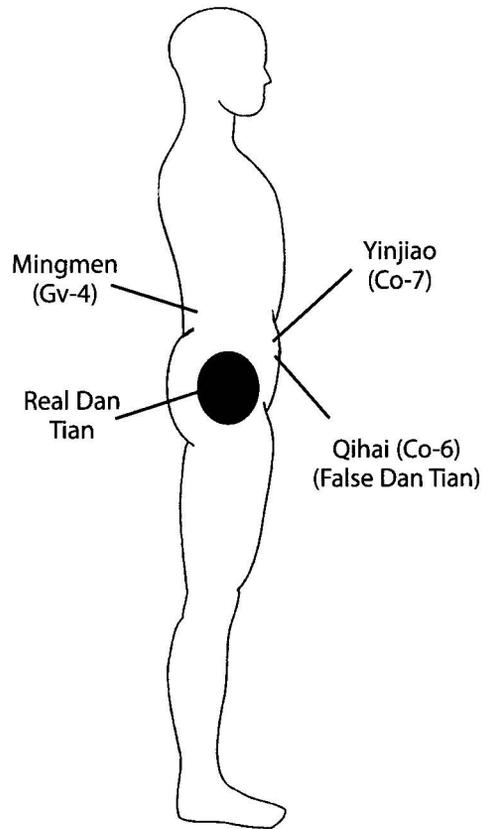


Figure 2-7. The Real Lower Dan Tian and the False Lower Dan Tian

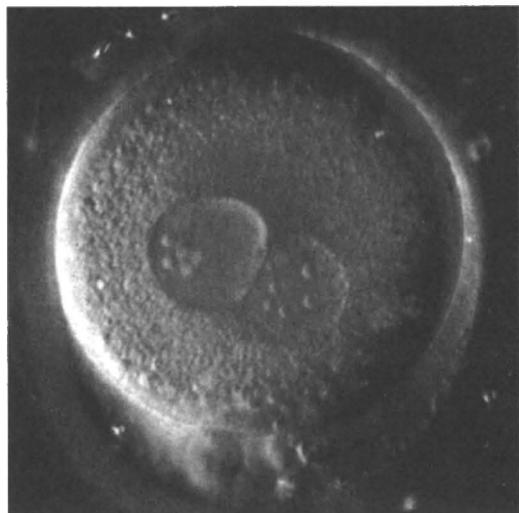


Figure 2-8. Original First Human Cell



Figure 2-9. Anatomic Structure of the Real Lower Dan Tian—The Second Brain

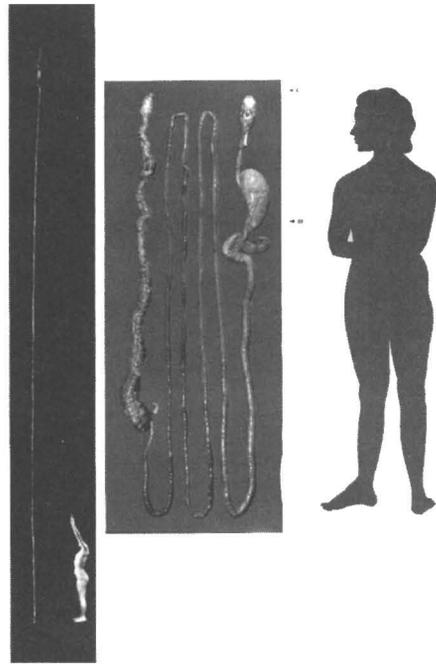


Figure 2-10. The Large and Small Intestines are About Six Times Your Height

The above argument adheres solely to the traditional point of view of the physical development of our body. Next, let us analyze this center from another point of view.

If we look at the physical center of gravity, we can see that the entire area is occupied by the Large and Small Intestines (Figure 2-9). We know that there are three kinds of muscles existing in our body, and we can examine them in ascending order of our ability to control them. The first kind includes the heart muscle, in which the electrical conductivity among muscular groups is the highest. The heart beats all the time, regardless of our attention, and through practice and discipline, we are only able to regulate its beating, not start and stop it. If we supply electricity to even a small piece of this muscle, it will pump like the heart. The second category of muscles are those which contract automatically, but over which we can exert significant control if we make the effort. The diaphragm which controls breathing, our eyelids, and certain sexual responses are examples of this muscle type, and their electrical conductivity is lower than the first type. The third kind of muscles are those muscles which are directly controlled by our conscious mind. The electric conductivity of these muscles is the lowest of the three groups.

If you look at the structure of the Large and Small Intestines, the first thing you notice is that the total length of your Large and Small Intestines is approximately six times your body's height (Figure 2-10). With such long electrically conductive tissues

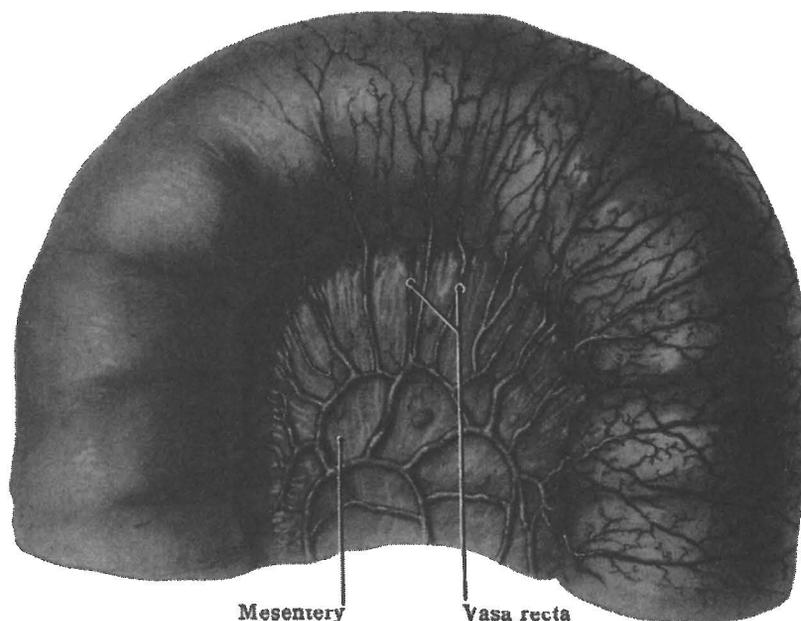


Figure 2-11. Low Electrically Conductive Material Such as Mesentery, Outer Casing, and Water in and Around the Intestines Makes the Entire Area Act Like a Battery

(Used with permission: James E. Anderson, M.D., Grant's Atlas of Anatomy, 7th ed., ©Williams and Wilkins)

sandwiched between all of the mesenteries, water, and linings (which it is reasonable to believe are poor electrical conductive tissues), the intestines act like a huge battery in our body (Figure 2-11).¹⁶ From this, you can see that it makes sense both logically and scientifically that the center of gravity, rather than the false Dan Tian, is the real battery in our body.

Furthermore, according to a 1996 article in *The New York Times*, a human being can be thought of as having two brains.^{17,18} One brain is in the head, and the other is in the gut (i.e. the digestive system). Though these two brains are separated physically, through the connection of the spinal cord (high electrically conductive tissue) (Thrusting Vessel, 衝脈), they actually function as one (Figure 2-12).

This article explains that the upper brain is able to think and has memory. (It is able to store data, utilizing electrochemical charges. The lower brain has memory, but does not have the capability of thought. This discovery offers confirmation of the Chinese belief that the Real Lower Dan Tian (Large and Small Intestines) is able to store Qi, while the Upper Dan Tian governs thinking and directs the Qi. Theoretically speaking, if the upper brain is able to think, then it should be able to generate an EMF while the lower brain should have a large capacity for storing charge. In other words, the lower brain is the human battery in which the life force resides. Once the brain has generated an idea (EMF), the charge will immediately be directed from the lower brain, through the spinal cord and nervous system, to the desired

area in order to activate the physical body for function.¹⁸

According to Ohm's Law in Physics,

$$V = I R$$

where V is potential difference or EMF, I is current, and R is resistance.¹⁹

From this formula, we can see that if R is a constant, then the higher the potential or EMF, the stronger will be the current that is generated. If we assume that the resistance of our body remains constant, then the more we are able to concentrate (higher EMF), the stronger the Qi flow will be. This parallels the Chinese Qigong concept that *the more you concentrate, the higher your energy level*. From Chinese Qigong, higher levels of concentration can be trained through still meditation. In addition, if we assume the EMF

to be constant, that means the mind's concentration remains the same. Then, the lower the R (resistance), the higher the current flow will be. According to the past Qigong experience, the more you are relaxed, the more Qi (current) can flow.

At this point you should also know that Qi can also be produced directly from food or herbs and then stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian. That means different food can produce different quantity and quality of Qi. This is the reason that those herbs which can produce more Qi in the body were searched for and studied in Chinese herbalism in the past. For example, ginseng has been recognized as one of the many herbs able to produce more Qi when taken orally.

Cell Replacement. From the above discussion, you may have gained a better idea of how we can link ancient experience together with modern scientific understanding. In order to make the scientific concept of Qigong even clearer, let us look at Qigong from another scientific point of view, this time chemical.

If we examine how we breathe, we can see that we inhale to take in oxygen, and we exhale to expel carbon dioxide (Figure 2-13). Every minute we expel a great deal of carbon from our body through exhalation. Carbon is a material in a physical form which can be seen. The question is, where is the carbon coming from in our body? Through breathing, how much carbon is actually processed out?

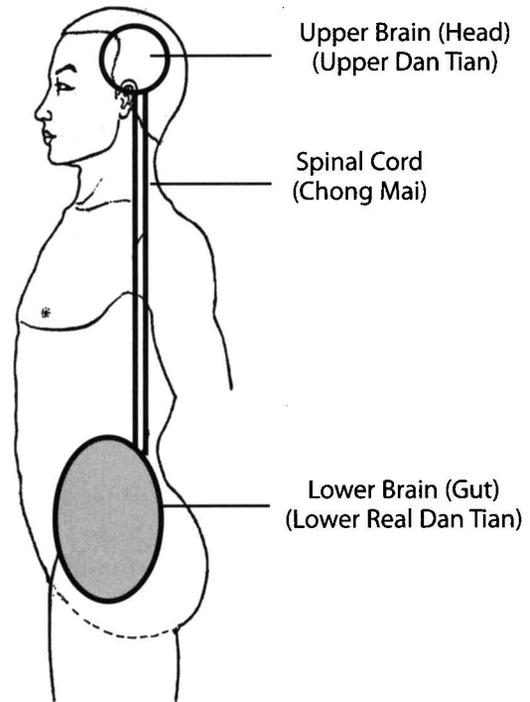


Figure 2-12. Two Polarities (Brains) of a Human Body

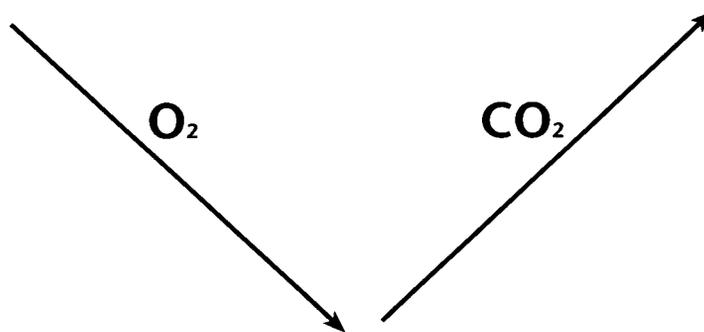


Figure 2-13. We Inhale to Absorb Oxygen and Exhale to Expel Carbon Dioxide

The first source of carbon is from the food (glucose) we eat. When this food is converted into energy through chemical reaction during our daily activities, carbon dioxide is produced.²⁰



$$\Delta G^{\circ} = -686 \text{ Kcal}$$

The second source of this carbon comes from the dead cells in our body. We already know that the majority (96%) of our body is constructed from the elements carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, while other elements such as calcium (Ca), potassium (K), chloride (Cl), sulfur (S), sodium (Na), magnesium (Mg), iodine (I), and iron (Fe) comprise much less of our body weight. This means that the cells in our body contain a great amount of carbon.

In addition, consider that every cell in our body has a life span. As many as a trillion (10^{12}) cells die in our body every 24 hours.¹⁵ For example, we know that the life span of a skin cell is 28 days. Naturally, living cells such as those of the bone, marrow, liver, etc. have their own individual life span. We rely on our respiration to bring the carbon (dead cells) out, and to supply living cells with new oxygen through inhalation, and new carbon sources, water, and other minerals from eating. All this aids in the formation of new cells and the continuation of life.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that the cell replacement process (metabolism) is ongoing at all times during our lifetime. Health depends on how smoothly and how quickly this replacement process is carried out. If there are more new healthy cells to replace the old cells, you live and grow. If the cells replaced are as healthy as the original cells, you remain young. However, if there are fewer cells produced, or if the new cells are not as healthy as the original cells, then you age. Now, let us analyze Qigong from the point of view of cell replacement.

In order to produce a good, healthy cell, first you must consider the materials needed. From the structure of a cell, we know that we will need hydrogen, oxygen,

carbon, nitrogen, and other minerals which we can absorb either from air or food. Therefore, air quality, water purity, and the choice of foods become critical factors for your health and longevity. Naturally, this has also been a major component of Qigong study.

However, we know that air and water quality today has been contaminated by pollution. This is especially bad in the big city and in industrial areas. The quality of the food we eat depends on its source and processing methods. Naturally, it is not easy to find the same pristine environments as in ancient times. However, we must learn how to fit into our new environment and choose our way of life wisely.

Since carbon comprises such a major part of our body, how to absorb good quality carbon is an important issue in modern health. You may obtain carbon from animal products or from plants. Generally speaking, the carbon taken from plants is more pure and clean than that taken from animals.

According to past experience and analysis, red meat is generally more contaminated than white meat, and is able to disturb and stimulate your emotional mind and confuse your thinking. Another source from which animal products can be obtained is fish. Again, some kinds of fish are good, while others may be bad. For example, shrimp, though low in calories, has a high cholesterol content, which may increase the risk of high blood pressure.

Due to the impurities contained in most animal products, since ancient times Qigong practitioners learned how to absorb protein from plants, especially from peas or beans. Soybean is one of the best of these sources; it is both inexpensive and easy to grow. However, if you are not a vegetarian originally, then it can be difficult for your body to produce the enzymes to digest an all-vegetable diet immediately. Humans evolved as omnivores, and the craving for meat can be strong. Even today, we all still have canine teeth, which were used to tear off raw meat in ancient times. Therefore, the natural enzymes existing in our body are more tailored to digesting meat. In an experiment, if we place a piece of meat and some corn in human digestive enzymes, we will see that the meat will be dissolved in a matter of minutes, while the corn will take many hours. This means it is generally easier for a human to absorb meat rather than plants as a protein source.

However, the above discussion does not mean we absolutely cannot absorb plant protein efficiently. The key is that if it is present to begin with, the *enzyme production can be increased within your body*, but it will take time. For example, if you cannot drink milk due to insufficient lactose in your stomach, you may start by drinking a little bit of milk every day, and slowly increase it as days pass by. You will realize that you are able to absorb milk six months later. This means that if you wish to become a vegetarian, you must reduce the intake of meat products slowly and allow your body to adjust to it; otherwise you may experience protein deficiency.

Other than a protein source, you must also consider minerals. Although they do

not comprise a large proportion of our body, their importance in some ways is more significant than carbon. We know that calcium is an important element for bones, and iron is crucial for blood cells. Therefore, when we eat we must consume a variety of foods instead of just a few. How to absorb nutrition from food has been an important part of Chinese Qigong study.

In order to produce healthy cells, other than the concerns of the material side, you must also consider energy. You should understand that when a person ages quickly, often it is not because he or she is malnourished, but instead is due to the weakening of their Qi storage and circulation. Without an abundant supply of Qi (bioelectricity), Qi circulation will not be regulated efficiently, and therefore your life force will weaken and the physical body will degenerate. In order to have abundant Qi storage, you must practice Qigong in order to build up the Qi in your eight vessels, and also to lead the Qi circulating in your body. This kind of Qigong training includes Wai Dan (外丹) (External Elixir) and Nei Dan (内丹) (Internal Elixir) practice.

Other than the concern for materials needed, and the Qi required for cell production and replacement, the next thing you should ask yourself is how this replacement process is carried out. The entire replacement process depends on the blood cells. From Western medicine, we know that a blood cell is the carrier of water, oxygen, and nutrients to everywhere in the body through the blood circulatory network. From arteries and capillaries, the components for new cells are brought to every tiny place in the body. The old cells then absorb everything required from the blood stream and divide to produce new cells. The dead cells are brought back through veins to the lungs. Through respiration, the dead cell materials are expelled as carbon dioxide.

However, there is something missing from the last process. This is the Qi or bioelectricity that is required for the biochemical process of cell division. It has been proven that every blood cell is actually like a dipole or a small battery, which is able to store bioelectricity and also to release it.¹¹ This means that each blood cell is actually a carrier of Qi. This is also understood in Chinese medicine. In Chinese medicine, the blood and the Qi are always together. Where there is blood, there is Qi, and where there is Qi, the blood will also be there. Therefore, the term “Qi-Xue” (Qi-blood) (氣血) is often used in Chinese medicine.

If we look at our blood circulatory system, we can see that the arteries are located deep underneath the muscles, while the veins are situated near the skin's surface. The color of the blood is red in the arteries because of the presence of oxygen, and its color is darker red in the veins both because of the absence of this oxygen and the presence of carbon. This implies that cell replacement actually happens from inside of the body, moving outward. This can also offer us a hint that, if we tense more, the blood circulation will be more stagnant, and cell replacement will be slower. We can

also conclude that most cell replacement occurs in the night when we are at our most relaxed state during sleep. This can further lead one to conclude the importance of sleep.

If we accept that blood cells are the carriers of everything which is required for cell replacement, then we must also consider the healthy condition of our blood cells. If you have good health and a sufficient quantity of blood cells, then the nutrients and Qi can be carried to every part of the body efficiently. You will be healthy. However, if you do not have sufficient blood cells, or the quality of the cells is poor, then the entire cell replacement process will be stagnant. Naturally, you will degenerate swiftly.

According to modern medical science, blood cells also have a life span. When the old ones die, new ones must be produced from the bone marrow. Bone marrow is the major blood factory. From medical reports, we know that normally, after a person reaches thirty, the marrow near the ends of the bone cavity turns yellow. This indicates that fat has accumulated there. It also means that red blood cells are no longer being produced in the yellowed area

(Figure 2-14).²¹ Chinese Qigong practitioners believe that the degeneration of the bone marrow is due to insufficient Qi supply. Therefore, Bone Marrow Washing Qigong (Xi Sui Gong, 洗髓功) was developed. From experience, we know that, through bone marrow washing Qigong practice, health can be improved and life can be extended significantly. If you are interested in this subject, please read *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

The next most important thing in human life is hormone production within your body. We already know from today's medical science that hormones act as a catalyst in the body. When the hormone levels are high, we are more energized and cell replacement can happen faster and more smoothly. When hormone production diminishes, then the cell replacement will be slow and we will age quickly. It was only in the last two decades that scientists discovered that by increasing the hormone levels in the body, we may be able to extend our life significantly.²²

Maintenance of hormone production in a healthy manner has also been a major

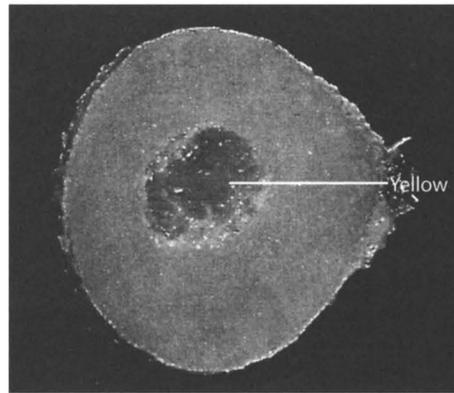
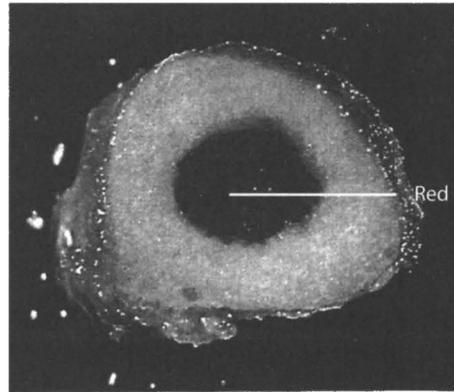


Figure 2-14. Structure of a Long Bone. Red Bone Marrow and Yellow Bone Marrow

concern in Chinese Qigong practice. According to Chinese medicine, glands that produce hormones were recognized since ancient times. Hormones were not understood. However, through thousands of years of practice and experience, the ancients understood that the essence of life is stored in the kidneys (Internal Kidneys). Today, we know that this essence is actually the hormones produced from the adrenal glands on the top of the kidneys. The Chinese also believed that through stimulation of the testicles and ovaries, the life force could be increased. Testicles and ovaries are considered as “External Kidneys” (Wai Shen, 外腎) in Chinese Qigong and medical societies. In addition, from still meditation practice, they learned how to lead the Qi to the brain and raise up the “Spirit of Vitality.” It has also been found that through practice, bioelectricity can be led to the pituitary gland to stimulate growth hormone production. All of these practices are believed to be effective paths to longevity.

From medical science, we know that our hormone levels are significantly reduced when the last pieces of our bones are completed between ages 29 to 30. Theoretically, when our body has completed constructing itself, it somehow triggers the reduction of our hormone levels. From this, you can see that maintaining the hormone levels in our body may be a key to longevity.

Finally, in order to prevent ourselves from becoming sick, we must also consider our immune system. According to Chinese medicine and Qigong, when Qi storage is abundant, you get sick less. If we take a careful look, we can realize that every white blood cell is just like a fighting soldier. If we do not have enough Qi to supply it, its fighting capability will be low. It is just like a soldier who needs food to maintain his strength. When the Qi is strong, the immune system is strong. Therefore, the skin breathing technique was developed, which teaches a practitioner to lead the Qi to the surface of the skin, in order to strengthen the “Guardian Qi” (Wei Qi, 衛氣) or an energetic component of the immune system near the skin surface.

From the foregoing, hopefully I have offered you a challenge for profound thought and further research. Although most of these conclusions are drawn from my personal research, further study and verification is still needed. I deeply believe that if we can all open our minds and share our opinions together, we will be able to make our lives more healthy and meaningful.

Breathing, Qigong, and Health 呼吸、氣功、與健康. According to Chinese Qigong society, Qi can be distinguished as “Upper Level Qi” (Shang Ceng Qi, 上層氣) or “External Qi” (Wai Qi, 外氣), and “Lower Level Qi” (Xia Ceng Qi, 下層氣) or “Inner Qi” (Nei Qi, 內氣). These two levels of Qi are separated by the diaphragm. While the upper level manages the exchange of the external Qi, the lower level governs the production and storage of the inner Qi (Figure 2-15). The nose is the entrance and exit of the Upper Level Qi, the diaphragm is the pump, and the lungs manage and process this Qi. The abdomen and Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) are the pump and piston to produce and store the inner Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian (gut).

You may already have figured out that the air is actually the “External Qi.” The air is called “Kong Qi” (空氣) which means “the Qi in space.” Qi here implies the energy existing in space. The bioelectricity which is stored at the Lower Dan Tian and circulating in the body is called “Inner Qi” (Nei Qi, 內氣).¹²

From the scientific point of view, these two Qis cannot be separated though they are not directly related. You should understand that the entire body’s inner Qi is produced from the biochemical reaction process.²⁰ The body’s energy is metabolized from food. Remember the formula:



$$\Delta G^{0'} = -686 \text{ Kcal}$$

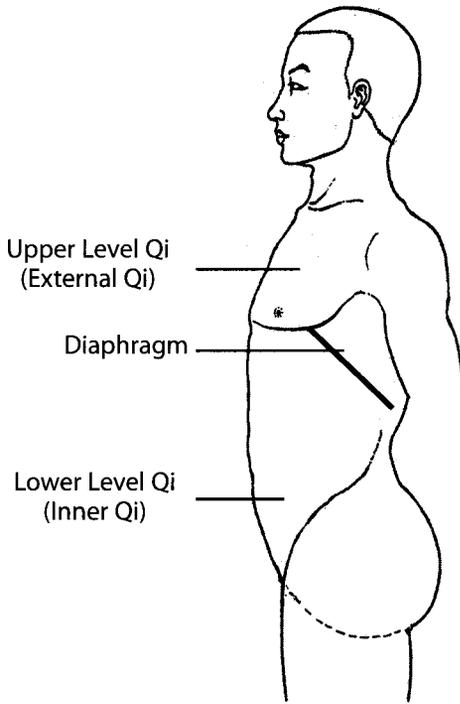


Figure 2-15. Upper Level Qi and Lower Level Qi

The energy produced is then converted into different forms of energy such as bioelectricity (Qi), heat, or light in the body. For this process, the quantity of oxygen is one of the most crucial elements necessary to complete the transformation of glucose into energy. That is why whenever you need to manifest stronger force for exertion, such as lifting a heavy weight or pushing a car, you must first inhale deeply to take in more oxygen. Only then can the inner energy be manifested to a significant level.

In Daoist society, the space above the diaphragm (lungs) is considered as the chamber where the external Qi is exchanged. The nose is the entrance and the exit while the diaphragm is the piston or the pump of this chamber. The space below the diaphragm down to the groin area is considered to be the chamber (Real Lower Dan Tian) of the inner Qi. Here, inner Qi can be built up and stored to an abundant level, through correct pumping movement of the abdominal area and the Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) cavity (Perineum)

You can see the importance of breathing and how it can be so crucial in Qigong practice. If your breathing is shallow, the exchange of the oxygen and carbon dioxide will not be completed. Naturally, cell replacement will not be fully accomplished. This is one of the major causes of sickness and aging.

2.3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EMBRYONIC BREATHING 胎息之理論基礎

From section 1-3, we have already grasped the idea of the Qi circulatory network in a human body. Here, I would like to summarize and review the concept of the Eight Vessels (Ba Mai, 八脈). In order to comprehend the role which the Eight Vessels play in Qigong practice, you must have a clear concept of the function of these Eight Vessels. This is especially true if you practice Nei Dan (內丹) (Internal Elixir) Qigong.

Reviewing the Eight Vessels

1. The eight Vessels include four Yin Vessels and four Yang Vessels, which balance each other. These Eight Vessels not only comprise the major framework of the body's Qi network, they function as Qi reservoirs that regulate the Qi status in the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經).
2. Though these Eight Vessels are considered to be Qi reservoirs able to store Qi, generally speaking, like Yang and Yin primary channels, the Yang vessels are able to manifest the Qi while the Yin vessels preserve it.
3. The Conception Vessel is classified as a Yin vessel to balance the Governing Vessel which is considered as a Yang vessel. The conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) in the front is responsible for regulating the Qi status in the six Yin primary channels (Qi rivers) while the Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈) governs the Qi status of the six Yang primary channels. Since the twelve primary Qi channels distribute the Qi to the entire body, these two vessels play the controlling role in the Qi distribution throughout the physical body.
4. The physical structure of the vessels is very likely constructed of various layers of tendons sandwiched between fasciae. Tendons are known to be better conductors than the muscles, while fasciae are considered as insulators (poor conductors). This structure comprises a sort of battery that is able to store the Qi to an abundant level. Naturally, the Qi flows better in the tendons than in the muscles. For example, if you take a look at the structure of the Governing Vessel, you will see that various layers of tendons attached at the center line of the spine are sandwiched by fasciae (Figure 2-16).
5. The Girdle Vessel (Dai Mai, 帶脈) is classified as an extreme Yang vessel which counterbalances the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal Cord) which is considered an extreme Yin vessel. The Girdle Vessel's Qi expands horizontally, which provides you with physical and mental balance, while the Thrusting Vessel keeps your physical body and mental

body centered (Figure 2-17). These two vessels are the two most important and crucial vessels which constitute the main frame of the Qi network. When the Qi expands in the Girdle Vessel, the Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) (Aura Energy) will be strongly manifested, and the function of the immune system will be abundant. When the Qi stored in the Thrusting Vessel is abundant, the central energy line will be strong. Consequently, the Shen can be raised up to a high level, the glands located along the central energy line such as pineal, pituitary, adrenals, and testicles (or ovaries) will also be nourished and produce hormones. In addition, the marrow Qi can also be abundantly stored, so healthy blood cells can be produced. We will discuss this in more detail in a future publication, *Spiritual Enlightenment Meditation*.

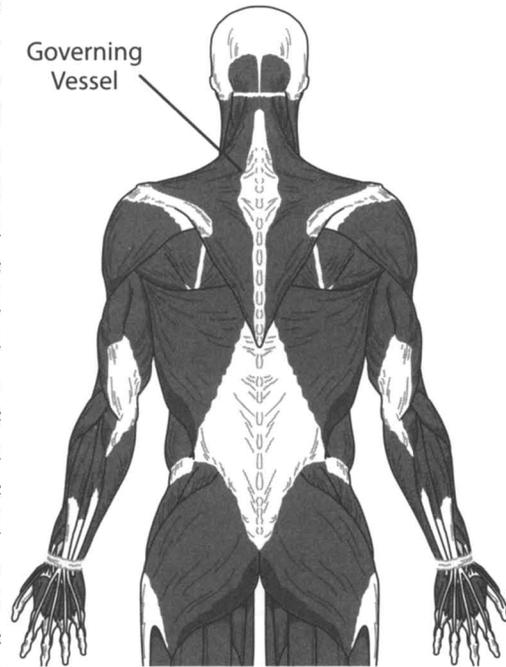


Figure 2-16. Anatomic Structure of the Governing Vessel

6. Naturally, once you have woken up in the morning, you start to use your physical body. Your exhalation is longer than your inhalation since your mind is out of the body. The Qi is led outward for manifestation. The Conception and Governing Vessels are responsible for regulating the Qi circulating in the Twelve Primary Qi Channels in your physical body, and therefore, the Qi is strongly and aggressively circulated in the Conception and Governing Vessels (i.e. the Small Cyclic Circulation). However, when night comes, you fall asleep. Your entire body is relaxed and your inhalation is longer than your exhalation. Consequently, the Qi is led inward to the central energy line, and the Guardian Qi shrinks. When this happens, hormones are produced by the pineal, pituitary, adrenal, and testicular (or ovarian) glands. The brain obtains Qi nourishment. This may be the reason for dreaming, as the brain cells readjust their energy storage status. This is no different from the Qi cycle of a fish. During daytime, Qi circulates strongly along the upper and lower contours of the fish. Thus, the fins and tail are moving aggressively. However, when night time comes, this Qi circulation weakens and the Qi will be focused at the center line.

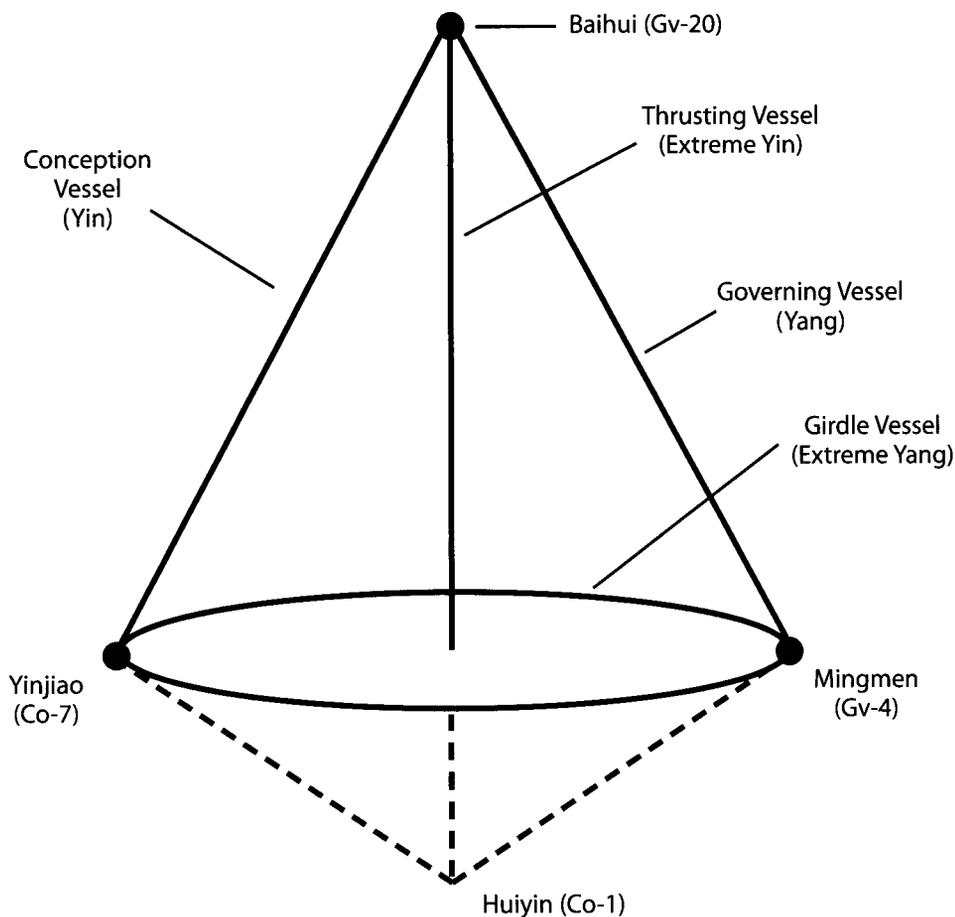


Figure 2-17. Thrusting Vessel and Governing Vessel

Electromagnetic waves are emitted from The Third Eyes of fish, which enables them to swim around without colliding with other fish or obstacles. (Figure 2-18).²³

Similarly, during daytime, a tree's energy will emerge upward and outward from the root (i.e. the tree's biobattery), so the energy can be exchanged with that of the sun. However, at night, the tree's Qi will return to its center and down to the root again (Figure 2-19). You should remember, all living things are part of the Dao. Thus, the Dao remains the same through nature. If you are able to comprehend one clearly, you are able to interpret others easily.

7. The other four vessels exist in pairs. They are the Yin Heel Vessel (Yinqiao Mai, 陰蹻脈), Yin Linking Vessel (Yinwei Mai, 陰維脈), Yang Heel Vessel (Yangqiao Mai, 陽蹻脈), Yang Linking Vessel (Yangwei Mai, 陽維脈). The

two Yin vessels connect at the Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) cavity (i.e. the perineum) and meet the other two Yin vessels, the Conception and Thrusting Vessels. That is why the perineum is named “Huiyin” and means “meet Yin.” From this, we can see that the Huiyin is the gate which connects with all four Yin vessels in the body. When this gate opens, the Qi is manifested and when this gate is closed, the Qi is preserved. For example, when you are happy and excited, your exhalation is longer than your inhalation, the body turns Yang and this may lead to excess Yang in the internal organs (especially the heart). When this happens, naturally, you will make a sound

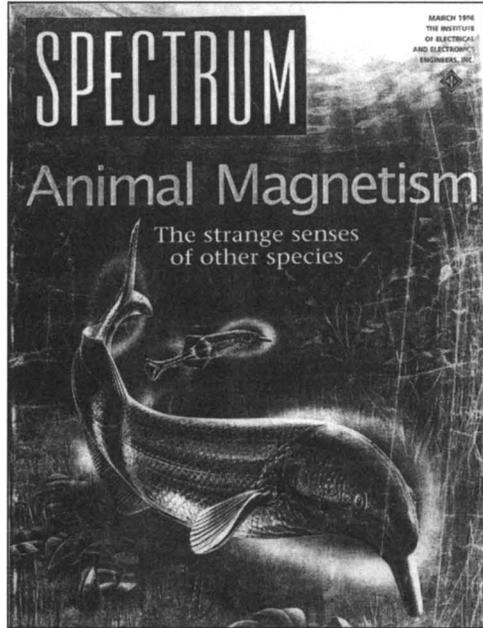


Figure 2-18. How Fish See Things in the Dark

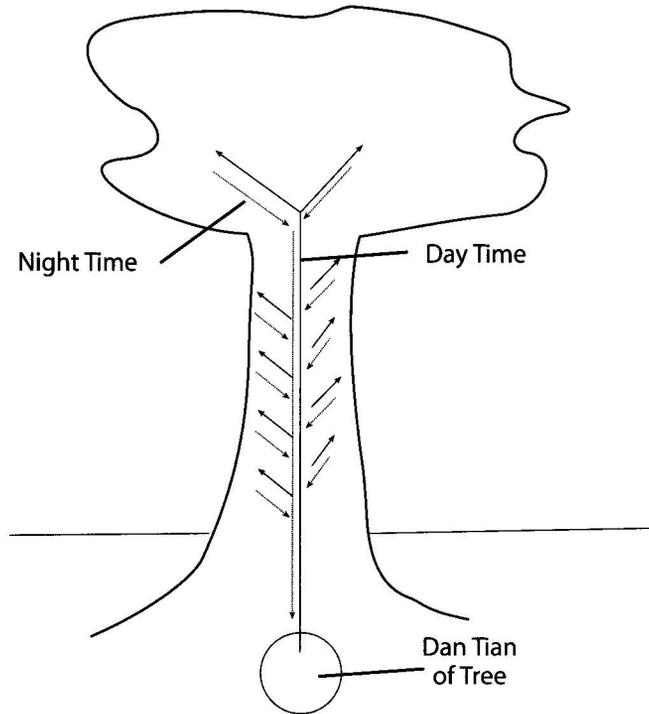


Figure 2-19. The Tree's Energy Moves Upward and Outward in the Daytime, and Moves Downward and Inward at Nighttime

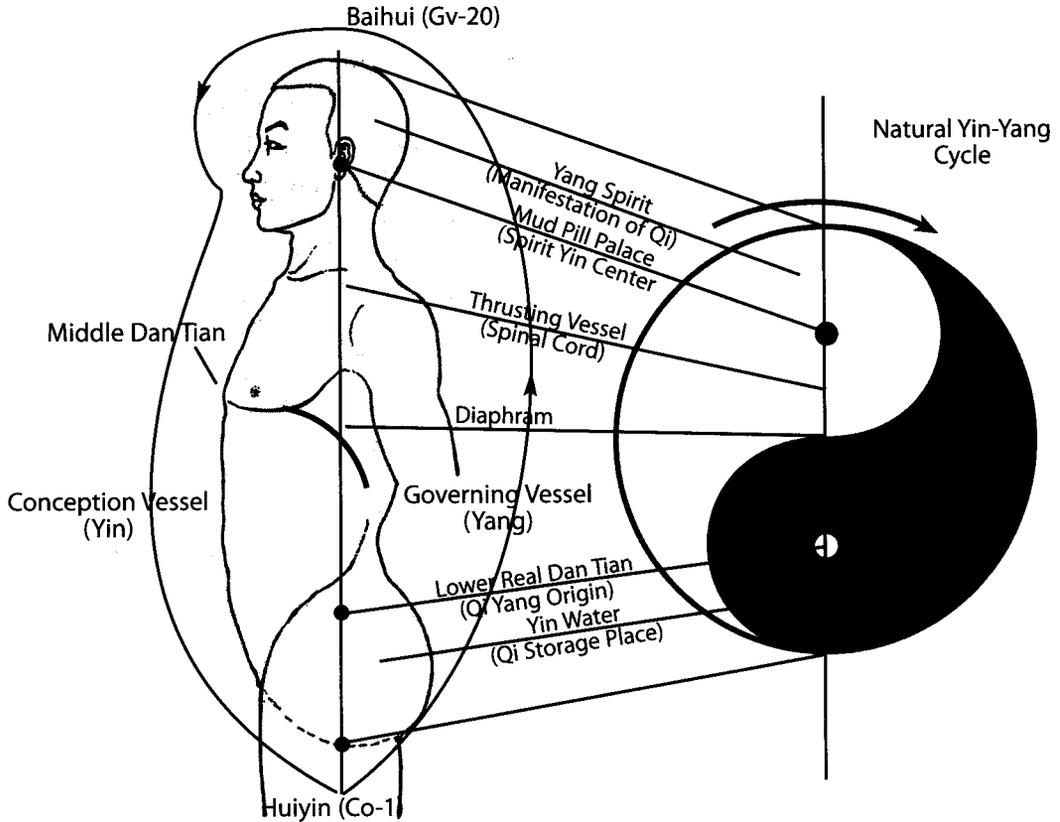


Figure 2-20. The Body's Yin and Yang, and the Two Polarity Centers

of “Ha” while pushing the perineum out (i.e. opening the gate) without thinking. On the contrary, when you are sad or scared, your inhalation is longer than your exhalation and you feel chilly. In order to preserve the Qi in the body, you will hold up (i.e. close the gate) the perineum automatically. In fact, using the perineum to control the Qi’s status in the body is a crucial hidden key in ancient Qigong practice.

Illustration of the Body’s Yin and Yang Polarities. In this subsection, I would like to compare the natural Taiji Yin-Yang symbol with the body’s Yin and Yang energy structure. From this comparison, you can easily see through many things which may inspire your Qigong pondering and practice. Remember, this is only my personal conclusion. You should keep your mind open and see if you are able to discover more links between the human natural body and the human Yin-Yang cycle. Since a human body is a part of nature, Qi manifestation in this body should be able to be interpreted by the natural Yin-Yang symbol (Figure 2-20).

1. The Qi circulation along the Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren and Du Mai, 任·督脈) is reversed from the natural Yin-Yang cycle so the Yin and Yang in the body can be balanced from natural Yin and Yang. We will discuss this more in the future book: *Small Circulation Meditation*.
2. Shen is generally considered as Yang. That is why the term “Yang Shen” (陽神) (Yang Spirit) is commonly used in Chinese Qigong documents. Shen is the general who controls the manifestation of the Qi. When Shen is high, the Qi can be controlled and manifested efficiently and effectively. That means once you are able to raise up your Shen to a higher level, your vital force will be enhanced. Normally, the raising up of the Shen takes place through the Baihui (Gv-20) (百會) which is located at the top of the Yin-Yang symbol, the place of extreme Yang. “Baihui” means “hundred meetings” and implies the meeting place of all the entire body’s Qi. That means it is the pivotal controlling point of the entire body’s energy. Baihui is considered as the most Yang place of the entire human body.
3. Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) is considered as the most Yin place in a human body. Huiyin is also commonly called “Haidi” (海底) and means “sea bottom.” This is because Qi is analogous to water, with the Large and Small Intestines as the ocean or Qi residence which is able to store the water (Qi). When the Qi stays at its residence, the physical body will be calm and peaceful. However, when the Qi is led away from its residence for manifestation, then the mind and body will be excited, and the Shen will be divergent. In this way the Qi is consumed. The way of maintaining calmness of the mind (and Shen) and the physical body is to lead the Qi downward. For example, when you are excited, your breathing is shallow and fast, and your body is tensed. In this case, if you are able to calm down your mind, inhale deeply and use your mind to lead the Qi downward to the abdominal area, and then exhale while relaxing your mind and physical body. When this happens, the body’s mental and physical tension will disappear gradually. This is one of the crucial keys to lowering high blood pressure in Qigong practice. On the contrary, if you lead the Qi upward to the brain, you will be excited and more tensed. Naturally, the blood pressure can also be raised up.
4. The body’s two polarities, Yin and Yang are connected by the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal Cord). The top “Spirit Yin Center,” located at the Mud Pill Palace (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮) (the site of the pineal and pituitary glands) in the Yang Spirit (Yang Shen, 陽神) (the brain or Upper Dan Tian), controls and restrains the Yang Shen’s manifestation. This Spirit Yin Center is just like a steering wheel that is able to govern the status of the Shen’s actions. If the Shen can stay at this center,

then it can be focused and centered. If the Shen is away from this center, then it is scattered. When this happens, even if the Shen is high, it is not focused. In order to bring the Shen to this Yin center, first your mind must be calmed. To keep your mind calm, you must avoid any emotional disturbance and desires. This is one of the main focus points in Qigong Embryonic Breathing.

The lower site of the two polarities is at the Real Lower Dan Tian located at the center of the Large and Small Intestines (Second Brain). This area acts as a biobattery which is able to store the Qi (bioelectricity). It is in this area that the food essence is absorbed and converted into energy (Qi). In order to keep the Qi at its residence, you must also learn how to keep your mind at the Qi Yang Origin (Real Lower Dan Tian or Center of Gravity). Here the Qi can be preserved and stored to an abundant level (Yang).

5. The Real Lower Dan Tian, the bio-battery, produces and stores the Qi, and is thus able to increase the quantity of the Qi and supply it to the body and brain for their function. However, the Upper Dan Tian center (Spirit Yin Center) controls the quality of the Qi's manifestation (Figure 2-20). From the Girdle Vessel (Extreme Yang Vessel) and Thrusting Vessel (Extreme Yin Vessel), it forms a "spiritual cultivation triangle" (Figure 2-21). The more abundant the storage of Qi (strong Guardian Qi), the higher the Shen can be raised. The base of the triangle represents physical life, while the height of the center line represents spiritual life.

Interaction of Yin and Yang (Intercourse of Dragon and Tiger) 龍虎交媾. Once you are able to keep your Shen and Qi at their residences (centers), then you have reached the first goal of "Embracing Singularity" (Bao Yi, 抱一). Remember, these two centers are the two polarities of the same thing, life. They synchronize and correspond with each other. Physically, they are in two places, but in function they must be treated as one. They cannot separate from each other. One is for physical life and the other is for spiritual life.

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that according to the available documents, there are two definitions of Embryonic Breathing. The first one is to unite the Shen and the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, that is, to return our being to the very beginning of life. Remember, it is from this Real Lower Dan Tian that a human life is initiated and developed. Therefore, to many Daoists, the first goal of Embryonic Breathing is to find this center so the Shen and Qi (son and mother) can be united there (Figure 2-22). Since the goal of this breathing practice is to return our beings to their Wuji center (center of gravity), I call this Embryonic Breathing "Wuji Breathing" (Wuji Xi, 無極息).

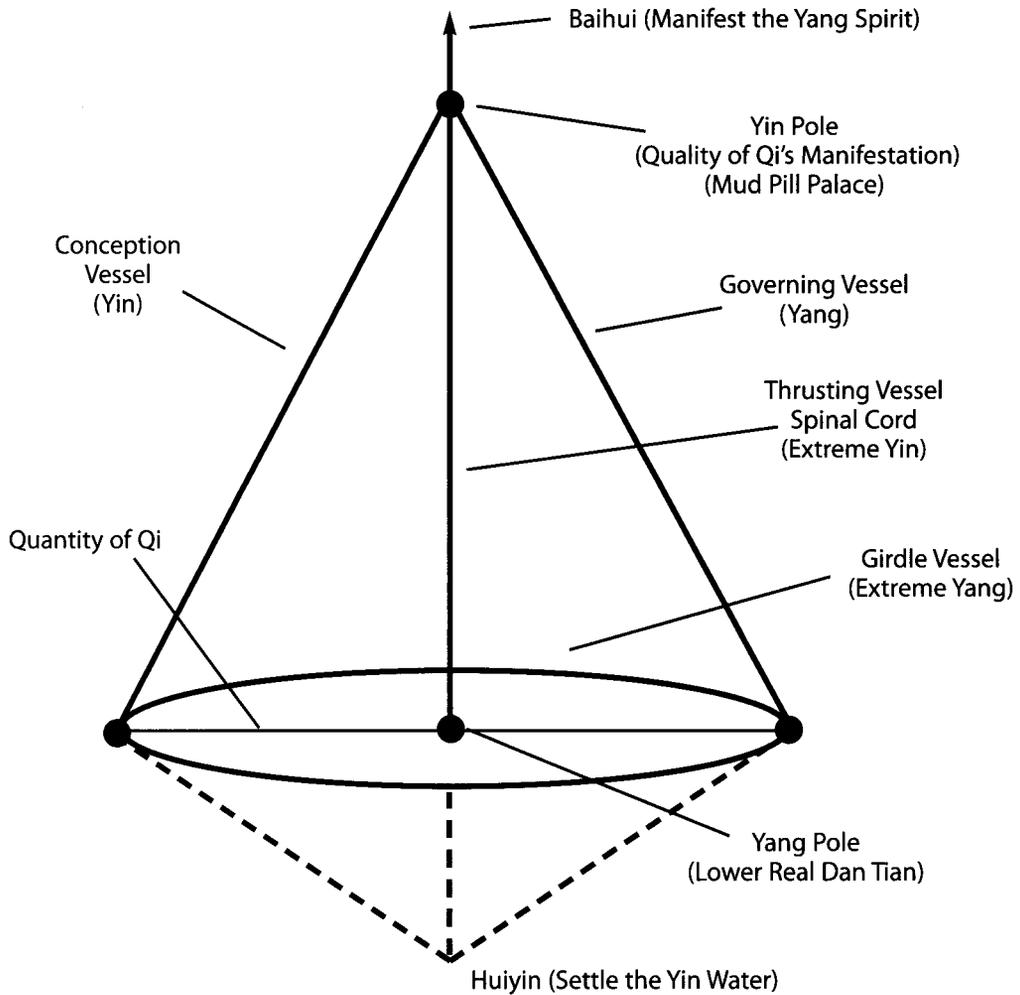


Figure 2-21. Spiritual Triangle

The second definition of Embryonic Breathing is to conceive a “Spiritual Embryo” (Shen Tai, 神胎) at the Huang Ting (黃庭) cavity located between the Middle and Real Lower Dan Tians. In order to reach this goal, you must learn how to use your concentrated wisdom mind (Yi, 意) to lead the Fire Qi (Huo Qi, 火氣) (Post-Birth Qi) down from the Middle Dan Tian and Water Qi (Shui Qi, 水氣) (Pre-Birth Qi) upward from the Real Lower Dan Tian and allow them to meet at the Huang Ting cavity (Figure 2-23). This process is called “the intercourse of dragon and tiger” (Long Hu Jiao Gou, 龍虎交媾) which means “the interaction of Yin and Yang,” and is also called Kan-Li (坎離) (water-fire). Then, you will lead the Shen down from the Upper Dan Tian to unite with this Qi so the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived.

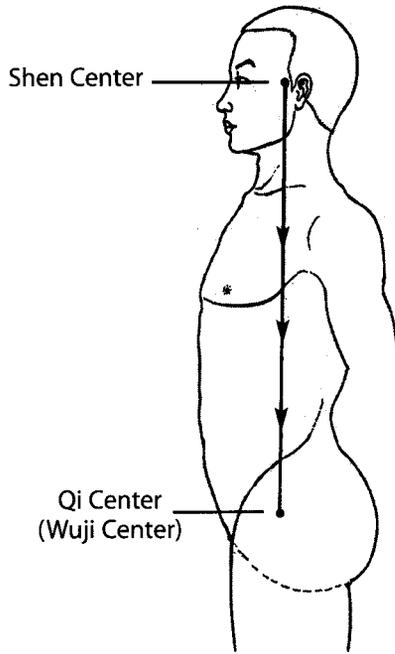


Figure 2-22. Unification of Shen and Qi at the Wuji Center

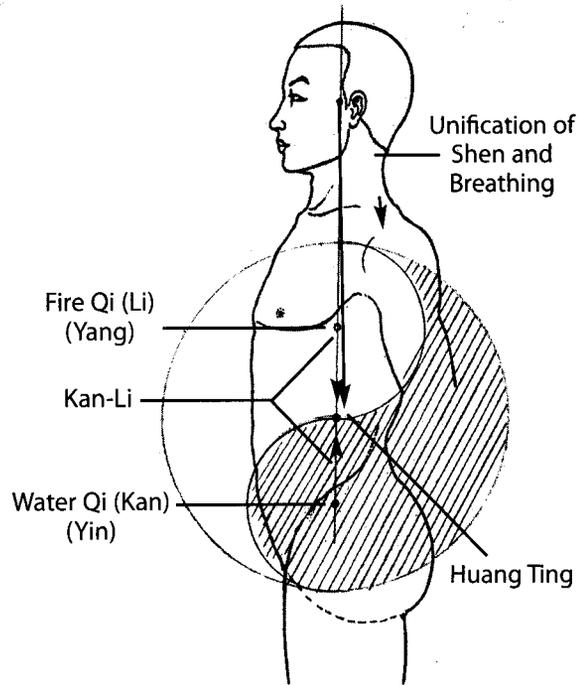


Figure 2-23. Conceiving the Spiritual Embryo

Summaries

1. In the Daoist document, *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament, About Large and Small Tripod and Furnace*, (性命圭旨全書) (大小鼎爐說) it says: “Huang Ting (黃庭) is the tripod, Qi Xue (氣穴) (Qi cavity) is the furnace. Huang Ting is just on the top of the Qi Xue, mutually connected with numerous Luo (絡) (secondary Qi channels), and is the meeting place of hundreds of Qi vessels (and channels) in a human body. The Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) is dense between these two cavities (between Huang Ting and Qi Xue) and is called ‘Small Tripod Furnace’ (Xiao Ding Lu, 小鼎爐). If ‘the position of Qian (乾) (the brain or head) is the tripod and the position of the Kun (坤) (the abdomen) is the furnace,’ then it means that the Ni Wan (泥丸) (Upper Dan Tian or brain) is the tripod and the Lower Dan Tian is the furnace. This is called ‘Big Tripod Furnace’ (Da Ding Lu, 大鼎爐).”²⁴ This document has offered you an idea of major sites explained in the large Yin-Yang and Small Yin-Yang symbols and how they relate to a human body (Figures 2-24 and 2-25). Please read Chapter 3 for detailed explanation of the tripod (Ding, 鼎) and furnace (Lu, 爐).

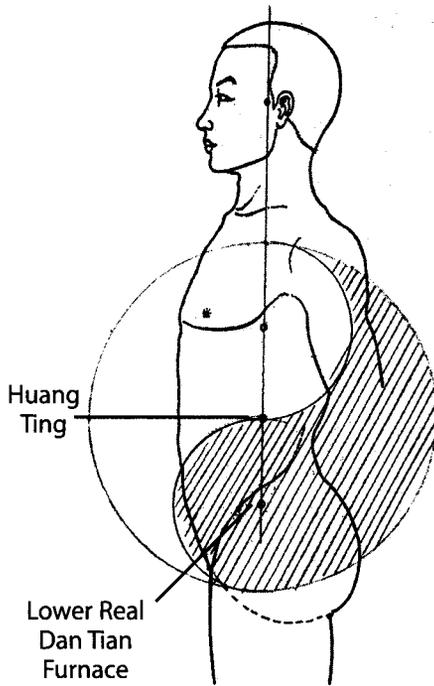


Figure 2-24. Small Tripod and Furnace

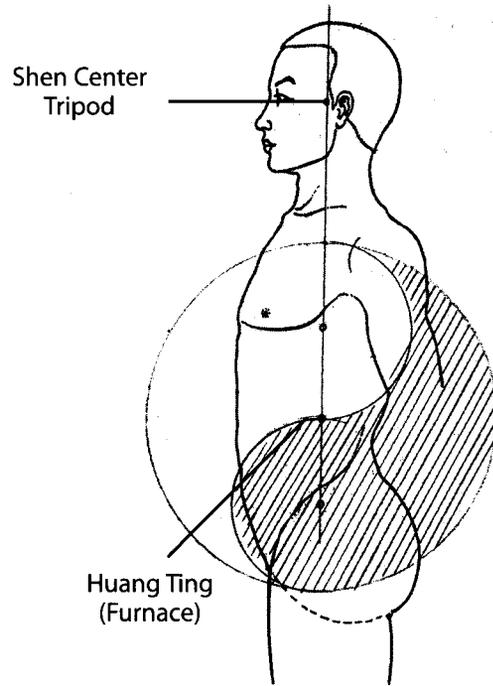


Figure 2-25. Large Tripod and Furnace

2. In the “Small Tripod Furnace” (Xiao Ding Lu, 小鼎爐), first you are searching for the Wuji state of Kan (坎) (Water Qi) and Li (離) (Fire Qi). That means bringing the fire Qi and water Qi to the Huang Ting (Qi cavity) and allowing them to meet and interact there. This is the process of Yin-Yang interaction or Dragon-Tiger intercourse. In order to conceive a Spiritual Embryo at Huang Ting, the Shen must be brought down to Huang Ting and unified with the Qi. This is called “the unification of the Shen and the Qi” (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合). When this happens, the “Spiritual Embryo” (Shen Tai, 神胎) can be conceived. Later, when the Spiritual Embryo is matured, then it can be led upward for cultivation of spiritual enlightenment (re-open The Third Eye).
3. In the “Big Tripod Furnace” (Da Ding Lu, 大鼎爐), you are looking for the Wuji (無極) state (No Extremity or no discrimination) of your original being. That is, to return your life to the very beginning. Therefore, after you have located the two polarities of the body, then you will bring your Shen downward to the Real Lower Dan Tian to unite with the Qi. This is the process of returning the life to its origin.

2.4 MEANINGS AND PURPOSES OF MEDITATION 靜坐之意義與目的

If we look carefully, we can see that meditation practice has existed in almost every culture in the world, especially in religious societies. There are many ways of meditation. Depending on their purposes, the training methods are also different. In this section, I would like to explain the possible meaning and the purposes of meditation. Then, I will summarize those meditation practices from Chinese Qigong society.

General Meanings and Purposes of Meditation

1. Search for a peaceful mind. The first and the most common purpose of meditation is probably searching for a relaxed, peaceful, calm, and harmonious mind. Generally, our mind is emotionally agitated by the surrounding environments. When this happens, the mind becomes scattered, confused and excited, and it consequently leads us to a state of emotional disturbance. Through meditation with deep profound breathing, we are able to calm down and make our mind clear.

Measurements with an EEG (electroencephalogram) machine show four groups of different brain waves (oscillating electrical currents), that through research have been associated with different activities. Normally, brain waves are classified according to frequency bands in cycles per second (Hz). These four categories are (Figure 2-26):²⁶

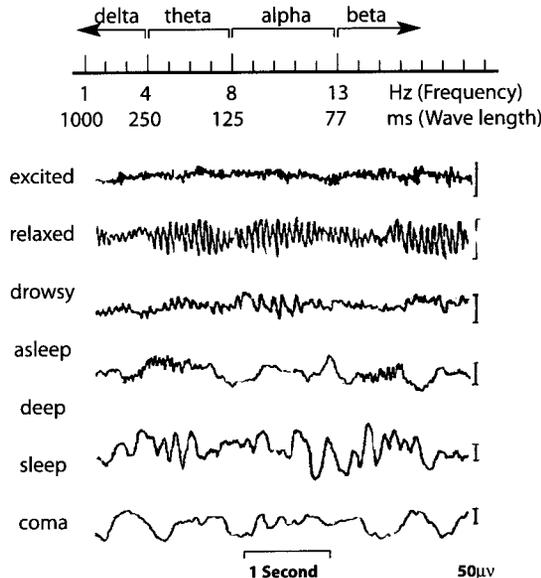


Figure 2-26. Typical Brain Wave Patterns From a State of Excitement to One of Deep Coma

1. Beta activity (above 13 Hz): Occurs in bursts in the anterior part of the brain and is associated with mental activity.
2. Alpha activity (8-13 Hz): Relaxation, is abolished by attention
3. Theta activity (4 to less than 8 Hz): Drowsy and asleep
4. Delta activity (below 4 Hz): Deep sleep and coma

From these classifications, we can see that when we are awake or involved in heavy thinking (Beta), the activity is busy and the signals are weak (i.e. the amplitude is low). We can see that roughly on average, there are 13 or more thoughts per second passing through our brain. Once we are relaxed (Alpha), although the signals are still weak, the number of oscillations is significantly reduced. Furthermore, the amplitude is increased. This means that when you are relaxed, your mind is more clear, calm and peaceful. This implies that concentration is increased. When you are in a drowsy or sleeping state, the number of oscillations is also reduced, but the thoughts are more irregular (Theta). Once you are in a deep, sound sleep (Delta), the number of oscillations is reduced to only a few and the oscillation amplitude is also significantly increased. From science, we know that the power of oscillation is as follows:²⁷

$$P = \text{Frequency}^2 \times \text{Amplitude}^2$$

This implies that, when you are in a deep, sleeping state, although your conscious mind is not heavily involved in thought (frequency reduced), the brain cells are obtaining a strong supply of nutrition, oxygen and Qi nourishment. In this calm state, there is less distortion or disturbance in the brain. Under these extremely calm and relaxed conditions, if you are nevertheless able to maintain consciousness, you can build up a better sensitivity for energy correspondence with the outside world. This is one of the desired states in meditation practice; there are also other states that correspond to different meditation goals.

In meditation, you are trying to reach the stage at which the brain waves are between Theta and Delta. This means that it seems you are sleeping, yet your conscious mind is still governing the being. According to Chinese meditation, this is the state of semi-sleeping or a self-hypnotic state. In this state, the brain's sensitivity or energy correspondence with other brain waves or natural vibrations reaches a peak. It is in this stage that a meditator seeks for the connection between his spiritual being and the spirit of nature.

2. Improving health and for healing. When the mind is relaxed and calm, the physical body will also be relaxed and calm. From past experience, we know that the more profound meditative state the mind is able to reach, the deeper the body is able to relax. When both the mental and physical body are relaxed, the Qi will be able to circulate in the body smoothly and naturally. In this case, irregular Qi circulation due to illness or any other reason can be regulated to a harmonious healthy state. According to Chinese medical science, this is the primary method of maintaining health and healing. In addition, during the deep meditative and relaxed state, the mind-body communication will be efficient and effectively carried out. When this happens, you will be able to use your mind to lead the Qi and regulate it to a healthy state. With the mind's concentration, the Qi circulation will be stronger and consequently the healing process will be faster. In addition, during deep meditation, the breathing will be deep, soft, and slender. When this happens, you are able to absorb oxygen and expel carbon dioxide more efficiently. From Western science, we already know that each brain cell consumes at least twelve times more oxygen than other cells. This implies oxygen supply is a crucial key to maintaining healthy functioning of the brain. Not only that, through deep exhalation of carbon dioxide, the waste in the deep places of the body can be brought out. This is the important key for the process of cellular replacement in our body to be successful.

3. Find the center of self-being. Normally, when you calm down, your mind will become clear and its thinking can be logical. Naturally, you must also stop yourself from indulging in fanaticizing. Whenever your imagination begins to take you far away from reality, you must continue to lead the thought back to reality. Otherwise, you may enter into deep fantasy. In this case, you have entered the path of the devil. This is called "entering the devil" (Ru Mo, 入魔) in Chinese meditation. The best way to stop it is to pay attention to the breathing and keep the mind straight, honest, and truthful.

In Buddhist and Daoist religion, normally there are four steps in the process of cultivating meditation involved in reaching the final goal of spiritual freedom. The first step is "self-recognition" (Zi Shi, 自識). In this first step, the mask on your face starts to drop off, which allows you to see your spiritual being more clearly. Mistakes, untruth and lying you have committed and hidden in your subconscious mind will gradually appear in your conscious mind. In Chinese Qigong society, it is believed that your subconscious mind is always truthful and associated with the spiri-

tual being. Once your mask drops off, you must face your real self. You must face the past and analyze it. Not only that, in order to gain permanent emotional balance, you must search for ways to free the feeling of guilt hidden deep inside you. This process will make you humble, able to understand yourself better, and finally help you find the center of your being.

The next step is “self-awareness” (Zi Jue, 自覺). In this step, if you pay attention, you will be aware of your spiritual being and the problems existing within yourself. Not only that, you will start to recognize the existence of other spiritual beings. You will be slowly and gradually paying attention to your thinking and behavior, and that of others as well. From this awareness, you will be able to realize your existence, and problems, and understand the role you should play in this society. Through this “self-awareness” meditation process, you will establish a calm and peaceful mind that allows you to harmonize with others and nature.

4. **Search for and understand the meaning of our lives.** From awareness, you gradually enter the third stage of cultivation. This stage is “self-awakening” (Zi Xing, Zi Wu, 自醒·自悟). From self-awareness, you have paid attention, collected information, and understood yourself and your environment. Now you gradually start to wake up and see things differently. Many people, after awakening, have seen how ugly human spiritual beings are, and decided to keep away from laymen society and become hermits or monks. Many others, after awakening, change their thinking about the meaning of life. Others are able to build up their confidence and make their lives more meaningful.
5. **Search for spiritual freedom.** Many people, once having awakened, have realized how we have been abused by political and spiritual leaders, both spiritually and physically. They start to search for ways to achieve freedom from bondage. This stage of “freedom from spiritual bondage” (Jie Tuo, 解脫) is one of searching for freedom from political and spiritual bondage. It is a search for “spiritual independence.” When you have reached this stage, your spiritual being can be independent and does not have to rely on someone else. Naturally, in this case, you will not easily be abused.
6. **To comprehend the meaning of this universe.** Even many non-religious people in China, through meditation, are trying to comprehend the meaning, the root, or the origin of nature. In other words, they are searching for

the truth of the Dao. To reach this goal, the first step is to search for the root of our lives (生命之本). Since our lives are a part of nature, from understanding the root of our lives, we are able to comprehend the meaning of nature. The search for this root is called “Embracing the Origin” or “Embracing Singularity” (Bao Yuan, Bao Yi, 抱元·抱一). Embracing here means to keep, to maintain, to enfold, and to cherish. Therefore, the first step of searching for this origin is to find the origin of our lives.

To find the origin of our spiritual and physical lives, Chinese Qigong practitioners pay attention to the three origins of our lives that include: Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精), Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣), and Original Spirit (Yuan Shen, 元神). It is believed, from understanding and cultivating these three origins, that we are able to find, the truth of our lives. Among them, it is believed the Original Spirit is the origin of the others since it existed even before physical life. Therefore, searching for the spiritual root has become the most important cultivation in all Chinese societies. The Daoist family says: “Cultivate the Xin (Emotional Mind) to cultivate the human temperament. Keep the center and Embrace the Singularity (Bao Yi, 抱一) (very origin).”²⁸ The scholar family says: “Exist the Xin (pay attention to the Xin) to cultivate the human temperament. Maintain the center through (i.e. comprehend completely) the one (origin).”²⁹ The Buddhist family says: “To brighten (understand clearly) the Xin to meet the human temperament. Millions of methods return to one.”³⁰ The medical family says: “Void Xin (humble mind) to stabilize the human temperament, embrace the origin and keep singularity (origin).”³¹ It is explained in a classic, *Classic of Great Peace* (太平經), about the “one.” It is said: “Ponder to keep singleness, why? What is singleness? The beginning of the counting number; what is the one, the Dao of begetting; what is one, the beginning of the raising Qi; what is one, the principle of the heaven and the earth (universe).”³² From this, you can see the one means the very origin of every thing or even energy. According to *Book of Change* (*Yi Jing*, 易經), this one means the state of Wuji (無極) (No Extremity). What is meant by the scholar’s family that says “to through the one?” It is explained in a Daoist book, *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命圭旨全書): “What the scholar means by ‘to through the one’ is to use the original body to through (understand) (human nature).”³³ It is also said in the Daoist family that: “Dao, (use) the one to through (understand thoroughly).”³⁴

In China, meditation has existed in almost every level of society. In Chinese medical and scholar societies, meditation is commonly called “Jing Zuo” (靜坐) which

means “sit quietly.” In these societies, meditation is used to search for ways to bring the mind to a peaceful, neutral, harmonious, and calm state. It is believed that many illnesses and human mental pain are generated from the mind’s emotional disturbance. Therefore, if we are able to neutralize the imbalance of the emotional mind, we will be able to remove the causes of sickness and human emotional pain. Therefore, this kind of meditation has also commonly been considered as laymen meditation. Naturally, it remains at the level of regulating the mind. The level of regulating the spirit is not actively pursued.

However, meditation in Chinese martial society, focuses not only on regulating the emotional mind, but also on pursuing the meaning of life, and the way to raise up the Shen. When the Shen is raised, the Qi can be effectively led to the physical body for power manifestation (Yang manifestation). When the meaning of life is pondered and comprehended during meditation, a peaceful and calm mind can be achieved (Yin calmness). From this Yin and Yang balance, a martial artist will be able to reach a deep martial skill and also profound understanding of harmony and peace. Here, I would like to point out an important fact: since most of the well known Chinese martial styles such as Shaolin (少林), Taiji (太極), Wudang (武當), Emei (峨嵋), Tianshan (天山), Qingcheng (青城), Kunlun (崑崙), Kongdong (崆峒), etc., were all developed in religious monasteries. All of these meditation methods and purposes in these styles are heavily influenced by religious meditation. In many ways, they cannot even be separated.

Finally, religious meditation is called “Zuo Chan” (坐禪) in Buddhism which means “sit for Chan,” and “Da Zuo” (打坐) in Daoism that means “engaging sitting.” Chan (禪) means to relate or to associate with Buddhism, which includes to cultivate, to refine and to pursue Buddhahood. In the Buddhist classic, *A Han Jing* (阿含經) it says: “Sitting for Chan and ponder for the origin, do not be neglectful and lazy.”²⁵ That means through Chan meditation, you are searching for the origin of spiritual life.

The final goal of religious meditation is pursuing enlightenment (Daoism) or the Buddhahood (Buddhism). Religious meditation has been recognized as the highest level of meditation in Chinese society. The monks are not only searching for the peaceful and harmonious mind by neutralizing their Emotional Mind, but also aiming for the unification of the human and the nature spirit (Tian Ren He Yi, 天人合一). In order to reach this goal, the Qi storage in the Real Lower Dan Tian (human bio-battery) must be abundant. When this happens, the abundant Qi can then be used to serve two purposes: strengthen the physical body and nourish the brain to an enlightened state. When the physical body is strong, physical life will be long and allow you to have a longer time for spiritual cultivation. When the brain is nourished to a higher level, The Third Eye will be re-opened. Then our spirit and the natural spirit will be reunited and the meaning of life will be understood.

From the above, you can see that different societies aim for different purposes. When you train meditation, first ask yourself: Why or what are the purposes of my meditation training? For a peaceful mind? For martial arts? Or for enlightenment? Then, second, you must ask, how do I reach the goal? Do I know the way? How do I find the correct way? How much commitment do I have? Do I have enough patience, perseverance, and a strong will to pursue my goal?

If you are interested in spiritual cultivation through Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹) Qigong practice, the first step is learning Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息). From correct Embryonic Breathing, you will be able to find your spiritual center and Qi center. Later, you will unify the spirit and the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian and reach the state of “Embracing Singularity” (Bao Yi, 抱一). This is the state of “Wuji” (無極), the state of returning the life to its origin. Not only that, from Embryonic Breathing, the Qi can be built up and stored at the Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level. This is the crucial key to Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong practice.

To reach the goal of Muscle/Tendon Changing, you must learn “Small Cyclic Heaven” (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) (Small Circulation) meditation. The purpose of the Small Circulation is for the mind to lead the Qi to circulate smoothly and abundantly in the two major Qi vessels: Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren Mai, Du Mai, 任脈·督脈). Then the Qi circulating in the twelve primary Qi channels will also be smooth and abundant, and your physical body will become conditioned and healthy.

To reach the goal of spiritual enlightenment, you must learn Brain Washing Grand Circulation. This is to lead the Qi from the Real Lower Dan Tian through the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to the brain to activate more brain cells and energize them to a higher vital state. When this happens, The Third Eye can be reopened. This is the state of “enlightenment.”

This book, *Qigong Meditation—Embryonic Breathing*, is only the first step of reaching this goal. Its practice is crucial in longevity and also spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, you must read this book carefully, ponder it, and then practice it. Once you have established a habit for your meditation, soon you will realize that you are dancing in a spiritual garden which is hard to describe to other people.

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3. 《道德經·二十五章》：“有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立而不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，強字之曰道。”

4. 《道德經·一章》：“玄之又玄，眾妙之門。”
5. 《道德經·五十一章》：“道生之，德畜之，物形之，勢成之。”指萬物變化。
6. 《道德經·二十五章》：“人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”指以自然為法。
7. 《淮南子·天文訓》：“道始于一，一而不生，故分為陰陽，陰陽和合而萬物生。”
8. 《道德經·一章》：“無，名先天之始；有，名萬物之母。常無，欲以觀其妙；常有，欲以觀其徼。”指事物正在變化之中。
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23. *Animal Magnetism, The Strange Senses of Other Species*, p. 32, IEEE Spectrum, March, 1996.
24. 《性命圭旨全書》(大小鼎爐說)：「黃庭為鼎，氣穴為爐。黃庭正在氣穴上，縷絡相連，乃人身百脈交會之處。」元氣氤氳二穴之間，謂之「小鼎爐。」乾位為鼎，坤位為爐。」即泥丸宮為鼎，下丹田為爐，謂之「大鼎爐。」
25. 《阿含經》：「坐禪思惟，莫有懈怠。」
26. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 4, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1993.
27. *Fundamentals of Physics*, David Holliday and Robert Resnick, p. 308, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New York, NY, 1970.
28. 道家：修心養性，守中抱一。
29. 儒家：存心養性，執中貫一。
30. 佛家：明心見性，萬法歸一。
31. 醫家：虛心定性，抱元守一。
32. 《太平經》：「以思守一，何也？一者，數之始也；一者，生之道也；一者，元氣所起也；一者，天地之綱紀也。」
33. 《性命圭旨全書·大道說》：「儒之一貫者，以此本體之一而貫之也。」
34. 道，一以貫之。

**Translations and Commentaries of Ancient Documents
Related to Embryonic
Breathing
(Gu Dai Tai Xi Wen Xian
Zhi Fan Yi Yu Ping Xi)
古代胎息文獻之翻譯與評析**

Translations and Commentaries of Ancient Documents 古代文獻之翻譯與評析

3.1 INTRODUCTION 介紹

More than 150 documents related to Embryonic Breathing practice, written during nearly four thousand years of Chinese Qigong history, are now available. Many of these documents focus on theory, while others emphasize the general concept of the practice. Naturally, the contents of many of these documents are redundant or repetitious. I have read them, filtered them, studied and experimented with them, and searched for possible explanations written in each document. With all of these efforts, I still believe that there are many more related documents that I have not yet discovered. However, through the available documents, I am able to conclude and formalize a clear idea of what Embryonic Breathing is, the theory behind it, and also its practice methods.

From these ancient documents, we are able to see the verification and achievement of this spiritual practice. This provides us with encouragement, confidence, and inspiration to pursue our final goal of spiritual enlightenment. In order to benefit from these documents, we should have a correct attitude when we study them. We should be open-minded with deep appreciation, remain humble, and establish our confidence. Yet we should not hesitate to challenge the statements in the documents, to test them, and to verify them. We should try to judge the entire practice from a logical and scientific point of view. Study these documents repeatedly and ponder them carefully. This will lead us to the path of profound internal feeling.

Such a profound internal sensitivity will enable us to find our true natural identity and the real meaning of our lives. It will also lead us to appreciate the greatness of the natural universe. We can free ourselves from the matrix of spiritual bondage that has been formalized in the course of human history. Only if we are able to liberate ourselves from this human spiritual matrix, can we expect to have a neutral mind to further develop our spiritual science. We must recognize that all religions created in the past are spiritual matrices which act against the true science which continues to pursue the truth of nature.

The main sources of documents were from Daoist and Buddhist society, with a few from scholar and medical society. Documents generated from martial arts society are very scarce. Even though there are some, their discussion and practice remains on the surface level.

The majority of the documents translated and commented in this book are from the following sources:¹⁻⁷

1. *Dao De Jing and Qigong* (道德經與氣功), by Ding, Xin-Bai (丁辛百) and Pan, Ming-Huan (潘明環), 安徽科學技術出版社, Anhui, China 1996.
2. *Chinese Qigong Dictionary* (中國氣功辭典), by Lu, Guang-Rong (呂光榮), 人民衛生出版社, Beijing, China, 1988.
3. *The Great Completion of Chinese Qigong* (中國氣功大成), by Fang, Chun-Yang (方春陽), 吉林科學技術出版社, Jilin, China, 1989.
4. *The Study of Practical Chinese Medical Qigong* (實用中醫氣功學), by Ma, Ji-Ren (馬濟人), 上海科學技術出版社, Shanghai, China, 1992.
5. *The Complete Book of Nourishing the Life in Chinese Daoist Qigong* (中國道教氣功養生大全), by Li, Yuan-Guo (李遠國), 四川辭書出版社, Chengdu, Sichuan, China, 1991.
6. *The Great Completion of Chinese Life Nourishing* (中國養生大成), by Fang, Chun-Yang (方春陽), 吉林科學技術出版社, Jilin, China, 1992.
7. *Important Collection of Concealed Daoist Qigong*, (道藏氣功要集), by Hong, Pi-Mo (洪丕謨), 上海書店, Shanghai, China, 1991.

Before you read the next section, you should understand that it is very difficult to translate ancient Chinese writings. Because of the cultural differences, many expressions would not make sense to the Westerner if translated literally. Often, knowledge of the historical context is necessary. Furthermore, since in Chinese every sound has several possible meanings, when anyone tries to understand a poem or write it down, he has to choose from among these meanings. For this reason, many of the poems or articles have several variations. The same problem occurs when the poems or articles are read. Many Chinese characters also have several possible meanings, so reading involves interpretation of the text even for the Chinese. Also, the meaning of many words has changed over the course of time. When you add to this the grammatical differences (generally no tenses, articles, singular or plural, or differentiation between parts of speech) you find that it is almost impossible to translate Chinese literally into English. In addition to all this, the translator must have much the same experience and understanding, as well as similar intuitive feelings as the original author, in order to convey the correct meaning.

With these difficulties in mind, I have attempted to convey as much of the original meaning of the Chinese as possible based on my own Qigong experience and understanding. Although it is impossible to fully translate the original meaning, I feel I have managed to express the majority of the important points. The translation has been made as close to the original Chinese as possible, including such things as double negatives, and at times, idiosyncratic sentence structure. Words that are understood, but not actually written in the Chinese text have been included in parentheses. Also, some Chinese words are followed by the English in parentheses, for example Shen (Spirit).

In order to assist your understanding, I have included commentaries from my personal understanding of the documents. It is again not easy to offer you a perfect commentary with 100% accuracy. There are many special Qigong terminologies which were used in the past. These terminologies can have different meanings depending on when they were used, how they were used, where they were used, and who were the ones using them. For example, the crown of the head is called “Bai-hui” (Gv-20) (百會) (Hundred Meetings) by medical society, “Tian Ling Gai” (天靈蓋) (Cover of Natural Spiritual Divine) or “Ni Wan Gong” (泥丸宮) (Mud Pill Palace) by Daoists. In order to translate these terms correctly, I have consulted many Qigong dictionaries and documents and searched for the best answer. Often, it does not make sense when you read the translation, however, after you read and understand the commentaries, the documents can be understood.

To make it easier for you, I have tried to classify these documents according to their main focus. Through this effort, I hope you can establish a structural sense from the beginning. In section 3-2, I have included those documents which talk about the general concept of Embryonic Breathing. Next, I have gathered those which talk about the Dan Tian in section 3-3. Then, I have classified those related to the concept of regulating the breathing, the mind, and the spirit in section 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6 respectively. As to the training methods, I have included them in section 3-7. Finally, the last section includes a few documents that do not belong to any of the above categories.

3.2 GENERAL CONCEPTS 一般概念

1. Dao De Jing (Chapter 10)¹

《道德經·十章》

When bearing and managing the Po (Vital Spirit) and embracing (maintaining) it to a singularity (simplicity), can it be not separating? When concentrating the Qi to reach its softness, can it be as (soft as) a baby? When cleansing the thought to reach its purity, can it be no flaw? When loving the people and ruling the

country, can it be no ruling? The opening and closing of the Heaven Gate, can it be (calm and tender) as a female? To comprehend (nature) and reach the four directions (everywhere), can it be known without knowing? When bearing and raising, (if one can) bear without keeping it to self, raising without being meritorious, leading without controlling, then this is the way of "profound natural virtue."

載營魄抱一，能無離乎？專氣致柔，能如嬰兒乎？滌除玄鑿，能無疵乎？愛民治國，能無為乎？天門開闔，能為雌乎？明白四達，能無知乎？生之畜之，生而不有，為而不恃，長而不宰，是謂玄德。

The book *Lao Zi* (老子), also commonly known as *Dao De Jing* (道德經), was written by Lao Zi (604-531 B.C.) during the Chinese Zhou Dynasty (周朝) (1122-255 B.C.). Lao Zi was also named Li Er (李耳) or Lao Dan (老聃), and nicknamed Bo Yang (伯陽). From Lao Zi's philosophy, scholar Daoism was originated. Later in Chinese Eastern Han Dynasty (Dong Han) (東漢) (25-220 A.D.), Zhang, Dao-Ling (張道陵) combined the Daoist and Buddhist philosophies together and created a religious Dao, called "Dao Jiao" (道教).

In *Dao De Jing*, there are many sayings related to Qigong practice, especially Embryonic Breathing and spiritual cultivation. Unfortunately, almost all of the interpretations of *Dao De Jing* were done by Chinese scholars, instead of Qigong professionals. So there are very few Chinese books or English translations available that link the relationship of the *Dao De Jing* with Qigong practice. This chapter is one of few which talk about the cultivation of spiritual life and Qi, as well as the purification of human nature and personality.

In the first sentence, you must first understand the meaning of Po (魄). Po is the vital spirit which is supported by vital energy (Qi) when a person is alive. When a person is dead, the Po has become Hun (魂) (Soul), which means the spirit after death. When we were born, the spirit incarnated into our physical body. This spirit, with Qi nourishment, has become Po, enabling us to manage our lives vigorously. However, in the process, we must keep our spirit in its spiritual center, and not confused and influenced by the surrounding environment. This spiritual training of keeping the spirit in its original simplicity is called "Bao Yi" (抱一) and means "Embracing Singularity" or "Embracing Simplicity." Therefore, the first sentence implies that when we are handling our spirit, can we keep it simple (pure) and maintain it at its residence without distraction?

Not only that, Qi is the inner energy that supports our physical life and continues to nourish our spirit. Can the Qi circulation be as soft as a baby? Since the air (Kong Qi, 空氣) (External Qi) is related to the inner Qi, it is also commonly believed that the Qi mentioned in this chapter means the breathing. We know that the body's inner energy is generated from its metabolism, which converts the glucose

into bio-energy. During this process, an abundant oxygen supply is necessary. The greater the oxygen supply, the more energy can be produced. That is why when we lift weights or push a car, we must first inhale deeply in order to generate more power.

The third important point mentioned in this chapter is about the mind. Can we keep our mind simple and pure, so there is no disturbance or confusion about life? In Qigong, a common comparison is that the mind is the king of a country, people are Qi, and the country is the body. Therefore, the following sentence means when you use the mind to love and lead the Qi, and use it to nourish the physical body, you can reach the stage of “regulating without regulating.”

Tian Men (天門) (Heaven Gate) means “The Third Eye” that allows you to communicate with nature. The Third Eye is also called “Yin Tang” (印堂) in Chinese medicine and Qigong society. In order to re-open The Third Eye, you must be soft and tender. Most important of all, you should never forget this place is the residence of the spirit (Shen, 神), the origin of life. Once you have re-opened The Third Eye, then you are considered enlightened since you will comprehend everything around you and are able to communicate with nature. At this time, you will know everything without any intention of knowing it. Not only that, once you have reached the Dao of enlightenment, you will educate others and help them to grow their spirits. You should not control their spirit or abuse them. You should teach them how to be independent spiritually, so they will no longer be abused either physically or spiritually. When this happens, everything has become nature. This is the way of “Dao” (道) or “Xuan De” (玄德) (profound natural virtue).

The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament (性命圭旨全書) said: “If (you are able to) concentrate the training of Qi to reach its softness, the spirit will stay (in its residence) for a long time. To and fro, the real breathing will become natural and smooth. Softly and continuously to lead the Qi to its origin. (In this case), the spiritual spring will always emerge automatically without pumping.”⁸ This saying implies that in order to keep the spirit at its residence for a long time (longevity), you must first learn how to breathe softly, so you can build up the Qi storage to a higher level, and then circulate it in the entire body smoothly and continuously. Through this practice, the Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) can be maintained at its residence. When this Original Qi is used to nourish the Original Spirit (Yuan Shen, 元神), your spirit can be raised up to a high level of longevity and spiritual enlightenment. In Qigong breathing practice, “uttering must be slender and receiving must be soft.”⁹ You must practice regulating the breathing until no regulating is necessary. In order to reach this stage, at the beginning, you must learn how to “condense (your) spirit in regulating breathing which can be reached only through peaceful Xin and harmonious Qi.”¹⁰ *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命圭旨全書) said: “When regulating the breathing, it must be regulated until the regulating has ceased. When

you train the spirit, you must train it until no spirit is necessary.”¹¹ This implies that at the end, all of the training and cultivation have become natural and no more training is necessary. When this happens, you are training always and everywhere.

Scientifically, it is known that we have two brains that constitute two inner energy poles (or polarities) of the body (Yin and Yang), which are connected via the spinal cord.^{12,13} Qi, known as bioelectricity, is constantly circulating in our body in order to maintain our lives. The upper pole regulates our spiritual life while the lower pole manages our physical life. These two polarities synchronize, coordinate, and harmonize with each other.

2. Dao De Jing

(Chapter 16)¹

《道德經·十六章》

Approach (Follow) the nothingness (emptiness) to its extremity and maintain calmness with sincerity. Millions of objects (lives) are in actions which allow us to observe their cyclic repetitions. Though there are so many objects, each individual must repeatedly return to its root (origin). When it returns to the root, it means 'calmness.' When it is calmed, then it means 'repetition of a life.' When the life repeats, it means 'constant natural routine.' If (one) knows this constant natural routine, then (his mind) is clear (enlightened). If (one) does not know this constant natural routine, then various unfortunate dangers could occur. If (one) knows this constant natural routine, then (life) is permitted. When life is permitted, then it is impartial. If it is impartial, then it can be completed. When it is completed, then it is heaven (nature). When it is heaven, it is the Dao. If it is the Dao, then it can be long and the death of the body will not be near.

致虛極，守靜篤；萬物并作，吾以觀其復。夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。歸根曰靜，靜曰復命。復命曰常，知常曰明。不知常，妄作凶。知常容，容乃公，公乃全，全乃天。天乃道，道乃久，殒身不殆。

All lives originated from nothingness, therefore, in order to see the repetition of lives, we must first reach this nothingness. This nothingness is called the state of Wuji (無極) (No Extremity), where there is no discrimination of Yin (陰) and Yang (陽). It is a neutral state of everything. Therefore, nothingness here means the emptiness of the emotional mind and material world. In order to reach this state, the first step is to maintain extreme calmness of both mental and physical bodies. Then you will be able to see the actions of all lives and understand their repetitions. Even though there are millions of various living objects, each individual, at the end, must return to its origin (root). It is from this origin that the initiation of life begins again. When one has returned to this origin, it is calm, quiet, and peaceful. When new life is initiated again, the natural constant routine (Chang, 常) will be repeated. If you know

this constant natural routine, then there is no doubt about life and you will have become enlightened and understood the meaning of life. If you do not know this routine, then you rub against nature, and consequently various disasters may occur. If you are able to follow the natural routine and way of natural rules, then your life will be long and healthy. This is what the “Dao” means.

Embryonic Breathing is to keep the mind at the Wuji (無極) state. In order to trace back our origin, we must first know how to keep our mind at the center. This center means the center of the Qi (氣) (Real Lower Dan Tian, 真下丹田), and also the center of the spiritual being (Upper Dan Tian, 上丹田). As mentioned earlier, one of these two Polarities is Yin and the other Yang. The Real Lower Dan Tian provides the quantity of Qi, so the physical body can perform its life with vigorous energy and physical strength. The Upper Dan Tian (spiritual center) governs the usage of the Qi and improves the quality of the Qi manifestation. These Two Polarities are connected through the spinal cord (Chong Mai, 衝脈). Physically, there are Two Polarities, but in function, they are one, and cannot be separated. When your mind is able to remain in these Two Polarities (Embracing Singularity) (Bao Yi, 抱一), then you are able to conserve and govern your Qi effectively and efficiently. This is the key to longevity and maintaining health.

3. The Song of Great Dao

(Eight Notes of Life Abidance; The Marvellous Theory of
Abidance for Pure Cultivation)² (Gao, Lian; Ming Dynasty)

《大道歌》

《遵生八箋·清修妙論箋》

(明·高濂撰)

The Great Dao (Da Dao) is not far (away) but inside the body. Ten thousand objects are empty, but the human temperament is not empty. If the human temperament cannot be empty and stay together with the Qi harmoniously, (how can) Qi return to its original ocean (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian) and (expect) unlimited longevity. If (you) wish to keep the spirit in the body, (then) do not leave (even) an object in Lingtai (i.e. spiritual platform). (If) any object (i.e. thought) stays in the heart (i.e. mind), the spirit will not be clear. (This) will waste the real essence and damage the tendons and bones (i.e. physical body). The spirit directs the Qi and from Qi the shape remains (i.e. healthy). (In this case, you) will live for a long time without needing herbs. The techniques are easy; however, the secrets are hard to meet (i.e. obtain). (The correct ways) have always been changed (into wrong ones) and separated from the expert path. Therefore, even though a thousand people or ten thousand people have learned (about this), after all, there is not even one who has accomplished (i.e. few have succeeded). (Whenever) the spirit has exited (from the physical body), immediately bring it back. When the spirit has returned to the physical body, the Qi will also return automatically. As such, practice every morning and evening, the Spiritual Embryo will be conceived and born naturally.

大道不遠在身中，萬物皆空性不空。性若不空和氣住，
氣歸元海壽無窮。欲得身中神不出，莫向靈台留一物。
物在心中神不清，耗散真精損筋骨。神御氣兮氣留形，
不須藥物自長生。術則易知訣難遇，總然易了不專行。
所以千人萬人學，畢竟終無一個存。神若出兮便收來，
神返身中氣自回。如此朝朝並暮暮，自然赤子產靈胎。

In this song, it states that the Great Dao (Da Dao, 大道) of longevity and enlightenment is in our bodies. As long as we cultivate it, we will be able to reach this Dao. The mind should not stay on the objects around us. All of these objects, after all, are empty. What the Daoists and Buddhists train is to keep away from the influence or temptation of the objects generated from earth, fire, water, and air. Since your spiritual body originated from physical and emotional nothingness, in this training, you are returning to nothingness. The Buddhists call this “Si Da Jie Kong” (四大皆空) or “Four Large are Empty.” You should cultivate your human nature and temperament and raise up your spirit to a higher stage. Once you have reached a high spiritual level and are able to harmonize with the Qi, then it can be kept at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Then, through the conservation of Qi and the high governing power of your spirit, you will live for a long time. Lingtai (靈臺) means the spiritual platform, the residence of the spirit (Shen Shi, 神室) which is located at the center of the brain. This residence is also commonly called “Ni Wan Gong” (泥丸宮) that means “Mud Pill Palace.”

In order to keep Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, first you must have a simple and pure mind which is free from the temptation of the objects around you and also from emotional bondage. When this happens, your spirit will be able to stay in its spiritual center. Once your mind is away from this center, it will naturally lead the Qi away from its residence and waste it. Therefore, when the spirit is firmly kept inside of the body, the Qi will also stay. When the Qi is abundant and able to stay in the body, the physical body (shape) will be strong and healthy. This is the key to longevity. The crucial key to producing the Spiritual Embryo is to keep the spirit inside the body all the time.

From this song, you can see that in order to produce the Spiritual Embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎), you must cultivate your spirit. In order to raise your spirit to a higher level, you must first have abundant Qi stored in the Real Lower Dan Tian. When this Qi is led upward to nourish the brain, the spirit can be raised. However, during this period of training, if your mind has been tempted and influenced by external attractions both physically and mentally, you will not be able to store the Qi to a higher level to generate a Spiritual Embryo. In conclusion, this is the stage of cultivating your human nature or temperament so you can be free from physical and emotional bondage (human desires).

4. Jade Pendant Inscription of Transporting Qi^{2,5}

《行氣玉佩銘》

When transporting Qi, (if) deep, then accumulate. If (Qi is) accumulated, then can be extended. When it is extended, it can be sunken downward. If sunken downward, then steady. If steady, then firm. If firm, then able to germinate. Having germinated, then grow. When grow, then retreat. When retreat, then (return to) the heaven. The foundation of the heaven is at the top (i.e. brain or Upper Dan Tian) and the foundation of the earth is at the bottom (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian). If following (these rules), then live; if adverse, then die.

行氣，深則蓄，蓄則伸，伸則下，下則定，定則固，固則萌，萌則長，長則退，退則天。天几春在上，地几春在下，順則生，逆則死。

When you circulate the Qi in the body, if the breathing is deep, then the body is relaxed and the mind is calm. When this happens, the Qi circulation can be deep and the Qi storage can reach an abundant level. Only if you have an abundant storage of Qi, can this Qi be strong enough to extend and be distributed everywhere in the body. It is said: "Transport Qi as though through a pearl with a 'nine-curved hole,' not even the tiniest place won't be reached."¹⁴ When this happens, the body's metabolism will be smooth and natural, and you will be healthy. Not only that, if you have abundant Qi, it can be led downward and stored in the Real Lower Dan Tian. Then life can be stabilized and firm.

Leading the Qi and storing it in the Real Lower Dan Tian is the process of Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息). It is the process of returning the mental and physical life to its origin (Wuji state). Once the Wuji state can be reached, then new life can be germinated and grown strong again. After you have fulfilled the purpose of the Qi manifestation, then retreat again and return to its origin, the Real Lower Dan Tian. This process is the way of the heavenly cycle (Dao, 道). That means if you know how to conserve and store the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you will be able to manifest it efficiently for your life. Once you have completed the manifestation, you must know how to return the Qi and conserve it again at the Real Lower Dan Tian. How to manifest the usage of the Qi to its highest efficiency depends on how much you are able to purify your spirit and raise it up to a higher level. Then this spirit will be able to govern the Qi circulation smoothly. The head is considered as the heaven (Tian, 天) while the abdomen area is considered as the earth (Di, 地) in Chinese Qigong. The Upper Dan Tian is located at the heaven and is the residence of the spirit while the Lower Dan Tian is situated at the abdominal area which is the residence of Qi. If you know how to store the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian and keep your spirit focused and high at the Upper Dan Tian, you will achieve longevity.

5. Stele with One Hundred Words

(Lu, Yan)²

《百字碑》
(呂岩作)

When cultivating Qi, do not just constantly talk about how to keep (i.e. protect) it. When descending the mind (i.e. calm down the mind), it should be doing without doing. If (you) know the origins (i.e. causes) of movement (i.e. Yang) and stillness (i.e. Yin), then there is nothing (i.e. no reason) for (you to) ask anyone else. To face the real reality, (you) must deal with daily affairs. However, when (you) deal with these daily affairs, (you) should not be infatuated by them. If (you are) not infatuated, then (your) temperament can be steady (i.e. self-controlled). When the temperament is steady, the Qi will naturally return (i.e. be preserved). If the Qi can be returned, the elixir (i.e. Baby Embryo) can be conceived, consequently, Kan and Li can coordinate with each other within the kettle (i.e. under control). When there is Yin-Yang (interaction), the repeated cycle will be initiated, this will bring (you) a natural derivation (of new life) like thunder (i.e. enlightened). White clouds are moving upward, and sweet dew is sprinkling Xu Mi (i.e. completeness of human virtue). I will drink the wine of longevity by myself, how can others know how free and unfettered I am? (I) sit down to listen to the songs (generated from the instrument) without strings, I comprehend clearly the pivotal function of natural creation. In total, these are twelve sentences which offer (you) the ladder to ascend to Heaven (i.e. enlightenment).

養氣忘言守，降心為不為。動靜知宗祖，無事更尋誰？
真常須應物，應物要不迷。不迷性自住，性住氣自回。
氣回丹自結，壺中配坎離。陰陽生反復，普化一聲雷。
白雲朝頂上，甘露洒須彌。自飲長生酒，逍遙誰得知？
坐聽無弦曲，明通造化機。都來十二句，端的上天梯。

Cultivating Qi is not just learning how to maintain it. The most important of all is learning how to regulate your Xin (Emotional Mind). This mind must be regulated until no more regulating is necessary, and it becomes natural. When this happens, your mind will be clear and your judgments will be neutral and accurate. Then, whether you are active or still, you know where the origins are. If you know clearly what is happening, why do you need to ask anyone else? In order to live in this world of human society, you must deal with many necessary affairs. However, when you are handling them, you should not be attracted or lured by money, glory, dignity, pride, jealousy, power, or other human desires and emotions. If your mind is separated from these temptations, then it can be calm and steady. Then Qi will naturally return to its origin (Real Lower Dan Tian). This will result in the formation of the elixir (Spiritual Embryo). Then you are able to control your life easily through the adjustment of Kan (坎) (Water) and Li (離) (Fire). Through the Kan and Li, the Yin and Yang status of your spiritual and physical bodies can be regulated as you wish. Kan

and Li are the methods which change the body's Yin and Yang. Through the cultivation of the Yin and Yang of your spiritual and physical body, when the time is ripe, you can suddenly re-open your third eye for enlightenment like a clap of thunder. When this happens, you have no doubt about your life. Your life will be just like the pure white clouds floating in the sky, also like the sweet dew upon Xu Mi (須彌). Xu Mi is the Daoist term for the human spiritual being in the fullness of human virtue. In this case, you will be able to live long and enjoy life to the full. Not only that, you will be able to communicate with nature like listening to songs without sound and also understanding the pivotal functions of nature.

6. Classic of Embryonic Breathing^{2,3,5}

《胎息經》

The embryo is conceived from the concealed Qi. Qi is developed through the (regulated) breath of the embryo. When Qi is present, the body may live; when spirit (Shen) abandons the body and the shape (i.e. embryo) disperses, death will follow. Knowing (how to cultivate) the spirit and Qi makes long life possible. Firmly protect the insubstantial emptiness (i.e. Spiritual Embryo at the Real Lower Dan Tian) so as to cultivate spirit and Qi. When spirit moves, the Qi moves; where spirit stops, the Qi stops. If you wish to have a long life, spirit and Qi must harmoniously coordinate (with each other). When the Xin (heart-mind) is not infatuated by thoughts coming or going, then (spirit and Qi) will not exit and enter, and thus will always stay naturally. To practice intelligently is the true way (of success).

胎從伏氣中結，氣從有胎中息。氣入身來為之生，神去離形為之死。知神氣可以長生，固守虛無以養神氣。神行則氣行，神住則氣住。若欲長生，神氣相住。心不動念，無來無去，不出不入，自然常住。勤而行之，是真道路。

Nobody knows when or by whom this classic was written. However, it has been passed down for generations and considered as one of the most important documents about Embryonic Breathing.

Basically it says that the Holy Embryo (Sheng Tai, 聖胎) (Shen Tai, 神胎) is conceived from Qi concealed at the Real Lower Dan Tian. In order to reveal this concealed Qi, you must practice Embryonic Breathing. Once you have stored this Qi to an abundant level, your life force will be strong, bringing you good health and longevity. However, in order to manifest this Qi into physical life force, you must have a strong spirit to focus the circulation and manifestation of Qi. Once you have lost this living spirit, you will lose your health and die. Therefore, he who knows how to cultivate his spirit and develop his Qi will live a long and healthy life. This first part of the classic explains how to regulate the relationship between physical life, Qi, and spirit.

In order to reach this goal, first you must keep your mind firm and staying at the Real Lower Dan Tian. The Real Lower Dan Tian is called “Xu Wu” (虛無) and means “nothingness.” When your mind remains at the Real Lower Dan Tian, it is the state of Wuji (無極) (No Extremity) and the state of “no discrimination,” in other words the state of nothingness. Only when your mind is in this state, can you really be in the neutral state of your mental being. To reach this, you must clear out emotional thoughts and desires. This is the state described in *Dao De Jing*, “Approach the nothingness (emptiness) to its extremity, and maintain calmness with sincerity.” You should know that “the mind leads the Qi.” When your mind is active and thinking, you are leading the Qi away from its residence, the Real Lower Dan Tian, and consuming it. In order to store your Qi to an abundant level, you must know how to conserve it, protect it, and also build it. These are three important things always emphasized in Internal Elixir Qigong (Nei Dan Qigong, 內丹氣功) practice.

In order to build up the Qi to an abundant level, you must not only keep your mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you must also know the techniques of Embryonic Breathing. In order to manifest your Qi efficiently for your life activities, you must have a strong and highly controlled spirit. Then Qi consumption will be limited and performance efficiency will be high. Therefore, the key to longevity is to keep the spirit and Qi in mutual coordination and harmonization. To keep the spirit to a pure and high level, first you must have a calm Xin (Emotional Mind). Xin is compared to a monkey, while the Yi (Wisdom Mind) is compared to a horse (Xin Yuan Yi Ma, 心猿意馬). In order to keep the monkey steady, you must restrain it in its cage, the Wuji state. This is the crucial key to success.

7. Embracing Simplicity; Explain Stagnation?

《抱朴子·釋滯》

Those who have obtained (the capability) of Embryonic Breathing are able to breathe without using the nose and mouth, like (the breathing of) a fetus in the womb.

得胎息者，能不以鼻口噓息，如人在胞胎之中。

This document describes that one who has really reached the Dao of Embryonic Breathing is able to stop the breathing for a while just like a fetus in the womb who does not use the nose or mouth to breathe. In order to extend your breathing to a longer time, your physical body must reach a higher level of relaxation and your mind must also achieve a profoundly calm meditative state. When this happens, your heartbeat will slow down and the oxygen consumption in your body will decrease to its minimum. In this case, your breathing will be long, quiet, slender, soft, calm, smooth, continuous as if you were not breathing at all.

Technically, in Embryonic Breathing, in order to lead the Qi to the center (Real Lower Dan Tian) and store it there efficiently, you must first inhale deeply, and then hold your breath until the Qi reaches this center. This is the Kan (坎) (Water) of the Qigong practice. The longer you are able to hold it without sacrificing the relaxation of your physical body, the faster the Qi can be led to the Real Lower Dan Tian. If you tense while doing so, the consumption of oxygen will increase and thus the breathing will become urgent and short again. This kind of holding of the breath is the crucial key to leading the Qi to the center. By the same token, in order to lead the Qi outward and manifest it into physical power, we often hold the breath until the exhalation has reached its maximum. For example, when you push a car or lift a heavy weight, often you inhale deeply first to take in oxygen sufficiently. In this case, the biochemical reaction process can reach its highest efficiency, and Qi can be produced more abundantly for the physical body's action. Then, you will exhale and lead the Qi to the physical body for action. At the end of your exhalation, you often hold your breath to allow the Qi to reach its maximum performance level. This is the Li (離) (Fire) of the Qigong practice.

8. Ling Jian Zi's Dao Yin Zi-Wu Recording²

《靈劍子導引子午記注》

What is Embryonic Breathing? It is a method of Embracing (i.e. maintaining) Singularity (i.e. simplicity, Wuji center) and keeping it in the neutral state. An embryo in the womb takes air through the umbilical cord. After ten months (of pregnancy), (it) becomes a newborn. Then (the baby) will take the air from the head (Shen Lu). A truthful person (i.e. person who has reached the Dao) breathes deeply but not from the nose. Embryonic Breathing is what Lao Zi said about returning to the baby state (of breathing). This is Embryonic Breathing.

胎息者，抱一守中之法也。嬰兒在腹中，取氣于臍管，十月脫胎，即取氣于神廬。真人鼻無出入，其息深深。老子所謂復歸于嬰兒者，胎息之謂也。

“Dao Yin” (導引) is one of the ancient terms in Qigong which means “to guide and to lead.” “Zi-Wu” (子午) means “midnight and noon” and implies the timing of the cultivation. Ling Jian Zi (靈劍子) is the name of a Daoist who wrote this classic. According to the Chinese calendar, each month has only 28 days since it follows the lunar cycle. Therefore, ten months is 280 days and approximately the same as the Western concept of nine months pregnancy. “Shen Lu” (神廬) means “the spiritual residence,” namely the head. Finally, “Zhen Ren” (真人) means “the truthful person” and refers to those Daoists who have re-opened The Third Eye and reached the Dao. The reason for this is simply that in order to re-open The Third Eye, a person must be truthful. As long as a person is not truthful and continues lying, then The Third Eye cannot be re-opened since he will be afraid others will see through his original intention.

This simple document clearly points out that the key to Embryonic Breathing is to keep the mind at its spiritual center, and also to preserve the Qi and allow it to stay in the Qi residence (Real Lower Dan Tian). As mentioned earlier, there are two energy polarities in our body, one in our head and the other in our abdomen. The upper pole is the residence of the spirit (Shen) and the lower pole is the residence of the Qi. Western science has recognized the upper pole as the upper brain, while the lower pole (abdomen) is the second brain.^{12,13} These two brains are connected through the spinal cord, which is highly electric conductive fiber. Since there is nearly no resistance to the Qi circulation in the spinal cord, it implies that physically there are two brains which function as one. Even though there are two polarities, actually, they function as one. It is the Yin and Yang side of the same thing. The spirit in the upper brain controls the quality of the Qi manifestation while the lower brain builds up and stores the quantity of the Qi. Therefore, when the document mentions the one (simplicity) or neutral state, it means to keep the mind and Qi at these two centers respectively. When this happens, the mind will be centered and the Qi can be preserved. This is the crucial key to Embryonic Breathing.

9. The Classic of Tai Shang's Embryonic Breathing for Life Nourishment²

《太上養生胎息氣經》

Concerning the method of breathing, (you) must have a Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) like an embryo in the mother's womb. After ten months (of pregnancy) it matures, tendons and bones are harmonious and soft. Use the Ming Xin (i.e. Yin mind) to cease thoughts, (then) the harmonious Qi will arrive automatically.

凡服氣法，存心如嬰兒在母胎，十月成就，筋骨和柔，
以冥心息念，和氣自至。

“Tai Shang” (太上) means “Grand Uppermost” and is an abbreviation of “Tai Shang Lao Jun” (太上老君) which means “Grand Uppermost Old Gentleman.” To Chinese, to be called “old” is a sign of respect instead of an insult as in the Western world. Traditionally in China, the older you are, the more respected you are by people around you. “Tai Shang Lao Jun” is a respected name of Lao Zi (老子) given by Daoists.

Again, Xin (心) is the Emotional Mind developed after birth. Ming (冥) means the Yin world. According to Chinese tradition and belief, there are two worlds (or spaces) coexisting in this universe. One is the “Yang world” (Yang Jian, 陽間), the material world in which we live. The other is the “Yin world” (Yin Jian, 陰間), the spiritual world where we go after death. Yang is the manifestation and is active, while Yin is calm and conceals energy. Ming Xin therefore means the mind of the Yin world. When your mind is in this world, all material attractions will disappear since

substance has no meaning in the spiritual world. If you are able to keep your mind in this state, your physical activities and thinking will cease. This will lead you to the source of life (Wuji state).

At this time, you are pure and without emotional disturbance, and the harmonious Qi will be generated in the Real Lower Dan Tian. This harmonious Qi is the origin of the spiritual baby embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎)

10. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament

(Zhang, Jing-He's Secret of Embryonic Breathing)²

《性命主旨全書》
(張景和胎息訣)

Real Xuan and real Pin, inhale and exhale by itself automatically. It is just like the pond fish swimming in the spring time, like torpidity of hundreds of insects, the Qi contained inside is joyful and harmonious, and the spiritual wind blows constantly, neither dirty nor clean, not from the mouth nor from the nose, going nowhere and coming from nowhere, no exit and no entrance. (Everything has) returned to its root and origin. This is the real Embryonic Breathing.

真玄真牝，自呼自吸，似春沼魚，如百蟲蟄，灑氣融融，
靈風習習。不濁不清，非口非鼻，無去無來，無出無入。
返本返原，是真胎息。

To understand this document, first you must know what is Xuan (玄) and Pin (牝) in Daoist terminology. In the ancient document, *The Interpretation of Embryonic Breathing Classic* (胎息經注), it says: “Three inches under the navel is Qihai (氣海), also called Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田), or Xuan Pin (玄牝). What is Xuan? It means water; what is Pin, it means mother.... Those who cultivate the Dao, always conceal their Qi under the navel, keep their spirit (Shen, 神) inside the body. From the mutual harmonization of the spirit and Qi, the “Marvellous Embryo” (Xuan Tai, 玄胎) will be formed. Once this miracle is formed, it will grow and survive. This is the Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹)”¹⁵ This document points out that the Lower Dan Tian or Real Lower Dan Tian is the place of conception of the Spiritual Embryo. The way of doing so is to keep the Qi there and maintain the spirit and mind at their centers. When this happens, the spirit and Qi will harmonize with each other and the Spiritual Embryo will be formed.

Another document, *Concealed Secret of Fong's Family* (馮氏錦囊) says: “There is a crux in the body which is named “Xuan Pin” (玄牝). This place is how life can be alive. In fact, this place is the residence of spirit. It is the place where the Three Origins (San Yuan, 三元) (Jing, Qi, and Shen, 精·氣·神) (Essence, Qi, and Spirit) gather. The cavities where the essence (Jing, 精), spirit (Shen, 神), soul (Hun, 魂),

and vigor (Po, 魄) meet. It is the root where the Golden Elixir (Jin Dan, 金丹) (Qi) returns and the place where the immortals conceive their Holy Embryo.”¹⁶ Also, *Dao De Jing* (道德經) (Chapter 6) said: “(If) the Valley Spirit does not die, it is called ‘Xuan Pin.’ The gate of the Xuan Pin is the root of heaven and earth. It exists softly and continuously. When you use it, it will not be exhausted.”¹⁷ This document clearly points out that “Xuan Pin” is the place where the spirit resides (Shen Fu, 神府). This place is at the middle of the brain and commonly called “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) or “Mud Pill Palace” (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮). It is called valley because physically the brain is constructed of two hemispheres, and between them, a valley is formed which is able to generate resonance to correspond with energy from outside the body (Figure 3-1). The spirit which resides in this valley is called “Valley Spirit” (Gu Shen, 谷神). The center of this valley is actually where the pineal and pituitary glands are located (Figure 3-2). In spiritual cultivation, Daoists believe that through cultivation of essence (Jing, 精), Qi (氣), and spirit (Shen, 神), and gathering them at the spiritual center, the Spiritual Embryo can be grown, which will result in the birth of the spiritual baby (re-open The Third Eye) (Kai Tian Yan, 開天眼). When this happens, enlightenment can be achieved.

Scientifically, when you condense your spirit at this center, your mind is leading

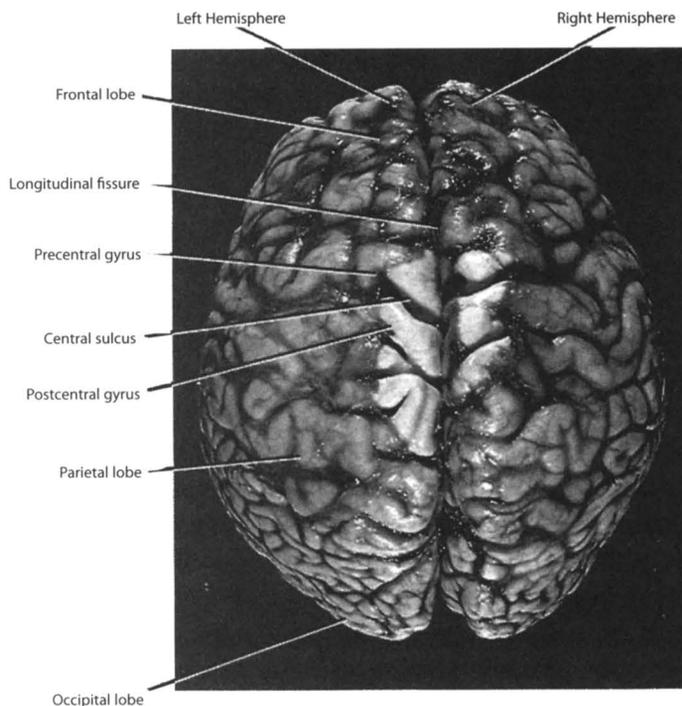


Figure 3-1. The Brain Encompasses Two Hemispheres

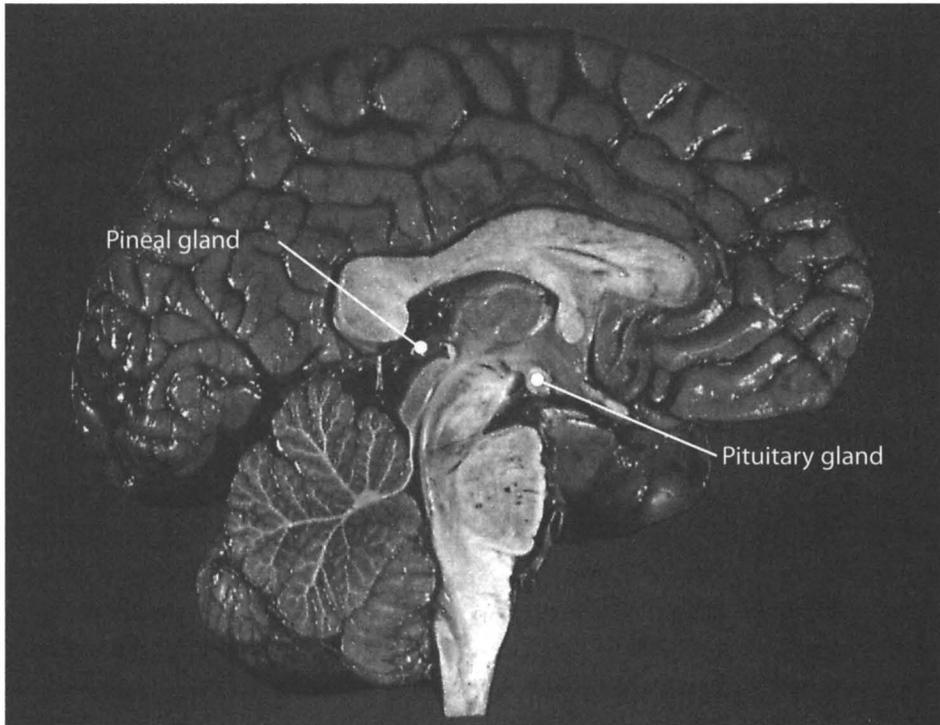


Figure 3-2. The Pituitary and Pineal Glands (Mud Pill Palace) in the Spiritual Valley

the stored Qi from the Real Lower Dan Tian (bio-battery) upward through the spinal cord (Thrusting Vessel) (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to this center, and stimulating hormone production. Hormones act as catalysts in the body's biochemical metabolic process. When the hormone content is high, the vital force is strong and longevity can be reached.

From this, we can see that, in fact, in Embryonic Breathing we are aiming for spiritual breathing at the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田) and also Qi breathing at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). As mentioned earlier, these Two Polarities are the Yin and Yang aspects of the same thing. Therefore, while it seems there are two places, nevertheless they function as one. Spiritual Wind (Ling Feng, 靈風) implies the flow of spiritual energy that passes through your body.

11. The Thesis of Retaining the Shen and Firming the Qi²

《存神固氣論》

In addition, according to the theory of bearing and variation, those (who carry) only Yang will not bear (the offspring) and those (who carry) only Yin will not grow. Those Perfect Men (Zhi Ren) (i.e. those who have reached the Dao) talk about nourishing the Holy Embryo, and searching for the exit way (of death)

know that Kan or Li, lead or mercury cannot be left alone. If it is not from the intercourse of the dragon and tiger (i.e. Yin and Yang) and from establishing the key axis at the marvellous extremity (i.e. Lower Rear Dan Tian), who is able to stabilize the original harmonization (of spirit and Qi) and breathe as an embryo?

且生化之理，獨陽不生，孤陰不長。至人謂養聖胎，求出路，坎離鉛汞不相孤。苟非龍虎交媾，立關軸于玄極，誰能住元和而息胎呼？

“Kan” (坎) means “water” and “Li” (離) means “fire.” Lead (Qian, 鉛) and mercury (Gong, 汞) are terms commonly used in Daoist society. Lead and mercury were used in Daoist alchemy to adjust the Yin and Yang of the elixir. Dragon (Long, 龍) and Tiger (Hu, 虎) are commonly used to represent the Yin and Yang. Kan and Li are the methods which could result in the change of the Yin and Yang.

This article emphasizes that in order to have a congelation of a Spiritual Embryo, you must first know how to create the harmonious interaction of Yin and Yang. Yin or Yang alone will not generate life. In order to have a harmonious interaction of Yin and Yang, you must know the crucial keys of Kan and Li. For example, exhale is Li while inhale is Kan; the mind is Yang when it is excited and Yin when it is calm. Also when the Qi stays in its residence, it is Yin and when led away from its residence, it is Yang. Not only that, it is believed that the fire Qi (Yang Qi) generated from the Post-Birth essence (air and food) resides at the Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田) (area near lower section of sternum) while the water Qi (Yin Qi) produced from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) resides at the Real Lower Dan Tian.

When you lead the fire Qi downward and water Qi upward to interact with each other at Huang Ting (黃庭), it is called “Kan-Li” (坎離) (Figure 3-3).

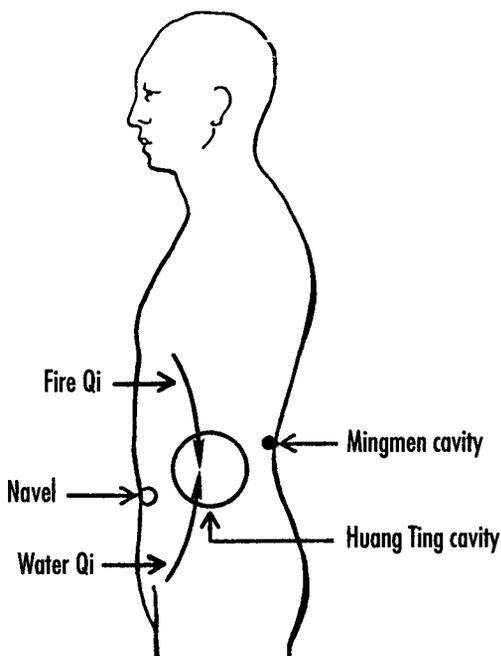


Figure 3-3. Interaction of the Yin (Water) and Yang (Fire) Qi in the Huang Ting Cavity

12. Refined Thesis of Embryonic Breathing^{3,7}

《胎息精微論》

Lao Zi said: "Those who know the Dao (natural way), Heaven will not kill, and those who have contained the De (natural virtue), Heaven will not harm. Dao and De embrace each other mutually." If (you) do not wish to be weak and old, the most important key is to absorb the internal grand harmonious Original Qi (Yuan Qi). Train yourself to (keep the mind) clear and pure, to keep the body relaxed and natural, do not hold onto thoughts of the ego, maintain the internal organs in their peaceful and steady healthy state, comprehend the grand harmony (of nature) profoundly, ponder the theory of longevity deeply, conceal the Qi (at the Real Lower Dan Tian) without moving it away, the Yi (i.e. Wisdom Mind or logic thinking) is like a stream flowing (i.e. without disturbance). (If you are able) to train this without ceasing (i.e. continuously), then (you) have really gained the Dao.

老君曰：“知道者，天不殺。含德者，天不害。道德相抱。”身不衰老。內食太和元氣為首。清淨自練，委身放體，志無念慮，安定臟腑，洞極太和，長生久視，潛氣不動，意如流水，行之不休，得道真矣。

It is very difficult to explain the real meaning of “Dao.” In *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 1, it is said: “Dao, if it can be talked about, then it is not the real Dao.”¹⁸ In *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 25, again, it said: “There is something formed (in nature), which existed before heaven and earth (i.e. nature); quiet and rare, independent and unchanging, it continues cycling and does not rest; it can be the mother of the heaven and the earth. I don’t know its name and named it ‘Dao.’ It can be called ‘Da’ (大) (Grand).”¹⁹ From this, you can see that once we start to talk about the great nature, we are using our limited knowledge, influenced by emotion, to make an interpretation of the Dao. This has already led the real meaning of the Dao away from the truth. This is because humans are not truthful. We lie and play tricks on each other, so we all have a serious mask on our faces. Not only that, we have created an emotional matrix through our limited thinking and beliefs, and become trapped in this emotional bondage. Therefore, the closest way to describe the Dao is “The Natural Way.” “De” (德) is the manifestation of the Dao or the activities of nature.

Whoever follows nature will live a long and healthy life. Dao and De must match and be harmonious with each other. To keep the body from getting withered, weak and old, you must practice a few things. These are: 1. Cultivate the internal Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣), and conserve it; 2. Keep the mind clear and pure (calm and peaceful). Do not have an ego which makes you worry and disturbs your emotional mind. Keep the wisdom mind active. When this happens, the spirit can be maintained to a high level; 3. Maintain the body’s strength (Yang) and keep the physical

and mental bodies relaxed and comfortable (Yin). Then the circulation of the entire internal Qi will be harmonious, consequently, the internal organs will be healthy and harmonious. This is stage of “Tai He” (太和) and means “Grand Harmonization.” Naturally, the key to reaching this harmonious stage is constant practice.

Go into a quiet room every day and protect (i.e. preserve) the Xuan Yuan Qi. (Xuan Yuan means to stay at the two Xuan gates, keeping the mind in the Real Lower Dan Tian which is connected with them). If there is Xuan (i.e. Qi) in the Xuan (i.e. insubstantial center, namely Real Lower Dan Tian), then I have my life. If there is an alive (Qi) in life, then I have a shape (i.e. physical body). When there is a shape in the shape (i.e. healthy physical body), then I have the (Original) Essence. When there is a (refined Original) Essence in the Essence, then I have an (abundant) Qi. When there is an (abundant Qi) in (my) Qi (circulation), then I have a (strong) spirit. When there is a (highly cultivated) spirit in my spirit, then I will become natural (i.e. unification of human spirit with the natural spirit). De (i.e. natural virtue) uses the shape (i.e. physical body) as a carriage and Dao (i.e. natural way) uses the Qi as the horse. Hun (i.e. soul) uses the Essence as its root and Po (i.e. vigorous spirit) uses the eyes as the doors. When the shape is fatigued, then the De is dispersed. When Qi is derailed, then the Dao revolts. When the Essence is over consumed, then the Hun is damaged. When the eyes are touched (i.e. attracted), the Po is weakened.

每日入靜室，守玄元氣。〔玄元謂存玄門。〕玄中有玄是我命，命中有命是我形，形中有形是我精，精中有精是我氣，氣中有氣是我神，神中有神，是我自然。德以形為車，道以氣為馬，魂以精為根，魄以目為戶。形勞則德散，氣越則道叛。精銷魂損，目動魄微。

Literally, “Xuan” (玄) means marvellous or incredible and when this word is used in Daoist documents, it means mysterious. “Xuan Yuan” (玄元) means the mysterious origin and implies Dan Tians (丹田). Normally, it means the Upper Dan Tian and/or Real Lower Dan Tian (or Lower Dan Tian). Since the Lower Dan Tian generates and stores the Water Qi (Shui Qi, 水氣), sometimes, Xuan implies water. Therefore, in this document, “Xuan Yuan” means the “Real Lower Dan Tian.” If you are able to keep your mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian, then there is a marvellous Qi at the Dan Tian, which is the root of my life. If you are able to manifest this marvellous Qi into life form, then you will have a strong and healthy physical life and your shape will be complete. When you have a complete and healthy physical body, then the physical essence (hormones) can be produced and preserved efficiently. Once you have this abundant essence, then you can convert it into Qi and make the Qi circulation and storage abundant. When my Qi is abundant, you can lead it upward to nourish your spirit so as to raise up your vitality. Finally, if you can keep this spirit high, and staying in its residence, then you will be able to connect your spirit with the spirit of nature. This is the stage of the “Unification of Heaven and Human.” (Tian Ren He Yi, 天人合一)

De (德) is the natural manifestation of the Dao (道) in the shape of a human. When this De is in action, it is like a carriage in movement. Dao is the natural way. Qi is the crucial energy for the Dao to be manifested. Therefore, it is like a horse (Ma, 馬). Horse means the forerunner or the entire derivation of the Dao. The Dao (道) is “the way” where the horse runs.

When your essence is pure and abundant, the soul can be powerful, therefore, the essence is the root of the soul (Hun, 魂). The strength of Po (魄) (vigorous spirit) can be seen from the expression of the eyes and therefore, the eyes are the doors of the soul. The eyes manifest the deep and profound subconscious mind and thinking, which is connected to the soul.

In order to maintain a healthy life, you should not allow your physical body to be fatigued. Fatigue can be caused from too much working, lack of rest, or too many worries. When this happens, the manifestation of the Dao will be incomplete, and the De dispersed. In addition, you should not manifest your Qi to an excessive level. Too much Qi manifestation will exhaust the Qi stored in your body, and make the physical body too Yang. In this case, you are away from the Dao. Naturally, you will have a short life. Furthermore, you must learn how to protect or conserve your Original Essence. For male practitioners, the first step is to regulate your sexual activities. Too much sex will exhaust your essence. Then your physical body and spiritual body will be weakened.

Therefore, (you) should keep the shape (i.e. physical body) calm and safeguard (your) Qi. Protect (your) essence and treasure (your) spirit. Dao and De should be kept condensed and closed (i.e. maintained in the right path closely) and the Hun and Po should be safeguarded firmly. This is what is meant by: containing the Dao without speech, gaining the real Qi, muscles and skin are moist and glossy, obtaining the root of the Dao, hands and feet sweat, the essence (Qi) is abundant, (not hungry and thirsty as a) turtle or dragon's Embryonic Breathing, soft and slender existing for a long time. When used, it is not exhausted. Drink in the marvellous spring, ascend the spirit to the ultimate purity, returning the years back to the infant, and the Dao is kept natural. The ultimate Dao is not far but close to your own body. If (you) study and practice diligently and carefully, life can exist forever.

是以靜形愛氣，全精寶神。道德凝密，魂魄固守。所謂含道不言，得氣之真，肌膚潤澤，得道之根，手足流汗，精〔氣〕之充溢，〔不飢不渴，〕龜龍胎息，綿綿長存，用之不竭。飲于玄泉，登于太清，還年反嬰，道之自然。至道不遠，近在己身，用心精微，命乃永存。

This paragraph concludes that in order to have a healthy life, you must protect and safeguard four things in your body. These are your physical body (Xing, 形), Qi (氣), essence (Jing, 精), and spirit (Shen, 神). In order to protect them, you must

follow the rules of nature (Dao, 道) and the ways of its manifestation (De, 德). In this case, your spirit, soul, and vigorous energy can be firmed and protected. Once you have comprehended these theories, you simply have to practice it constantly. Just talking about it will not lead you to the goal of practice. Those who comprehend the Dao and also know how to practice it diligently will verify its truth. The verifications of this practice are: a healthy physical body, strong Qi circulation, without becoming fatigued easily; and breathing smoothly, softly, and slenderly. In this case, you have learned how to follow the Dao and the De.

Those who cultivate the Dao today, absorb the Qi either from the Five Elements (Wu Ya), Eight Directions (Ba Fang) (ether), Four Timings (Si Shi) (Four Seasons), Sun and Moon (Ri Yue), or stars, and mistakenly think (the Qi) can be taken from the crown and nose. Though all of these methods were recorded in ancient classics, however, it is rare to see one who has accomplished (the goal of this cultivation). This (goal) also cannot be reached by those who rely on food (and herbs). Therefore, all of those who cultivate the Qi cannot obtain its secret and waste the essence (i.e. effort) frequently. Even if (you) have obtained the entrance (i.e. the keys of training), you must also comprehend this secret and practice it diligently and delicately without slackness and laziness. (Those who wish to absorb the Qi through Embryonic Breathing, must absorb the internal Qi by seven gulps after midnight. Whenever a gulp is completed, then regulate the Qi for six or seven breaths, and then again gulp. When gulp, it is like the water passing (the throat) with the sound of Kan. This means the Qi is transportable. (Lead the Qi) straight downward to the Qihai (i.e. Lower Dan Tian) and condense it there until (the Qi) is full at the abdomen as if there were an embryo inside.)

今之修道者，或服五牙、八方、四時、日月、星辰等氣，並誤但思自頂鼻而入，雖古經所載，為之少見成遂，亦非食穀者所能行致爾。是以修氣者，皆不得其訣，虛精勤矣。既得其門，復悟其訣，要在精勤無退懈耳。〔凡胎息服氣，從夜半後服內氣七咽，每一咽既，調氣六、七息，即更咽之。每咽如水流過坎聲，是氣通也。直下氣海中凝結，腹中充滿，如含胎之狀。〕

“Wu Ya” (五牙) means the “alive Qi of the Five Elements” (Wu Xing, 五行): metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.²⁰ These five Qis correspond with the five Qis in five internal organs: lungs, liver, kidneys, heart, and spleen. Ba Fang (八方) means eight directions and implies the space or air around us. Si Shi (四時) means nature’s four seasons.

This paragraph explains that there are many Daoist practitioners who have learned to absorb Qi from the Five Elements, the ether, the four seasons, or the sun, moon, and stars through Baihui (百會) (crown) and nose (breathing). However, it is rare to see that the result of longevity practice is significant. The results are the same for those who attempt to accomplish longevity by diet and taking herbs. If you can-

not comprehend the secret, and practice diligently, then you are wasting your time and effort.

This paragraph follows with a practice method in parentheses. It says, in order to reach the goal of maintaining health and extending life, you must learn two things: one is Embryonic Breathing and the other is the correct way of generating saliva and swallowing it. According to medical Qigong, swallowing the saliva (Yan, 咽) is considered as one of the crucial keys of maintaining health. It is believed that the saliva is able to balance the body's Yang and bring the fire Qi down. Then we can be calm and peaceful both mentally and physically. A well-known Chinese medical Qigong, The Eight Pieces of Brocade (Ba Duan Jin, 八段錦) teaches how to use the method of circling the tongue in the mouth to produce saliva and then swallowing it. When you swallow it, make a sound "En" (嗯) and at the same time use the mind to lead the Qi downward to the Lower Dan Tian (or Real Lower Dan Tian). In this article, it says that you should do this after midnight and repeat seven times. Between each swallowing, you should maintain your Embryonic Breathing for at least six or seven respirations. If you are interested in the medical Qigong, The Eight Pieces of Brocade, please refer to the book: *Eight Simple Qigong Exercises for Health*, published by YMAA.

Embryo is formed from the (concealed) Qi and the Qi is initiated from the embryo; consequently, the embryo is completed due to (the supply of) Qi. Once the embryo has been formed and completed, millions of illnesses will automatically be repelled and the spirit will therefore reside (at its residence). Keep the three (i.e. Essence, Qi, and Shen) united as one and maintain them at the center (i.e. Upper Dan Tian), the corpse worms (Shi Chong, causes of death) will be falling and this will gradually lead (you) to immortality. Today's learners, either learning from ancient methods or instructed by those who do not know the Dao, all close the mouth and seal the nose (i.e. hold the breath) and emphasize holding the breath long. They do not know that this will cause the obstruction and stagnation (of the Qi) in the five internal organs, thus harming the righteous Qi (Zheng Qi). This is not the way of natural breathing. This will make the shape (i.e. physical body) and spirit become fatigued constantly, therefore useless. (When absorbing the Qi (i.e. training or cultivating the Qi), the joints must be transportable (i.e. loose and moveable), stomach ocean (i.e. stomach area) must be opened (i.e. loose), then receiving the original air essence (i.e. inhaling) and firming the Qi (at the Qi center). When the receiving has been completed, then return the joints into the closed condition while gradually allowing the external Qi (i.e. air) to exit through the nose. In this case, the internal and external will not be separated automatically. The Qi concealed in the embryo will be retained. However, (you) should bend (your) fingers and count the number of breathings in (your) mind, from ten to one hundred, from one to two, to three hundred. This is called "Little Smoothness" (Xiao Tong). This will result in the sharpness of the ears (i.e. listening) and eyes (i.e. seeing), hundred illnesses can be healed.)

凡胎從氣中結，氣從胎中生，胎因氣中成。結成即萬病自遭，神靈居之。三一守中，尸蟲亡墜，即漸通仙靈矣。今之學者，或傳古方，或受非道，皆閉口收縮鼻，貴其氣長，而不知五臟壅閉，畜損正氣，殊非自然之息，此繁勞形神，無所益也。〔凡服氣之時，即須關節通，胃海開，納元氣固，納畢，即關節還閉，徐徐鼻出納外氣，自然內外不離，胎中氣亦不出。但潛屈指數息，從十至百數，從一百至二百、三百，此為小通，即耳目聰明，百病皆愈。〕

“Shi Chong” (尸蟲) means “corpse worms” and implies “three emotional worms” which are able to agitate your emotions and lead you to the path of death. These three worms are: 1. Desires at the Upper Dan Tian; 2. Seven emotional attachments at the Middle Dan Tian; and 3. Desires for alcohol and sex. As long as you have these three worms, your Righteous Qi (Zheng Qi, 正氣) will be affected and harmed. This will lead you to sickness and finally, death. “Xiao Tong” (小通) means “little smoothness” and means the smooth circulation of the Qi.

In order to achieve longevity, you must first form a “Holy Embryo” (Sheng Tai, 聖胎) in your Real Lower Dan Tian through correct Embryonic Breathing. Once this Holy Embryo is formed, then you can be healthy and live long.

However, in order to reach enlightenment, you must also learn how to lead Qi upward to the Upper Dan Tian (Spiritual Residence) so the Three Origins (San Yuan, 三元), essence, Qi, and spirit can be united there.

The correct way of Embryonic Breathing is to first keep your mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian, and also to know the correct way of breathing. If you simply hold the breath without knowing the methods, you can only cause more problems internally. Then, in the parentheses of the original text, the method for correct breathing is explained. First, you inhale deeply and lead the Qi to the Real Lower Dan Tian while relaxing all the joints of your entire body and stomach area. Then, immediately restrain the Qi at the joints while allowing the air to be released slowly and gradually. In this case, the Qi generated can be maintained internally. You should begin your practice with ten respirations first and then gradually increase the number without any uncomfortable and tightened feeling. If you are able to do it for a few hundred times, then you have accomplished the small achievement.

The Dao (i.e. Daoist documents) says: “If (you) restrain and stuff the nose and mouth in the practice of the Embryonic Breathing, then this theory is unreasonable. Since the mouth and the nose are not transportable, then (the Qi) will be stagnant at the lungs and damage them. How can it be beneficial?” Those who absorb (i.e. train) the internal Qi, though the effort is very little, the result can be seen quickly. The accomplishment of this all depends on the peaceful spirit and calm mind, no vexation and no disturbance. This means the Qi paths are opened

for smooth circulation. There is an original internal harmony which stays the whole day without dispersion. The flesh and skin are moist and shining, the hands and feet sweat (healthily). This is the secret of the Dao for longevity. (After midnight, swallow seven times and then immediately hold the Qi. Keep this internal Qi (internally) and do not release it, while using the nose and mouth to inhale and exhale external Qi (i.e. air) gradually and slowly without any mixture with the internal Qi. Before dawn swallow, seven times and after dawn again swallow seven times. Total there are twenty-one swallows, then stop. Those whose body is large, then it should not be limited by this number. Whenever there is an empty stomach, immediately swallow internal Qi. When the internal Qi is full, there is no hunger.) At the beginning, it will have a little difficulty. After practicing for a long time, it becomes marvellous. The hairs are black, the teeth are strong, the eyes are sharp and shining, tendons and bones are all solid (i.e. firmed), brave with embryonic spirit, the face is lustrous, walking light, the mind without desires, the spirit not greedy (i.e. longing for glory), profound father (i.e. an understanding father) with a newborn baby, and there is no boundary which cannot be reached. Keep the Hun (i.e. soul) and Po (i.e. vitality) firmly at their origins, the three (i.e. Essence, Qi, and Shen) will automatically and truly be unified into one. Forever conserve Dao, keep the spirit peaceful and calm, the spirit will naturally and automatically be connected to the supernatural divine. This is called "Yong Bao" (i.e. a lasting treasure) in Dao and is the accomplishment of Embryonic Breathing (through cultivating) Original Qi. This is also the final marvelousness of Zhen Ren's (i.e. truthful persons who have reached the Dao) Embryonic Breathing.

道曰：“若抑塞鼻口，擬習胎息，殊無此理。口鼻氣既不通，則畜損肺臟，有何益哉！”餌內氣者，用力雖微，而速見功成。全在安神靜慮，不煩不擾。即氣道疏暢，關節開通，內含元和，終日不散。肌膚潤澤，手足流汗，長生之道，訣在此矣。〔從夜半后服七咽，即閉氣，但內氣不出，鼻口常徐徐出納外氣，內氣都不相雜，至五更又服七咽，平旦又服七咽，都在二十一咽止。若體糧者，即不限此數，肚空即咽內氣。〕內氣滿，無饑渴。初習即小難，久久甚妙。髮黑齒堅，眼瞳英明，筋骨全實，壯勇胎神，面貌光澤，行步舉輕，心自無欲，神不貪榮，玄父赤子，固際無傾。魂魄守元，三一自真，永寶其道，靜安其神，神自通靈，道曰永寶，胎息元氣克成。自為真人胎息之妙窮于此也。

This last paragraph emphasizes that when you practice Embryonic Breathing, you should not hold your breath, which causes internal stagnation of the Qi circulation. The key to Embryonic Breathing is keeping the breathing deep and long while the body is relaxed and the mind is calm. Scientifically, in order to keep the breathing long, you must keep the oxygen consumption to its minimum. For this, you must have a calm meditative mind, centered at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Qi residence) combined with an extremely relaxed physical body.

In the document, the practice method is inserted in parentheses. It says, right

after midnight, you need to swallow saliva seven times. Naturally, as explained earlier, you must also repeat Embryonic Breathing six or seven times, inhaling deeply into relaxed joints (relaxed physical body), and with a calm mind. Then, slowly and gradually release the air without feeling uncomfortable. You should repeat the same practice at 3:00—5:00 A.M. and also at dawn, making a total of twenty-one swallowings. However, you should not be limited to this number. The more you practice, the more benefit you will receive. “Yong Bao” (永寶) means the treasure that you are able to keep forever. “Zhen Ren” (真人) means “truthful person,” referring to those who have achieved the Dao.

13. A Brief Classic about Embryonic Breathing (Wang, Wen-Lu's Embryonic Breathing Method)²

《胎息經疏略》
(王文祿胎息法)

In the Tai Xu (i.e. Great Emptiness or Universe), the spirit is harmonious and prosperous. There is a Qi (i.e. energy) through which the spirit is able to exist. Consequently, (the spirit) is conceived and the embryo is formed. Once the embryo is formed, it begins to breathe. The beginning of an embryo is just like a flower and the navel is like the footstalk, where the stem (i.e. the umbilical cord) connects to the embryo. When the mother exhales, (the embryo) also exhales and when the mother inhales, (the embryo) also inhales. This respiration is called “Xi” (i.e. breathing). When it (i.e. breathing) has reached its extreme calmness, the pure Yang will grow daily. When the embryo is matured, the shape is completed and (the baby) is born. This is the first original shape (i.e. physical body) to show the world. (This is) the breathing training which (you) should focus on so as to reach its softest as a baby.

太虛氤氳，一氣孔神，伏始結胎，胎結乃息。胎初入花，
臍如蒂，蒂帶連胞，母呼亦呼，母吸亦吸，呼吸為息，
靜極純陽日長，彌月形全誕生，此原始以示人，欲專氣
致柔如嬰兒也。

“Tai Xu” (太虛) means “Grand Emptiness” and implies the great nature of the universe. It is believed that there are many forms of Qi (energies) filling up this universe. Through these energies, the spirit is able to exist and grow. From the existence of the spirit and the Qi, the embryos of various life forms can be conceived and formed. Once the embryo is formed as an independent life, it can breathe by itself. This embryonic respiration is called “Xi” (息). At the beginning of this respiration, the embryo is connected with the mother through the umbilical cord and breathes in unison with her. During this growing stage, the body is in an extremely calm and relaxed state. The breathing is soft and slender, and the mind is in a neutral and extremely peaceful state, without emotional disturbances. From this extremely calm (Yin) state, the Yang physical body begins to grow. When the manifestation of Yin

has been matured, the baby is completed and then born. This tells us clearly that in order to return to the beginning of our life, we must return our breathing to our baby stage. When this happens, we can expect to have a long peaceful life.

14. Important Fundamental Secrets of Embryonic Breathing³

《胎息根旨要訣》

All of the writings written by those who cultivated Embryonic Breathing in ancient times did not reach the marvellous key door (of the training). According to the explanation in words, all of them either have lost or gained (only) in some special areas. Some may say: "If there is no breathing, then there is an embryo. When the breathing is restrained without panting, then it is breathing." All of them have their own individual sayings and have not gained the real content of the subject, thus have misled those who learn later. It makes (you) doubt whether these writings are still beneficial and useful. However, those who cultivated the life have already (wasted the time and) reached the end of their lives. It is really sad! That (i.e. the secret) which I have obtained is actually very simple and easy. Those who wish to learn in the future should keep it precious. To receive the Qi (i.e. cultivate the Qi) is the marvellous application of the Embryonic Breathing. This must be done through analyzing the internal and external Qi, and also the Qi of the internal organs and bowels. This is all related (to the Qi) generated in the body, therefore, they must be understood.

古修胎息者，尋其所著，皆未達于玄門，據其文字所陳，悉皆互有得失。或云：‘無氣是胎，閉氣不喘是息。’各執一門，未有所趣，迷誤后學，疑或益滋，而修生之人，性命已殆，足可悲哉！余今所得，實為簡易，將來學人，保而深惜。夫云服氣，即胎息之妙用也。切在分析內、外氣，及在臟腑之氣，統一身之所生，不可得而知也。

This first paragraph mentions the importance of obtaining the true and correct way of cultivating the Qi through Embryonic Breathing. Even though there are many documents in existence today, most of them cover only one or two of the possible aspects of the training. Therefore, they are not complete. In order to obtain the real secret of the training, you must have an open mind which allows you to see the different aspects of the same thing. You should not be stubborn in keeping only one belief. Only after you have collected and studied all of the existing documents, through logical pondering and practice, will you understand the correct way of practice.

For example, most documents do not discuss the relationship between Embryonic Breathing and the internal organs. In fact, the external Qi (Wai Qi, 外氣) (Guardian Qi, Wei Qi, 衛氣) and internal Qi (Nei Qi, 內氣) (Managing Qi, Ying Qi, 營氣) are all manifestations of the Qi from the Real Lower Dan Tian. In order

to have a strong Guardian Qi for your immune system and Managing Qi for the healthy functioning of the organs, you must first have an abundant Qi stored in the Real Lower Dan Tian. The key to reaching this goal is through correct Embryonic Breathing and also knowing the way of making the Qi manifest more efficiently, both internally and externally.

The External Qi (Wai Qi, 外氣) here does not mean “air” as explained earlier but the “Guardian Qi” on the skin and its surface. The Internal Qi (Nei Qi, 內氣) also does not mean the Qi (bioelectricity) circulating in the body specifically. It means the Managing Qi of the internal organs.

This Qi must be produced daily. The coarse Qi manifested at the surface for guarding (i.e. protection, Guardian Qi) is the Qi generated from (the breathing of) panting with sounds. If the Qi is originally coarse, then the life is short. If the Qi is slender, then the life is long. Those Qis concealed in the internal organs and bowels are the Qis of function (i.e. Managing Qi). These two Qis do not originate from cultivation and receiving. The Embryonic Breathing aims for the two Yin and Yang Qis from the heaven and the earth. It is the Qi that is used to congeal the essence (Jing) at the beginning (i.e. Original Qi). When this Qi is congealed, the shape (i.e. physical body) is formed. Once the shape is established, then this essence Qi first congeals and produces two eyes. These two eyes are the essence Qi of the father. It is called the “essence of pure Yang,” thus millions objects can be seen and inspected. In addition, from receiving mother’s Yin Qi, Xuan Pin (i.e. heaven and earth of the body) is constructed and this is the mouth and the nose. Therefore, it is known that the shape is the origin of Qi’s receiving while the Qi is the root of the shape. In this case, these two Qis are the root and stalk of the shape. Once these root and stalk have been established, then (the embryo) is able to breathe softly by following the mother’s (breathing). After ten moons (i.e. ten months), the body of the baby is completed. This is how those cultivators use it as a model. It is said that (this) is for returning to the root. This is why the Embryonic Breathing is so important.

此氣須日日生之。凡粗氣在榮衛之中，為喘鳴之氣。氣本粗者命促，氣本細者命長。眾氣在臟腑之內，為運動之氣。此兩者並非修服之氣。其胎息者，是天地陰陽二氣，初結精之氣，氣結而為形，形既成立，則精氣先凝為雙瞳子。雙瞳子者，即父之精氣，號為純陽之精，故能鑒視萬物。又受母之陰氣，而成玄牝者，即口鼻也。是知形為受氣之本，氣為成形之根，則此二氣為形之根蒂也。根蒂既成，則能隨母呼吸綿綿，十月胎體成而生，故修養者效之。夫云復其根本，此胎息之要也。

We know that the body’s metabolism is completed through biochemical reaction in the body. During this reaction process, oxygen is one of the most essential ingredients for the new cells’ construction and also for the production of energy. The quantity of oxygen is important and directly influences the production of Qi. For

example, when you push a car or lift up a heavy object, before you tighten your muscles, you will inhale deeply first and then manifest the power. If the inhalation is shallow, the power manifested will be weak.

This translation distinguishes the Managing Qi (Ying Qi, 營氣) from the Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣). Managing Qi is used to maintain the organ functions and also to regulate the production of Qi through biochemical reaction. Here, it is pointed out that these two Qis are obtained by breathing through the nose. It is different from the Qi produced through Embryonic Breathing. The Qi produced from nose breathing is for maintaining life and not for forming new life. New life is formed through Embryonic Breathing, which allows you to convert the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) into Qi. This Qi can then be used to conceive the Spiritual Embryo. In order to reach this goal, breathing through the nose must be slow, soft, quiet, and slender. When this happens, the Qi produced from the respiration will only be used to maintain physical activity instead of making it excited. In this case, through the calm meditative mind and abdominal exercises, we will be able to convert the Original Essence into Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) and then lead it inward to store it at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). In this case, physical activity ceases, and through the mind's concentration in the Wuji state (無極), we will be able to store the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian. This is the key to Embryonic Breathing.

Ancient people all said: "Qihai is the root and origin of the Qi." This saying is not true. This is because they did not know how (the Qi) ceases (i.e. returns to its origin), and therefore it is useless if repeated (i.e. re-initiate the Qi circulation). Ancient immortals all passed down the teaching orally and did not write it down in words. This is because they only wanted to share (the secret) with those who had the same aspiration. What is called the "root" is opposite to the navel on the number 19 of the vertebrae. This is the space between two spine muscles and under the bladder (external kidneys) which is called "Ming Di" (i.e. Life Stalk), also called "Mingmen" (i.e. Life Door), "Ming Gen" (i.e. Life Root), or "Jing Shi" (i.e. Semen Residence). It is the place where the male conceals the sperm, and female preserves vaginal secretion. This is the root of producing the Qi for longevity. This is the root which (we should) recover today and cultivate (i.e. increase) its production. This is just like mother and son in shape (i.e. apparent), why do (we) keep it. Qi is considered as mother while the spirit is considered as son, and this Qi is the origin of the essence. Qi does not have shape, is not a substance, it follows the essence up and down. First it establishes the shape, and due to the existence of the shape, the Qi is able to reside. (The spirit) relies on the mother (i.e. Qi) and does not abandon the mother, thus lives with mother. Thus the spirit and the Qi can reside in the shape firmly, therefore longevity can be expected. Therefore, all of those who cultivate their lives always keep the spirit and the Qi unified (i.e. in harmony with each other), the son and the mother mutually stay with each other. In this case, there is no breathing from the mouth and the nose naturally. Zhuang Zhou (i.e. Zhuang Zi) said: "Those truthful persons (i.e. those who have obtained the Dao) breathe with soles." This means the

breathing is very deep. Lao Zi in his classic said: "Keep the root deep, and firm the stalk, means to repeat life." This means the most fundamental crucial key is maintaining the Qi in Mingmen (i.e. Life Door). Therefore, in the future, those gentlemen should not let out (the semen) easily.

古皆云：‘氣海者，為氣之根本。’此說非也。為不知其所止，是以復之無益。古仙皆口口相授，非著于文字之中，蓋欲胎其同志。所謂根本者，正對臍第十九椎，兩脊相夾脊中空處，膀胱下近脊是也，名曰命蒂，亦曰命門，亦曰命根，亦曰精室，男子以藏精，女子以月水，此則長生氣之根本也。今之所復其根本，修其所生，斯則形中母子，何不守之。夫氣為母而神為子，氣則精液也。氣無形質，隨精液以上下，但先立形，則因形而住氣，為其母而不舍母，則依母而住，神氣住形中，故能住世長生久視。故修生之人，常令神與氣合，子母相守，自然玄牝無出入息也。莊周云：真人息以踵。言其息深深也。老子經云：深根固蒂，是為復命。此乃命門元氣根本之旨也。將來君子，勿得輕泄耳。

The author of this article believed that Qihai (Co-6) (氣海) is not really the main concern in protecting the Qi. It is true that Qihai is the place where the Original Qi is produced from the conversion of the Original Essence. However, the most important of all is to keep it without losing it. Therefore, he specified that the most important place you should protect and cultivate is the place under the bladder (external kidneys, which means testicles or ovaries) where the semen is produced. He called this place “Ming Di” (命蒂) (Life Stalk), “Mingmen” (命門) (Life Door), “Ming Gen” (命根) (Life Root), or “Jing Shi” (精室) (Semen Residence). The reason for this is if this place is not firmed, then even if you have built up an abundance of Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, eventually you will lose it. For example, sexual activities for a male practitioner will make him lose this semen, the root of life. Therefore, the cultivation is useless. Here, I would like to point out that there is a place between L2 and L3 of the vertebrae also called “Mingmen” (Gv-4) (命門) by Chinese medicine. Therefore, you should not be confused by this.

In this document, the author also pointed out that in order to establish a Spiritual Embryo, you must know how to unify your spirit and Qi. Spirit and Qi are just like son and mother which cannot be separated. This training is called “Shen Qi Xiang He” (神氣相合) and means the unification of the spirit and Qi.

In summary, in order to conceive a Spiritual Embryo through Embryonic Breathing, you must know how to produce Qi at the Qihai (Qi furnace), lead it inward to store it at the Real Lower Dan Tian, protect it from loss, and unify the spirit and Qi.

15. Marvellous Applications of Inner Truth^{3,7}

《內真妙用訣》

Frank Discussion of the Correct Theory of Becoming Heavenly Immortal, Commented by Wu, Shou-Yang, Ming Dynasty; Frank Discussion of Embryonic Breathing, #9: Chong Xu Zi said: 'Ancient Embryonic Breathing document said: 'Embryo is conceived from the concealed Qi and Qi is initiated from the breathing of embryo.' These sayings are the important methods of becoming deities and immortals in the past and future. Again, I would like to comment on it in detail and discuss it frankly.

《天仙正理直論·明伍守陽撰注·胎息直論第九》：沖虛子曰：“古胎息云：‘胎從伏氣中結，氣從有胎中息。’斯言為過去未來諸神仙天仙之要法也。予愿再詳譯而直論之。”

Wu, Shou-Yang (伍守陽) (1552-1640 A.D.) was a Daoist Qigong practitioner and scholar during the Chinese Ming Dynasty (明朝). Chong Xu Zi (沖虛子), or Wu, Chong Zi (伍沖子) are the Daoist names of Wu, Shou-Yang. In the first paragraph, he explains the purpose of this document.

When a human has just been conceived, the two Qis (i.e. Yin Qi and Yang Qi) are combined as one. This is only the Qi of the emptiness (i.e. no shape). There is neither embryo nor breathing. From mother's breathing, the embryo grows into a fetus. The fetus grows due to the inner breathing (i.e. Xi). When the fetus has formed its structure, it is marvellous that it can be breathing by following (its) mother's breathing. Therefore, it will not feel suffocating and stuffy in its breathing whole day. At this time, it does not breathe through the mouth and nose. There is only a connection with the mother through the umbilical cord. Consequently, he can be (alive) even though there is no breathing. This is the scenery of the real Embryonic Breathing. Once the baby has separated (from the mother), this (inner breathing) is broken. There is no more umbilical cord connection between the mother and the baby. Therefore, there is no choice but relying on self, breathing through mouth and nose. Though this serves the same purpose (in absorbing the air) as when he was still a fetus, the difference is that the knack of (receiving) is different. If (we) wish to reverse the situation and return ourselves to youth, how can we not change our current breathing into the breathing as we were as a fetus?

夫人身初時，只二氣合一，為虛空中之氣而已。無胎也，亦無息也。因母呼吸而長為胎，因胎而長為息，及至胎全，妙在隨母呼吸而為呼吸，所以終日呼吸而不逼悶。此緣不由口鼻呼吸，只臍相通，故能似無氣息一般，此正真胎息景也。離胎而息即斷，無母臍與子臍相通，不得不向自身口鼻起呼吸，即與胎中呼吸同，而暫異其竅耳。逆修返還之理，安得不以我今呼吸之息，而返還為胎中息耶？

It is believed that an embryo is formed due to the interaction of the father's and mother's Qi. The father's Qi is considered to be Yang while the mother's is considered Yin. Since these two Qis are only inner energy, they are empty without any physical shape. At this time, there is no embryo formed yet, and naturally there is no Embryonic Breathing. When these two Qis congeal and form into an embryo, then the embryo will do its own breathing. Even though the embryo absorbs oxygen and nutrients through the umbilical cord from the mother, the mother does not have the capability to push the oxygen and nutrition into the embryo. The mother is simply a supplier. The embryo has to absorb the oxygen and nutrition through the up and down movements of his abdomen. These up and down movements pump and suck in the supplies from the mother's body. Therefore, the first step in learning Embryonic Breathing is Abdominal Breathing. The Abdominal Breathing is also called "Back to Childhood Breathing" (Fan Tong Hu Xi, 返童呼吸). Theoretically, through these up and down abdominal movements, you will be able to convert the food essence, or fat, stored at the abdominal area into Qi through biochemical reactions.

In addition, to reach the goal of Embryonic Breathing, you must also know how to minimize the consumption of oxygen which is taken in from the nose or mouth. In order to do so, your physical body must be extremely relaxed and your mind extremely calm and neutral. When this happens, you will be able to keep your mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian and thus lead Qi there for storage. These are the crucial keys to Embryonic Breathing.

Whenever (you) return (your) breathing (to the Embryonic Breathing) by using the nose and mouth, (you) are returning (yourself) to the place where the Embryonic Breathing originally was. It is as if (you) have returned to the time of Embryonic Breathing. Practice gradually until reaching the stage that Embryonic Breathing is "as if there and as if not there." What does the "as if there and as if not there" mean? It means (as if) the breathing has reached the end of the breathing. It is just like before birth returning to the stage of no breathing and no embryo, or Wuji state. This is the path which has neither life nor death. It can be done so is not because suddenly there is nothing (for you) to rely on or to coordinate with so (you) are able to return the breathing to its center for Embryonic Breathing. This is what is called "single Yin will not be completed." This is also one of the reasons. It must be done when the Pre-Heaven Qi (i.e. Original

Qi has just started to generate, there is also a unique feeling, (i.e. existence) of the Original Spirit. In addition to the coordination of the breathing, these three treasures are gathered. The great herb (i.e. Qi) can be refined and completed (i.e. gathered). This great herb can then be led in the correct timing to the Huang Ting, the place where the embryo is formed.

凡返還呼吸時，以口鼻呼吸之氣，而復歸于胎息之所，如處胎息之時，漸漸煉至胎息亦真無。真無者，滅息盡之義也。方是未生時，而返還于未有息、未有胎已（以）前之境界，不落生死之途者矣。所以得如此者，亦非驀然無所憑依配合，便以呼吸歸中而可胎息者。所謂孤陰不成者，此亦其一也。必要有先天氣機發動之時，又有元靈獨覺，及呼吸相依，三寶會合，已先煉成大藥者，而轉歸黃庭結胎之所，于此之時。

When you start the practice Embryonic Breathing, you are using the nose and mouth for your respiration while keeping your spirit at the Upper Dan Tian (Yin polarity center) and mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian for the Qi's storage (Yang polarity center). Once you have reached an extremely calm and relaxed state, the mind or the spirit will not be led away from its center and the Qi's consumption will reach its minimum level. When this happens, the breathing will slow down and reach the stage where it seems as if it is there and as if it is not there. Then, you can unify and harmonize the spirit and the Qi (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合), and return to the Wuji state of life before the embryo was formed. This is the stage of nothingness and insubstantiality, therefore, there is no meaning to life or death.

In order to reach this stage, you cannot just rely on the breathing and return the Qi to its residence. Without the unification of the spirit, this single pole will not accomplish anything. In order to reach this goal, you must have three things: to cultivate the Original Qi, (Yuan Qi, 元氣) or otherwise called Pre-Heaven Qi, and store it at the Real Lower Dan Tian; to have a high level of cultivation of your Original Spirit (Yuan Shen, 元神); and finally, correctly harmonize your breathing. Only then will the condensed Qi, or great herb, be formed. When this Qi is led to Huang Ting (黃庭), then the Spiritual Embryo can be formed. Huang Ting is the space behind the navel. *Yellow Yard Classic* (黃庭經) said: "Yellow, is the earth color and the earth (in Five Elements) represents the center. Yard is the empty space in front of the house. It is named Huang Ting and means the empty space in the center." It also said: "The empty space behind the navel is Huang Ting."²¹ In fact, Huang Ting is the inner space between abdomen and diaphragm.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are four stages of cultivation for spiritual enlightenment in Daoist society:

- A. Refining the Original Essence and Converting it into Qi (Lian Jing Hua Qi, 練精化氣)—One Hundred days of Building the Foundation (Bai Ri Zhu Ji, 百日築基)

- B. Purifying Qi and Converting it into Spirit (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 練氣化神)—
Ten Months of Pregnancy (Shi Yue Huai Tai, 十月懷胎)
- C. Refining Spirit and Returning it to Nothingness (Lian Shen Fan Xu,
練神返虛)—Three Years of Nursing (San Nian Bu Ru, 三年哺乳)
- D. Crushing the Nothingness (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空)—Nine Years of
Facing the Wall (Jiu Nian Mian Bi, 九年面壁)

From this, you can see that this paragraph is talking about the first stage of cultivation.

Thereafter, use the Embryonic Breathing to nourish, (i.e. conceive) the spiritual embryo. The spirit and Qi (i.e. son and mother), when united at the (Huang Ting) center, with the assistance (i.e. coordination) of Embryonic Breathing, then it is the beginning of conceiving the embryo. This is just what was stated in the document, Entering the Herbal Mirror, that "the forming of the (spiritual) embryo at the beginning depends on (the cultivation) of the original (physical) life (i.e. respiration). Though it seems there is a fine slender breathing existing, as if at the navel and as if not at the navel but in the emptiness, (i.e. Huang Ting)." It's just like the (Buddhist) document, Classic of Releasing Human Purgatory said: "The very original beginning, (it is) as if there is a suspended precious pearl apart from the ground for 50 feet; as if it has appeared right in front of the Buddha, as if there is a precious pagoda emerged from the ground, as if it exists in the empty insubstantiality." All of these are (the verification) of the result. All of these are accomplished by applying and transporting the Real Breathing (i.e. Embryonic Breathing) in the cultivation and gradually forming the embryo until it is matured. Though it seems suddenly there is no breathing from the mouth and nose, there is some respiration. It is just like when the embryo (is in the womb). It seems there is the respiration at the beginning and eventually it ends with nothingness. This is what the real Embryonic Breathing is. It is from this real Embryonic Breathing that the Yang Spirit (Yang Shen) can be established.

而后以胎息養胎神，得神氣乘胎息之氣，在中一定，即是結胎之始，正《入藥鏡》所謂初結胎看本命而得者。雖似有微微呼吸，若在臍輪而若不在臍輪在虛空。正《度人經》所謂元始懸一粒寶珠，去地五丈，如世尊之前，地湧之寶塔，在虛空中等語，皆是也。皆用運旋真息，以漸至成胎，頓然絕離口鼻，不存呼吸，滅卻有作，恰然處胎相似，而胎中之息，始雖似有而終絕無，即是真胎息，所以成陽神者。

Once you are able to unify and harmonize your Shen and Qi at the Huang Ting, then you will gradually form the Spiritual Embryo. The forming and growth of this embryo must rely on Embryonic Breathing at the Huang Ting area. When the embryo begins to form, it is very small like a precious pearl suspended in empty

space. Right in front of it is the future of Buddhahood. This must be done continuously through Real Breathing, (Zhen Xi, 真息) (Embryonic Breathing) until the embryo has matured. This is the second stage of spiritual cultivation, i.e. Purifying Qi and Converting it into Spirit (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 練氣化神) (Ten Months of Pregnancy) (Shi Yue Huai Tai, 十月懷胎)

“Zhang” (丈) is a Chinese unit of length which is a little bit longer than 10 feet (3 meters). “Shi Zun” (世尊) is a respectful name for Buddha (佛) (Sakyamuni). A human’s central energy body is constructed of Two Polarities connected by the Thrusting Vessel, (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (spinal cord). The Yin pole at the Upper Dan Tian where the spirit resides, controls the quality of the Qi manifestation, while the Real Lower Dan Tian, or second brain, is considered as the Yang pole which stores the Qi. When the Yin spirit unites with the Qi at the Huang Ting, a new Yang spirit (Yang Shen, 陽神) will emerge and thus form a new life.

Practice this for a long time without breaking, very soft and dense, not even a second (that you are) not in the scene of no breathing as in the embryo. Train until it has reached the verification of the great firmness of the Yang Spirit (Yang Shen), (where) there is absolutely no movement or stillness, no initiation or termination (of the mind). This is the roundness of the embryo. Then, (you) will still aim to return to the beginning of the embryo’s formation in (your) mother’s womb, when the sole Qi (i.e. the interaction of Yang and Yin Qi) has not formed you (i.e. embryo) yet. This is the time when there is no discrimination of essence, Qi, and spirit yet. It is just what the (Buddhist document), Classic of Releasing Human Purgatory called: “the final stage of disembodiment and observing the four directions to accomplish (immortality).” This is the final disembodiment or returning the spirit through Embryonic Breathing. This is (also) the final stage of ten months (of carrying the Spiritual Embryo) so as to verify the immortality.

如是而久久無間斷，綿綿密密，無時無刻而不是在胎中無息之景，直証陽神大定，絕無動靜起滅，即是胎圓，乃返還到母胎初結，一氣未成我，而未分精、氣與神之時，正《入藥鏡》所謂終脫胎看四正而得者。胎息還神，固曰畢矣，畢其十月中關之事，神仙之証也。

After you have practiced for a long time, the embryo matures and becomes a spiritual baby. This is the completeness of the second stage of cultivation, Ten Months of Pregnancy (Shi Yue Huai Tai, 十月懷胎)

Then in the next stage, you lead the baby spirit upward to the Upper Dan Tian for the birth of the spiritual baby. To enable the birth of the spiritual baby, you must have reached the Wuji state, which is even before the existence of the essence, Qi, and spirit. This will lead you to the third stage of spiritual cultivation, Refining Spirit and Returning it to Nothingness (Lian Shen Fan Xu, 練神返虛)—Three Years of Nursing (San Nian Bu Ru, 三年哺乳). The birth of the Spiritual Embryo means The Third Eye’s opening so the new spirit is able to exit and enter from this eye or gate.

When this stage has been reached, it means you are able to disembody and become a human immortal (Tuo Tai Huang Gu, 脫胎換骨). This spirit has its own life and is able to travel anywhere in heaven and earth (i.e. nature). Nature, or the universe, (i.e. heaven and earth) is called “Si Zheng” (四正) which means four directions, east, west, south, and north.

Furthermore, there is further (training) which is to refine the spirit and return it to the empty insubstantiality at the Upper Dan Tian so as to verify the cultivation of divine immortality (Tian Xian). Therefore, (you) must move the (embryonic) spirit upward to the Upper Dan Tian and exit through the Heaven Gate (Tian Men), (i.e. Third Eye) through the manifestation of the Yang Spirit (Yang Shen). (This spirit) is able to exit hastily and enter suddenly. Why can it be done so? When it (i.e. the embryo) was still under the ten month (pregnancy), the spirit may have exited (the Heaven Gate). However, this is the exit which should not be. This is because the exit (of the spirit) was caused due to the six roots of desires (Liu Gen) which were attracted by the devil. Once it has exited, the spirit will be seized and enters the devil territory. (When this happens), the respiration will be again carried out through the mouth and nose. (When this happens, you) should immediately bring (your mind) in, and follow the (embryonic) breathing again and return the embryo to its residence. When the Spiritual Embryo is matured, then it should exit. Whenever there is a thought of exiting, the Yang Spirit will exit from Heaven Gate. However, if it is parted (from the mother body) too long, it can be lost. In this case, immediately return to the (Upper Dan Tian) and again enter the insubstantial steadiness, (i.e. emptiness). This is because when the spirit is born (i.e. exits the Heaven Gate), it is just like a newborn human baby, which needs three years of nursing.

猶有向上田煉神還虛，而証天仙者，在所必當知。故遷神于上丹田而出天門，以陽神之顯見者，倏出而倏入，何也？當前之十月之內，而或有出者，是不宜出之出也，由六根之為魔而妄出。妄出則神走而著魔境，而息亦走著于口鼻，必急入則依于息而歸胎。此時之出，是當出而出也。故起一出念，而出陽神于天門，若出之久，恐神迷失而錯念，故即入丹田，而依于虛無之定。所以神既出胎，喻同人生之幼小，須三年哺乳者，以定為哺乳也。

There are two definitions of immortality. One is called “Ren Xian” (人仙) which means “Human Immortality.” If you have reached the stage of human immortality, your physical life will continue for a long time. That means you have completed the second stage of establishing a Spiritual Embryo at the Huang Ting. However, in order to have spiritual immortality and avoid reincarnation of human life, you must establish an independent spiritual life. That means the spiritual baby is able to exit through the Heaven Gate (Tian Men, 天門) or Heaven Eye (Tian Yan, 天眼) (Third Eye). Heaven Gate means the forehead area where the Heaven Eye (Third Eye) is

located. Often, either one of them can be used to represent The Third Eye on the central lower part of the forehead. If you are able to grow an independent spiritual life, then your spirit will last forever, and you achieve eternal spiritual life. This is the third stage of cultivation, Refining Spirit and Returning it to Nothingness (Lian Shen Fan Xu, 練神返虛)—Three Years of Nursing (San Nian Bu Ru, 三年哺乳). This is the beginning stage of reaching “Heaven Immortality” (Tian Xian, 天仙) which means the eternity of spirit. Six Roots (Liu Gen, 六根) means the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and Yi (mind), the six roots which can generate emotions and desires.

It is also said that surely it will need nine years and three years (of cultivation) is talking about at the beginning of the (spiritual) exiting, (you) should occasionally enter (the body) for (spiritual) steadiness. This is to complete the stage of returning insubstantiality for heaven immortality (i.e. spiritual eternity). When (you) have (reached and) verified the stage of extreme insubstantiality and nothingness, then (you) have verified, (i.e. accomplished), the stage of Heavenly Immortality. In this case, the steadiness is more for entrance and less for exiting. It is also appropriate that (the spirit) should be able to be active when exited and reach high level of steadiness when entered. Therefore, I say: “The beginning of the exiting from the steadiness is actually the beginning of the entering steadiness.” Though the heaven immortality has been verified, however, there is no limitation of timing. Therefore, Buddha also said: “When (you) have reached the end of insubstantial and empty world (i.e. Wuji world), my cultivation will not be ended after all.” It is for this reason, (the spiritual life) will (only) be ended after the Heaven and the Earth, (i.e. nature), so I can avoid ill fortune (i.e. reincarnation). This achievement will again not be restricted by the timing. (In this case, you) have reached the marvellous world of immortality or Buddhahood. This is the ultimate goal of the heavenly immortal Buddhahood. Those who cultivate (this) holy truthful training should know all of these trainings and verify this result.

又言九載三年一定者，言出定之初，時而入定，以完成還虛之天仙也。証到至虛至無，即証天仙矣。然是定也，入定時多而出定時少，又宜出之動而入之遠也。我故曰：“出定之初，即為入定之始也。”雖天仙已証，亦無不定之時也。故世尊亦曰：“虛空界盡，我此修行，終無有盡。”正如此也。至于終天地之后，超過劫運，亦無不定之時也。此猶仙佛以上無仙無佛之妙境，而天仙佛之至者也。後來聖真，共知之，共証之。

After three years of nursing, the spiritual baby has become stronger and more independent. The spiritual baby will become very active due to the new discovery of the new world (i.e. enlightenment). Even though this has happened, you must occasionally return your spirit to its center and keep it firm and steady. This center remains as the residence and the root of spiritual growth. Once you have reached this

stage, your spirit will be able to reach spiritual eternity and escape from the natural destiny of reincarnation or rebirth.

However, the last stage of spiritual cultivation will not be ended here. In order to complete the final cultivation of heavenly immortal Buddhahood (Tian Xian Fo, 天仙佛), you must complete the final nine years of cultivation by facing the wall. This is the stage of Crushing the Nothingness (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空)—Nine Years of Facing the Wall (Jiu Nian Mian Bi, 九年面壁). To crush the thought of the no thought, so your spirit is able to survive forever.

In order to do so, you must again return your spirit to its center and stabilize it. The Chinese word, “Ding” (定) is a very deep Gongfu (功夫) which means the steadiness, the firmness of the body, the mind, and the spirit. When this happens, the Qi will be conserved and preserved. This remains the crucial key to the spiritual baby’s growth. That is why it is said: “The beginning of the exiting from the steadiness is actually the beginning of the entering steadiness.” After nine years of the final stage of spiritual cultivation, crushing the nothingness, the spirit has matured and become completely independent. In this case, the layman human body can be given up and will not be needed any longer. This is the stage of “heavenly immortal Buddhahood.” If you wish to know more about this spiritual cultivation, please refer to the book: *Qigong—The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

16. Songs of Embracing Singularity in Embryonic Breathing⁷

《胎息抱一歌》

The origin of a human’s life is nothing else but the Original Qi (Yuan Qi). If (you) know where the Original Qi resides, then (you) are not too far from the Great Dao (Da Dao). Lao Zi said: “Millions of objects, (i.e. lives) are all Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi) and live. There is no object which does not conceal the Yin and embrace the Yang, (i.e. contain both Yin and Yang).” If (you) do not know how to embrace singularity, then it will be hard to become intimate with the Dao. This is because the Dao originates from the singularity. What is the singularity? It is the Qi mother. (Two) Qis are united (i.e. Yin and Yang Qi), and formed into the embryo. Once this embryo is conceived, breathing begins. Two Xuans (i.e. key ingredients) all have their own purposes. Therefore, the classic says: “When it is in the mother’s womb, there is an embryo without breathing. (This embryo) borrows the mother’s breathing to grow its body. After the spirits are separated, then there is an Embryonic Breathing.” Those who are learning the Dao must know the theories of the embryo and the breathing and ponder their delicate marvelousness. If one is able to reach this original root, then he can become an extraordinary (man) and verify the holiness (of the training). When a normal person holds (his) breath, the (spiritual) embryo is not firm. (However) when a holy man retains his (spiritual) embryo, (he) does not firm (i.e. hold) his breath. When the breath is held, the chest is full and the Qi becomes chaos.

夫人受生之本，莫非元氣。若知元氣所居，方不遠於大道。老君云：‘萬物皆抱一而生，未有一物不負陰而抱陽者也。’若不知於抱一，與道難親，故道生於一也。一者，氣母。氣結成胎，胎結成息，二玄各有其旨。故經云：‘在母腹之時，有胎而無息，假母呼吸成長其身。分靈之後，胎息具焉。’學道之士，切須知胎息二理，窮其微妙。若達本原，超凡證聖。常人閉息，不固其胎，聖人存胎，不固其息。閉者，胸滿氣亂也。

Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) is the inner energy converted from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精). Therefore, if you are able to know where the Original Essence is stored and how to convert it into Original Qi and keep it firm in its residence, then you are not too far from reaching the Great Dao (Da Dao, 大道). Lao Jun, (老君) meaning Lao Zi (老子), is the name given by his Daoist followers. Lao Zi said: “When carrying and managing the vital force (Po) by Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi, 抱一), can it be not separated?” (Chapter 10)²² Po (魄) is the vital force which is generated from the inner Qi and the Shen. When a person has a strong vital energy to accomplish something, it is called “Po Li” (魄力), and means “the strength of vigor.” Yi (一) means both the spiritual center and Qi center which are connected by the spinal cord (Chong Mai, 衝脈). The spiritual center is the Yin center, or Mud Pill Palace, located at the center of the brain, or Upper Dan Tian, where the spirit resides. The Qi center is the Yang center where the Qi resides; it is located at the center of physical gravity (the second brain, or Real Lower Dan Tian).

The spirit controls the quality of Qi manifestation, while the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian supplies the quantity of inner Qi that supports our physical life. These two, one Yin and one Yang, have formalized the Singularity (Yi, 一) or the Two Polarities. Though they are two physically, in function, there is actually only one singleness. When the Qi is led upward to nourish the spirit (Shen, 神), the spirit can be raised to a strong state and is called “Po” (魄). When the Shen is energized and raised up, so it is able to carry and manage our lives, then it has become Yang. That is why Shen is also called “Yang Shen” (陽神). The cultivation of Shen is accomplished by cultivating the human temperament first. The cultivation of physical life is achieved by conserving and not wasting Qi, and also knowing how to build the Qi to a higher abundant level. This dual practice is called “Dual Cultivation of Temperament and Physical Life” (Xing Ming Shuang Xiu, 性命雙修). While they seem to be two things, actually they are one. This is because they are the two polarities of one life, closely related to each other and acting as one unit.

In order to reach the Dao, you must know this singularity, protect it and cultivate it. From this singularity, the Dao of life originates. This origin is also the mother of Qi where the Qi is converted from Original Essence. Once you are able to keep

this Qi at its residence without wasting it, with the unification and harmonization of the Shen, the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived. Once the embryo is conceived, a new spirit will reside in this embryo and become independent. Therefore, the mother and the embryo have their own spiritual center and each can breathe by itself. In order to conceive this Spiritual Embryo, you must know Embryonic Breathing. This cannot be done simply by holding the breath. The breathing should be as if it is there and as if it is not there: slender, soft, quiet, calm, and peaceful. However, in order to keep your spirit and Qi in their residences, you must know how to embrace the singularity. That means the singleness of the thought which does not have any emotional disturbance and desires.

Yan Luo Zi said: "Swallow and then hold (the breath), then it becomes chaos by itself." Mr. Yin said: "If you use Shen to drive the Qi, then the nose will not lose its breath." Huang Ting Classic said: "Play music three times to dance the Embryonic Immortal. Since ancient time, those holy men have practiced how to firm the Embryonic Breathing and therefore achieve the Dao. Shen (spirit) and Qi have therefore conceived the embryo, which results in the steadiness of the breathing. It is rarely heard that through holding the breathing, one has become the real (i.e. has reached the Dao)." Holy men said: "Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi) and keeping (the spirit) in its center, the embryo will naturally originate. Protect the three and return three into singleness, three are spirit, Qi, and essence." These sayings have truly revealed the deep important points of the Embryonic Breathing. Therefore, (I) write a song of Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi) which contains twenty phrases to summarize these secrets.

煙蘿子云：‘咽復閉，徒自亂。’尹先生云：‘但使神常御氣，鼻不失息。’黃庭經云：‘琴心三疊舞胎仙，自古聖人則閉固胎息而成道。神氣胎結，其息乃定。罕聞閉息而成真也。’聖人云：‘抱一守中子自沖，守三歸一神氣精是也。’斯言實露胎息之深旨，故作抱一歌二十首以訣其要。

This section of the document cites four origins which talk about Embryonic Breathing. From these four citations, we can conclude a few key points. First, you should not hold your breath if you don't understand how and why. This can only cause you mental disturbance and physical sickness. Second, the unification of the Shen and the Qi through correct breathing is the key to Embryonic Breathing. This is also the way to conceive a Spiritual Embryo. Third, in order to conceive a Spiritual Embryo, you must learn how to protect your Three Treasures (San Bao, 三寶), Jing (essence), Qi, and Shen (spirit) and keep them at the center (singularity).

When Embracing Singularity, (you) must know the origin of the "True Singularity" (Zhen Yi). The spiritual enlightenment, after all, is achieved due to (cultivation of the) Dan Tian. (Through) exit and entrance (of the Qi and Shen), the deep rooted Xin (Emotional Mind) can be opened (i.e. enlightened). Shen

and Qi can then correspond and harmonize with each other, which results in the development of the embryonic immortal.

抱一須知真一源，神明終自有丹田。出入往來心地啟，
氣神相應化胎仙。

When you practice Embracing Singularity, you must know what is the singleness and how to embrace it. If you don't have this knowledge, it will be like driving a car in a new city without a map. The theory is just like a map which can direct you to the precise place where you want to go. Therefore, you must always keep the questions of why, what, and how in your mind.

If you wish to reach the final goal of enlightenment, you must know where the Dan Tians are, their purposes, and the techniques. After all, without knowing these, you will not be able to keep your Shen and Qi at their residences. Consequently, you are wasting your time and effort for your cultivation. In order to locate these Dan Tians (especially Upper and Real Lower Dan Tians) and keep your mind there, you must first see through your emotional mind and learn to release it. Once you are able to open the gate of the Emotional Mind (Xin, 心), your mind will not be attracted and bothered. This will result in the calmness and peace of your mind. Then the Shen and the Qi will naturally stay at their residences. Through the unification and harmonization of the Shen and Qi, the immortal Spiritual Embryo can be conceived.

When just learning the teaching of Embracing Singularity, it is hard to know the truth (of the practice). After diligently practicing daily for a long time, (you) will be enlightened automatically. Even though there is no mutual correspondence in the profound abyss, the clam will contain the full moon and congeal the pearl with halo (i.e. shining Holy Embryo).

抱一初傳未識真，功勤日久自通神。杳冥之內無相應，
蚌含秋月暈結珍。

Even if you have known thoroughly the theory of Embracing Singularity, you will still need time, and patient and diligent practice to see the result. Only if you have understood the theory and have established a firm confidence in it, even though you cannot reach the profound level of practice yet, actually a shining Spiritual Embryo has already been conceived. Yao Min (杳冥) means "Profound Abyss" which represents the Yin spiritual world (Yin Jian, 陰間). The Yang material world is called Yang Jian (陽間). The clam is able to conceive its energy inside and therefore congeal the pearl. Full moon (Qiu Yue, 秋月) is round and shining which implies the shining result of forming the Spiritual Embryo.

There is a marvellous door to cultivate the truth, (or true Dao), by Embracing Singularity. (Through this) Mr. Xi Yi has directly reached Kunlun (i.e. peak of

cultivation). (The practice of) marvellous breathing is not affected (whether you) recognize the Xuan Pin (or not). A single Qi must long reside at the center all the time.

抱一修真有異門，希夷直達到崑崙。妙息不干玄牝記，
時中一氣鎮長存。

Chen, Xi-Yi (陳希夷) was a well-known Daoist Qigong master who lived from the end of the Tang to the beginning of the Song Dynasties (c. 900-1000 A.D.) (唐末宋初). Kunlun, meaning Kunlun Mountain (崑崙山), is one of the highest mountains in the west of China. Here, Kunlun means the head (or the brain) and implies spiritual enlightenment. Pin (牝) represents a female animal and implies the foundation of creation, the mother of millions of objects which has the same meaning as Dao (道). Xuan (玄) means profound, abstruse, mysterious, and marvellous. Therefore, Xuan Pin (玄牝) means the marvellous and mysterious Dao, the mother of creation of millions of objects. The Dao is not easy to understand and it is impossible to explain it clearly and thoroughly. Therefore, it does not matter how much you can comprehend the Dao, to practice Embryonic Breathing, the most important thing is to keep your Qi at its residence (i.e. Embracing Singularity). Then you will conserve your inner energy and this will result in the conception of the Spiritual Embryo.

When Embracing Singularity, (you) must know how to be magnanimous within yourself automatically. (You) must not allow the breathing to be impeded at the throat. If (you) are able to comprehend the real meaning of the contents, five internal (organs) and three palaces (i.e. Three Dan Tians) will gain peace automatically.

抱一須知自在寬，勿令氣壅在喉間。若能曉達真詮義，
五內三宮自得安。

In order to embrace singularity, you must first regulate your emotional mind (Xin, 心). You should not be attracted, disturbed, and bothered by your emotional environment. The key to reaching this goal is training yourself to be magnanimous so nothing is able to bother you. Only if your mind is regulated, can your breathing be smooth and natural. Though the theory is very simple, it is not easy to really comprehend the profound meaning and make it happen. You must continue your regulating until no regulating is necessary. When this happens, your five internal Yin organs will be harmonious and peaceful. The five internal organs include: the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys, and the lungs. According to Chinese medicine, our emotions are closely related to these five internal Yin organs, and can influence the Qi circulation in them. Only when the mind is regulated to a peaceful and calm state, can the Qi circulating in these five internal organs also be harmonious. In addition, once

you are able to regulate your emotional mind, you will be able to keep your Shen at the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田), calm down the fire Qi at the Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田), and store abundant water Qi at the Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田) or Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田).

Embracing Singularity to return (to our) origins will (allow us to) reach the primary nature of human life. (Therefore,) why (do we) give up the internal (cultivation) and focus on the external training? As long as (we are) able to firm the stalk and keep the root deep, then there is a place (i.e. opportunity) for longevity.

抱一還元達本生，何勞棄內外邊行。但能固蒂深根了，
只於此處是長生。

In order to find the origin of our lives, we must cultivate our Shen and Qi internally. External physical training, though it enables us to maintain a healthy physical life, will not lead you to immortality. In order to have immortality, you must first trace back and return to the beginning of life. Only then, can you firm your root and stalk, and re-establish a foundation for your longevity and enlightenment. The root here means the spiritual root at the Upper Dan Tian and the Qi root at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Stalk refers to the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (spinal cord) which connects the Two Polarities, or Dan Tians. The Upper Dan Tian, The Thrusting Vessel, and the Real Lower Dan Tian constitute the central energy system of a human body. When this central energy system is strong, the immune system will function strongly, and therefore longevity can be achieved.

It is primarily extraordinary (i.e. unusual) in cultivating (our) true origins through Embracing Singularity. (You) must not allow the Shen and Qi (to be) separated from each other. Keep them together at all times whenever sitting or walking. When (the Qi and Shen are) transported to the Heaven Gate (i.e. Third Eye), the life will be extended automatically.

抱一真元本異常，勿令神氣兩分張。坐行之處長相守，
運到天門生自長。

To achieve the goal of enlightenment is not an easy task. The first step is learning how to keep the Shen and Qi at their centers firmly (i.e. Embracing Singularity). Next, you must unify them, and harmonize them with each other at all times. The key to reaching this goal is to stop outside emotional attractions and disturbances to your mind. Then your mind will be calm and peaceful and thus pay attention to the inner feeling. This is the crucial key to the unification of the Shen and Qi.

Once you have established abundant Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian and then led it upward through the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal cord) to nourish the brain, The Third Eye can be re-opened. The Third Eye is called “Tian

Yan” (天眼) and means “Heaven Eye.” The reason for this is simply that when this “Heaven Eye” is re-opened, you will be enlightened, your spirit will unite with the natural spirit and suddenly you will be able to feel and sense many natural occurrences which other people cannot feel and sense. When you have re-opened the “Heaven Eye,” you should also have regained the capability of telepathy which we once had a long time ago.

When Embracing Singularity, (you) must incorporate it (i.e. the practice) into the Five Elements (Wu Yun). How can it be in vain if the Qi and the shape mutually correspond with each other? Since there is nothing in the empty door (i.e. Four Emptinesses), why do you still go there (i.e. long for it)? This will make (your) floating life (i.e. the life without the root) wasted and (your) practice in vain.

抱一令歸五運中，氣形相應豈成空。空門無物何須去，
虛棄浮生枉用功。

“Wu Yun” (五運) means “the transportation of Five Elements” (Wuxing, 五行). They are Metal (Jin, 金) (Lungs, Fall); Wood (Mu, 木) (Liver, Spring); Water (Shui, 水) (Kidneys, Winter); Fire (Huo, 火) (Heart, Summer); and Earth (Tu, 土) (Spleen, Four Seasons). That means the Qi exchanges among five internal organs and also the four seasons. When you practice “Embracing Singularity,” you must coordinate and harmonize with the five internal organs and four seasons. Only then are the Qi body and physical body able to harmonize and balance with each other. The first key to cultivation in “Embracing Singularity” is to keep the physical body strong and healthy. In order to reach this goal, you must have built up abundant Qi so the physical life can be manifested efficiently.

“Empty Door” (Kong Men, 空門) means the door leading you to the “Four Emptinesses” (Si Da Jie Kong, 四大皆空). This means the illusion or matrix generated from the four great materials: earth, water, fire, and wind. Since they do not have meaning to the spiritual world, they are empty. If you continue searching for these material desires and do not know how to cultivate your spiritual world, then you are wasting your life. Since a human life is short and comes and goes, it is like a floating duckweed without a root (Fu Sheng, 浮生).

To practice Embracing Singularity, (you) must recognize that our lives are just like the person (i.e. reflection) in the mirror. Among the colors, it manifests the body of colors. (To avoid this false illusion, you) must start from transcending San Jie (i.e. Three Circles). If (you) continue to have the delusion about the dust world (i.e. emotional world or laymen society), then how can (you) keep (yourself) clean from the dust?

抱一由如鏡裡人，色中唯現色中身。從茲漸得超三界，
妄塵塵更豈能塵。

When you practice “Embracing Singularity,” you must first recognize that a human life is like the reflection in the mirror. All emotions and desires are only illusion. To spiritual cultivation, they mean nothing. If you are attracted by the color (i.e. material world) in the mirror, then your mind will generate the color (i.e. desires) and continue to disturb your peaceful mind. You must practice to regulate your mind gradually until you are able to jump out of “San Jie” (三界) (Laymen Matrix). “San” (三) means “three” and Jie (界) means: “world, boundaries, circles, and societies.” According to Buddhist society, “San Jie” means: 1. The world of desires (for sex and food); 2. The world of colors (material world); 3. The world of no color (generated from extreme calmness through meditation). The first step in regulating your mind is to get rid of the world of desires and colors. This will lead you to the world of “no color” which can be achieved from the calmness of the mind. Once you have reached this “no color” world, you can then focus on your spiritual cultivation of “Embracing Singularity.” The final goal is to get out of these three circles and reach enlightenment. It is said in Buddhist society: “Jump out of three circles, then (you) will not be in the boundary of the ‘Five Elements’ (i.e. Laymen’s reincarnation cycle).”²³

“Chen” (塵) means “dust” which implies the dirty mind generated from the seven emotions and six desires. The laymen society is called “Chen Shi” (塵世) and means “dust world.” This is the world that fills up with emotional minds such as: anger, hate, love, jealousy, joy, sorrow and sadness, and also with the desire for power, wealth, glory, dignity, and many other things.

When Embracing Singularity, keep the Lingtai (i.e. Spiritual Station) opened every night, embryo is formalized at the embryonic (residence) (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian) in every breathing. If the Shen and Qi can be congealed and become the precious treasure, even (though) the Original Spirit (Yuan Ling) is going to be dispersed (i.e. death), they will return to (your body) eventually.

抱一靈臺月夜開，息息之中胎在胎。神氣若凝歸作寶，
元靈欲散卻還來。

“Lingtai” (靈臺) means “Spiritual Platform or Station.” Please do not confuse this term with Lingtai used in Chinese medicine. Though these names are exactly the same, they have different meanings in different contexts. The Lingtai in Qigong means the “spiritual residence” located in the brain, while the Lingtai (Gv-10) in Chinese medicine is an acupuncture cavity located on the back between the spinous processes of the 6th and 7th thoracic vertebrae (Figure 3-4). In Qigong, Lingtai is also called Ling Guan (靈關) (Spiritual Gate) (Daoist term) or Ling Shan (靈山) (Spiritual Mountain) (Buddhist term).

On the basis of our scientific understanding and traditional Qigong practice, it is understood that when we are awake and physically active, the major Qi flow in the body stays in the Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren and Du Mai, 任·督脈).

We know from Chinese medicine that the Conception Vessel regulates the Qi circulation in the six Yin channels. The Governing Vessel regulates and governs Qi in the six Yang channels. Since these twelve Qi channels distribute the Qi to the entire physical body, the Qi normally circulates strongly in these two vessels during the daytime while we are physically active.

However, when we sleep, the major Qi flow will condense inward and circulate in the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal Cord). When this happens, the brain obtains Qi nourishment, and the pineal, pituitary, adrenals, and testicles (or ovaries) located along the spinal cord are also nourished and produce hormones. Therefore, when you train your spirit, the best time to practice is midnight where the Qi is circulating in the Thrusting Vessel which connects the Two Polarities (i.e. two brains). When you train at this time, the spirit can be nourished efficiently and raised up to a high level.

When you practice, you are not only practicing the purification of your Shen but also building up the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian through Embryonic Breathing. You should remember that these Two Polarities (Upper Dan Tian and Real Lower Dan Tian) formalize the “singularity” of the central spiritual and physical energy. Only if you cultivate your spirit and Qi simultaneously, can you reach the goal of unification and harmonization of the Shen and Qi. If you are able to condense (firm) your Shen at its residence, then you have obtained a precious result. Then, whenever your Original Spirit (Yuan Ling or Yuan Shen, 元靈·元神) has been attracted by the outside world, you will be able to lead it back easily and continue your cultivation.

The technique of Embracing Singularity must be stated correctly and clearly. (You) must not confuse the panting and relate it (to the Embryonic Breathing). The real embryo can be conceived (from interaction of the Fire Qi) at the Li palace (i.e. heart or Middle Dan Tian) which is led downward to the Lower Dan Tian (to blend in with the Water Qi).

抱一之術述正元，勿將喘息擬相干。真胎不過離宮上，直須令住下丹田。

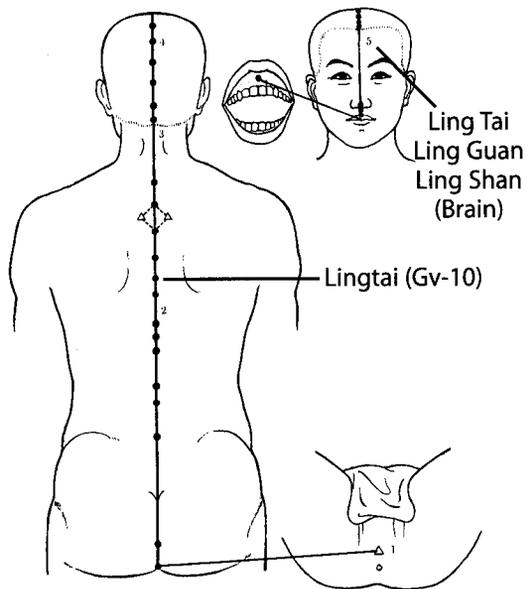


Figure 3-4. Acupuncture Lingtai (Gv-10) and Qigong Lingtai (Brain)

When you practice Embryonic Breathing, your breathing must not be heavy (panting). It should be soft, natural, smooth, slender, quiet, deep, easy, and relaxed. According to the Daoist understanding, in order to conceive the Spiritual Embryo, you must lead the Fire Qi (Huo Qi, 火氣) stored at the Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田) to interact with the Water Qi (Shui Qi, 水氣) stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian. In order to do so, you should lead the Fire Qi downward and Water Qi upward so they can meet at the Huang Ting (黃庭) where the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived. Huang Ting is a Daoist term which means the center place behind the navel area. The method of leading the Fire Qi downward and Water Qi upward is commonly called “Kan-Li” (坎離) which means “water-fire” in Qigong practice.

Embracing Singularity to keep the Original (Shen and Qi) harmonious is precious and flourishing. (You) should not let the Shen and Qi apart from each other and become weird (i.e. out of place). (If you only) treat the Tu-Na (i.e. breathing) as a true essence of practice, (then it is) hard to place (your) body at the village of longevity.

抱一元和寶易昌，莫叫神氣兩乖張。擬將吐納為真蒂，
難致身於不死鄉。

“Tu” (吐) means “to utter” and implies “to exhale” and “Na” (納) means “to receive” and implies “to inhale.” Tu Na (吐納) has also commonly been used as a Qigong practice. This is simply because the major key practice of Qigong is the correct way of respiration.

If you wish to have longevity, regulating breathing alone will not lead you to the goal. In order to become an immortal, you must unify your Original Shen (Yuan Shen, 元神) and Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣).

When Embracing Singularity, there is not even a second of pause (in practice). If the achievement can be accomplished from the six words (i.e. six healing sounds), the five internal (Yin) organs will be clean (i.e. healthy). If (you are) able to maintain (the healthy condition) of (your) shaped body (i.e. physical body) and live long, there are always chances for (your Yin and Yang) interaction and for the birth (of embryo).

抱一時中不暫停，六字功成五臟清。若留形身常住世，
來來生處更交生。

To achieve enlightenment and longevity is not an easy task. It will take a long time of study and practice. Therefore, you should not be discouraged and practice discontinuously. Other than diligent practice, you also need to attend to your physical health. Only if you have good physical health can you live long, which will provide you with a longer time for your cultivation. In order to have a good physical health, first you must keep your five Yin organs clean and healthy. These are: Heart,

Lungs, Liver, Kidneys, and Spleen. One of the key practices to keep these five organs clean, without Qi stagnation, is through making six sounds. These six sounds are: He (呵) (Heart), Hu (呼) (Spleen), Si (呬) (Lungs), Xi (嘻) (Triple Burner), Xu (嘘) (Liver), and Chui (吹) (Kidneys). If you wish to know more about these six sounds, please refer to the book: *Qigong for Health and Martial Arts*, published by YMAA.

To Embrace Singularity, (you) must always preserve the Shen (i.e. Spirit), Qi, and Jing (i.e. Essence). From preserving these three (treasures) and returning them into one (i.e. singleness), the accomplishment will be achieved automatically. What this body's function (i.e. health and longevity) relies on is refining the Canoderma lucidum grown in the field (i.e. Elixir Field, Dan Tian) of golden room, and refining it until the crystal (i.e. Spiritual Embryo) is formalized.

抱一惟存神氣精，守三歸一自功成。此身所為憑何住，
金室芝田鍊至晶。

“Ling Zhi” (靈芝) is *Canoderma lucidum*, a special herbal fungus. In Chinese medicine, it is believed that Ling Zhi has the power to extend your life. In this section, it implies the “elixir” (Dan, 丹) which can be grown at the Dan Tian (丹田) (Elixir Field). Therefore, if you are able to preserve the essence, protect your Qi, and refine your Shen and unify them into a singleness, the Spiritual Embryo can be generated. Jing (晶) is a natural crystal which usually takes a long time to formulate.

Embracing Singularity cannot be accomplished just living in seclusion by staying in the peaceful mountain (i.e. mind located in Kunlun Mountain). If (you) don't have the Dao (i.e. the correct way) in (your) living, (the cultivation) is still in vain. Live long leisurely in this world with vegetarian and controlled diet to conceive the Spiritual Embryo is the way of reaching immortality.

抱一非干守靜山，居塵無道亦徒然。長齊絕粒閑居世，
結得神胎始是仙。

This section points out a few things to which you must pay attention, to reach the goal of longevity and enlightenment. The first is if you do not have a correct lifestyle in your daily life, even if you meditate to regulate your mind, it is still useless. The mountain (Shan, 山) implies “Kunlun Shan” (崑崙山) which is one of the highest mountains located in the west of China. In Daoist terminology, Kunlun Mountain means the head, the highest place of the body.

The second thing it points out is keeping your life easy without too much tension. In this way, both your mental and physical bodies will be relaxed. The third point is keeping away from eating meat. According to Chinese medical and Qigong society, it is recognized that eating too much red meat, due to the contents of many bad ingredients, can cause the mind's emotional disturbance and the Qi's stagnation in the body. This will result in emotional sickness and physical illness.

Embrace Singularity so (you can) drink the sweet dew by yourself. The wind, thunder, clouds, and rains (i.e. emotional disturbances) are all over in the battle field (i.e. laymen society). After cleaning and calming down the Wu Yun (i.e. Five Internal Origins), (you) can get rid of laymen temperaments and reach the immortal village.

抱一自餐甘露漿，風雷雲雨遍疆場。五蘊肅然明靜後，
齊驅凡質泛仙鄉。

The wind (Feng, 風), thunder (Lei, 雷), clouds (Yun, 雲), and rain (Yu, 雨) here imply the emotional disturbances in laymen society. Through these disturbances, your emotions and temperament are hard to control and cultivate. The first step in stopping these emotional disturbances is to clean the Qi circulating in the five internal organs. “Wu Yun” (五蘊) means “five concealments” which implies “five internal organs: heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, and spleen.” There is another interpretation of Wu Yun. Wu Yun includes: 1. Color concealment (She Yun, 色蘊); 2. Perception concealment (Shou Yun, 受蘊); 3. Thinking concealment (Xiang Yun, 想蘊); 4. Acting concealment (Xing Yun, 行蘊); 5. Discriminating concealment (Shi Yun, 識蘊). All of these concealments are able to generate desires and emotional unbalance. Therefore, you must first clean away these concealments, then your temperament can be simplified and purified.

Embracing Singularity is to (apply) the real origins (i.e. Original Shen and Qi) to cultivate the true Dao. It is not necessary to put an effort in traveling clouds and water (i.e. places) to visit the immortal persons. It does not matter if the (Shen) goes or comes, always return it to its origin without any gap (i.e. break or slackening). If (you) rouse (your) cheek (i.e. agitate your emotional mind) too long, after all, will damage (your) body.

抱一真元養道真，不勞雲水訪仙君。返往元來無間得，
鼓腮終久損其身。

The true Dao of cultivation is to keep, protect and preserve the Original Shen (Yuan Shen, 元神) and Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) at their residences. If you know how to grasp this secret, you do not need to find a teacher. Whenever you have an emotional disturbance or a desire, the Shen will depart from its residence, and the Qi will be led away from its residence, consumed and wasted. Therefore, the most important thing in your spiritual cultivation is avoiding any emotional disturbance to prevent yourself from generating desires.

To Embrace Singularity, (you) must always maintain the great harmony in (your body). If there is a dispute in the bird nest (i.e. emotional dispute internally), then the evil spirit will be aroused. Then the Qi Po (i.e. Seven Vital Forces) and San Shi (i.e. Three Corpses) will bring (you) harm. If (you) keep (your) mind under the Kunlun Mountain, then the shining moons are numerous.

抱一常令含太和，鳥窠爭敢起妖訛。七魄三尸寧有害，
崑崙山下明月多。

“Qi Po” (七魄) means “Seven Vital Forces” which are related to seven emotions. The seven emotions (Qi Qing, 七情) are: happiness (Xi, 喜), anger (Nu, 怒), sorrow (Ai, 哀), joy (Le, 樂), love (Ai, 愛), hate (Hen, 恨), and lust (Yu, 慾). San Shi (三尸), or “Three Corpses,” are the three desires which could lead you to your death. They are the temptations of money, taste (i.e. food), and sex.²

In order to achieve longevity, you must first have harmony between the Qi and physical bodies. When this happens, all the internal organs will harmonize with each other and be healthy. To reach this harmony, you must first regulate your emotional mind and desires. If you continue to have these disputes internally, then you will bring much harm. If you are able to keep your mind at the spiritual center in the head (i.e. Kunlun Mountain, 崑崙山), then you will be able to enlighten yourself spiritually. Under the Kunlun Mountain is the center of the valley where the spiritual Yin center is located (i.e. Mud Pill Palace).

Embracing Singularity will allow (your) body to stay in the village of no death (i.e. longevity). Golden lotus flowers are blooming (for you) to sit on with nice and cool (feeling). There is no dregs and dirt in (your) solid abdomen (i.e. fullness of clean water Qi) and humble Xin (i.e. mind). The jade pond (i.e. place under the tongue) is full of eight delicious juices.

抱一身居不死鄉，金蓮花發坐清涼。實腹虛心無滓穢，
玉池滿注八瓊漿。

According to Buddhism, the laymen society which is filled with emotions and desires is considered as “emotional mud” or “dust” (Chen Tu, 塵土). Everyone in this emotional mud has a subconscious mind of “truth” (Zhen, 真). As long as you have this truthful subconscious mind in your deep heart, you already have a lotus seed within. If you meditate and search for spiritual cultivation, sooner or later the mask on your face will drop off, and you will step onto the first stage of spiritual cultivation, or “self-recognition” (Zi Shi, 自識). In this case, the lotus seed starts to sprout. From this self-recognition, through continuous meditation, you will step into the stages of “self-awareness” (Zi Jue, 自覺), “self-awakening” (Zi Wu, 自悟), and finally “freedom from spiritual bondage” (Zi Tuo, 自脫). When this happens, the lotus will continue to grow out of the mud and bloom a pure, clean lotus flower. The dirtier the mud, the bigger the flower that will bloom. This pure and clean lotus flower originates from pure thinking without any emotional disturbance and desires, as well as a solid and abundant Qi storage at the Real Lower Dan Tian in the abdominal area. In this case, you will become a Buddha sitting on the lotus flower with a pure mind and immortal spirit. When you have reached this stage, due to the freedom from

emotional bondage or the matrix, the body can be calm, relaxed, and cool. Consequently, the saliva generated in the “Jade Pond” (Yu Chi, 玉池) will be abundant which can be used to moisten the body’s dryness. “Yu Chi” implies the place underneath the tongue which is able to generate an abundance of saliva during meditation.

There is a secret key in true interpretation of Embracing Singularity. How can those high elegant and educated gentlemen know and talk about it. Return the Shen and maintain its warmth at the embryonic origin. After (you) have obtained the marvellous key, then (you) will know the training is deep and esoteric.

抱一真詮有秘關，高才儒士豈談宣。返神復熱胎元主，
妙旨方知深又玄。

Many elegant and educated people talk about Embracing Singularity. However, they should know that the cultivation of Embracing Singularity cannot be accomplished just through talking. In order to reach the goal, you must know the secret key of maintaining your Shen (Yin) in its residence and Qi (Yang) at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Later, when the Shen and Qi are unified and harmonized with each other, the Spiritual Embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎) will be conceived. If anyone does not know this key, then it does not matter how much he talks about it, the cultivation is still in vain.

To ask for longevity through Embracing Singularity is not difficult. The Qi and the shape (i.e. physical body) must correspond (i.e. harmonize) with each other mutually and (the Shen and Qi) enter Three Dan Tians. However, how confused it can be if just talk about the matter through speaking. (To learn the truth correctly), (you) must have a personal oral instruction from a well-known (experienced) teacher.

抱一求生不是難，氣形相應入三田。言中顯事何疑惑，
親沐明師口授傳。

This last paragraph concludes that in order to achieve longevity, you must harmonize your Qi and physical body. The Qi body is considered as the Yin body and the physical body is considered as the Yang body in Qigong practice. Though the Yin body cannot be seen, it is the root of life. The Yang body can be seen and is the manifestation of the Yin body. Therefore, these two bodies, seeming to be two, are actually one. They are the Two Polarities of the same thing — life.

Not only that, you must also know how to conserve the Qi instead of wasting it. In order to preserve your Qi efficiently, you must know how to keep the Qi at the Dan Tian. Only when it is necessary to be used for physical or mental manifestation, then the Qi is led out for it. The more efficiently you are able to use the Qi, the longer and the better your life will be. The crucial key to reaching this goal is learning how to build up the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level through

Embryonic Breathing and also how to keep the Shen in its residence (i.e. Upper Dan Tian) through meditation. When this happens, you will have an abundant quantity of Qi, and also a high quality of Qi manifestation.

Though talking and understanding is easy, there are many secret keys which must be taught by an experienced teacher. Knowing these secrets will shorten your training and make it more efficient and effective.

17. Secret Recording of Nourishing Life²

《養生秘錄》

If (one) is able to keep the “True Singularity” (Zhen Yi) (i.e. Wuji state), then the breathing will not be to and fro. It is like the fetus in the mother’s womb. This is called “great steadiness.”

能守真一則息不往來，如在母胞胎之中，謂之大定也。

Literally, “Zhen Yi” (真一) means “real one,” “real singularity,” or “real singleness.” “One” or “singularity” implies the main energy polarity of a human constructed by the spiritual center and the Qi center. As mentioned earlier, these two centers constitute the two energy poles of our body, and are connected via the spinal cord (Thrusting Vessel). One handles our spiritual life (Upper Dan Tian) and the other supplies our physical life (Lower Dan Tian). It seems there are Two Polarities, however, since they are connected through the highly electrically conductive spinal cord, they function as one. That means they correspond with each other simultaneously and closely relate to each other. The Lower Dan Tian belongs to Yang which supplies the quantity of the Qi and thus nourishes the physical life while the Upper Dan Tian belongs to Yin which controls the quality of the Qi manifestation. Yin and Yang are the two faces of the same thing. Like a magnet which has Two Polarities that cannot be separated from one another. It is said: “What is Zhen Yi? It means the body’s Yin (spirit) and Yang (physical body) are unified as one.”²⁴ The Daoist document, *Thesis of Retaining the Shen and Firming the Qi* (存神固氣論) said: “If a human is able to place his original truth (pure mind) at the Heaven Valley (天谷) (Spiritual Valley), then it is the Dao of keeping the ‘Zhen Yi.’”²⁵ The head is considered as heaven while the perineum is considered as the “sea bottom” (Hai Di, 海底). Therefore, heaven valley means the valley in the head, namely the Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷). When the Shen is able to stay at its residence, the Qi can then be kept at its center as well.

From this, you can see that to keep the mind at these poles means to maintain the singleness or singularity. When the mind stays at these Two Polarities, the mind will not be attracted by the outside world and the Qi can also stay at its residence without leaving and being consumed. It is said: “What is Embryonic Breathing? It is the Dao of abiding at the ‘real one.’ That is, Shen and the breathing are mutually

relying on each other. When the Shen condenses (concentrates), the Qi will be stabilized (stay at its residence)”²⁶ Therefore, it is written in the Daoist document, *Observing Vessels* (脈望): “If one is able to abide at the ‘Zhen Yi,’ then the breathing (Qi) will not be to and fro.” It also said: “If one is able to abide at the ‘Zhen Yi,’ then the real Qi will condense by itself and the Yang Shen (陽神) can be gathered.”²⁷ Though the spirit controls the manifestation of Qi, the spirit is the manifestation of the Qi, therefore, the Shen is classified as Yang.

18. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Methods of Transporting Qi)

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (御氣之法)

(If to) the top to the Ni Wan (i.e. Mud Pill Palace) and to the bottom to the Mingmen (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian), two sceneries are following each other mutually, then it can save the remaining days and increase longevity. If there is no control from the Shen when exhaling, then this breathing is not complete. If there is no governing from the Shen when inhaling, again, the breathing is not complete either. If (you) are able to coordinate and harmonize the Shen and Qi mutually in every breathing, then the embryo can be conceived from concealed Qi and the Qi can be produced through Embryonic Breathing. (In this case), the embryonic Qi can be congealed internally and will never die. When it has succeeded, the male will be able to gather the Jing (i.e. Essence) and the female is able to bear the baby. Though (the emotion) is touched by desire, it cannot compete against Shen. This is the way of returning the essence and nourishing it to the Shen. This is the breathing cultivating secret of the uppermost pure jade real (person) (i.e. those who have obtained the uppermost real Dao). If (you) are able to practice it daily, (you) will obtain its knacks (of cultivation) and gradually conform with the uppermost real Dao.

上至泥丸，下至命門，兩景相隨，可救殘老矣。若呼不得神宰，一息不全，吸不得神宰，亦一息不全。若能息之中，使神氣相合，則胎從伏氣中結，氣從有胎中息，胎氣內結，永不死矣。功成之后，男子聚精，女子結嬰，雖動于欲，不能與神爭，是謂真返精為神也。此者乃是上清玉真修息之訣，日能行之，自得其味，漸合太上真道。

“Ni Wan” (泥丸) is a Daoist term, which literally means “mud pill” and implies “the brain” or “Upper Dan Tian.” The Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷) between the two hemispheres of the brain is called Ni Wan Gong (泥丸宮) and means “Mud Pill Palace.” Palace means the place where the Shen resides. Then, what is the physical implication of “mud pill?” I believe it refers to the pineal and pituitary glands. When these two glands are nourished with abundant Qi (bioelectricity) the hormone pro-

duction can be abundant, and naturally, the body's metabolism through biochemical reaction will function smoothly. Naturally, your vital force is strong and the Shen can be high. Mingmen (命門) (Life Door) here means the Real Lower Dan Tian instead of the Mingmen cavity in acupuncture. The Real Lower Dan Tian stores the Qi, the energy for life.

This article points out that the Shen at the Upper Dan Tian and also the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian are mutually coordinated and harmonized with each other. These are the two energy poles which establish the central energy system of our lives. In order to make the Shen and Qi harmonize with each other, you must know how to use Embryonic Breathing to unify them, and then the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived. In order to reach this goal, you must first keep your Shen and Qi at their residences. To reach this state, keep your mind at the spiritual center and also the Qi center. Once you can do so, the central energy will be firmed and strong.

Next, you will lead the Shen downward to unify the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian. In this case, two polarities will be unified and become one. This is the Wuji state, the initiation of life.

19. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo

*(Secrets of Removing Hundreds of Internal
Vision Barriers in Embryonic Breathing)*^{23,7}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(百嶂內視胎息訣)

What is Embryonic Breathing about? World people (i.e. laymen) do not know. However, many ancient virtuous persons (i.e. those who understand the Dao) have all verified its result. If (you) do not obtain this method from gaining the oral secrets, (you) will not be able to start (your) practice. (Furthermore, if) without personal instruction and (you) go ahead to do it, (you are) only the first class of fool. Even if (you) have stabilized the Xin-monkey (i.e. Emotional Mind) and seized the Yi-horse (i.e. Wisdom Mind), it often wastes the Gongfu (i.e. energy-time) and cannot achieve it greatly. If (you are one of) those who really wish to cultivate and train (Embryonic Breathing) and wish to catch the Xin-monkey and restrain the Yi-horse, then (you) must first regulate (your) Qi and calm (your) breathing, clarify (your) Xin, cease the worries, and forget the emotions; consequently, there is a response (i.e. result). If (you) are not doing so, then the time will pass without result and be wasted. If there is no instruction from a teacher, it is hard to know it.

且胎息者，世人不知，諸賢皆從證果。若不得此法也，把不定不得口訣，不得下手，不得親傳，把手教著尚做，不過一等愚人。便待定心猿，擒意馬，往往空費其功夫，不成大事。若真修煉之人，欲捉心猿，收意馬。先須調氣定息，然後澄心息慮忘情，乃可應也。若不如是，則空過了時光日月。不因師指，此事難知矣。

According to Chinese tradition, there are two minds in our body, the emotional mind which is called “Xin” (心) (heart) and the wise, logical mind which is called “Yi” (意). Xin is compared to an ape (Yuan, 猿), which, though small, makes a lot of noise and generates great disturbance. Yi is compared to a horse (Ma, 馬), which, though large and powerful, can nevertheless easily be restrained.

This document points out two things. First, the theory is clear, but the training methods must be obtained from an experienced master. In Chinese tradition, in order to prevent the writing secrets being revealed to outside people, normally there are some hidden oral secrets which allow to you connect the practice with the theory. These oral secrets are generally passed down through personal instruction between a master and a trustworthy student. Second, if you wish to reach the goal of enlightenment through Embryonic Breathing, you cannot achieve this goal by just regulating your Xin and Yi. You must first learn how to regulate your Qi through stabilizing your breathing. Only then can your mind be clear and separated from emotional disturbance.

20. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament

(Taishi Family's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)²

《性命圭旨全書》
(太始氏胎息訣)

What is the Dao? It is only a Grand Emptiness (Tai Xu) (i.e. space). The heaven, the earth, the sun, and the moon are all generated from this Grand Emptiness. Therefore, the heaven and the earth are the real embryo of this Grand Emptiness and the sun and the moon are the real breathing of this Grand Emptiness. If one is able to conform with this Grand Emptiness (i.e. unification of human and nature), then the heaven and the earth constitute my embryo, and the sun and the moon are my breathing. What is contained in this Grand Emptiness is also my contents. (In this case) how can (I) be parted from the contents of the heaven, the earth, the sun and the moon, and become confused like other people?

夫道，太虛而已矣。天地日月皆從太虛中來。故天地者，太虛之真胎也。日月者，太虛之真息也。人能與太虛同體，則天地即我之胎，日月即我之息。太虛之包羅，即我之包羅。豈非超出天地日月之外，而為混虛氏其人歟。

The Dao (道) cannot be seen, and it is even impossible to describe it accurately with our limited understanding. If we force ourselves to explain it, the closest is Tai Xu (太虛), meaning “Grand Emptiness.” It is from this Grand Emptiness that the material world was initiated. Therefore, the heaven and the earth are actually the embryo of the Tai Xu or the Dao. The natural ceaseless cycling which causes the energy change of the universe is the breathing of the universe. Similarly, a human

body can be considered as heaven and earth. If we are able to unify our physical body and spiritual body with the heaven and the earth (nature), then the embryo of heaven and earth is also my embryo and the breathing of the heaven and the earth is also my breathing. It does not matter how and what, we are part of this nature. If we are able to unite ourselves with nature, then we are able to harmonize our spirit with it.

To do this, first we must find the origin of our lives and trace back its root. This root is our Qi center and spiritual center. These Two Polarities formalize a central Yin and Yang root which thus supplies our life both spiritually and physically. If we are able to return our spirit and Qi to these Two Polarities, we will be able to re-unite ourselves with nature. The spiritual center is located at the head and is considered to be the heaven, while the Qi center is situated at the lower abdominal area and is considered to be the earth.

21. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament

(Xing Kong Zi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing):

《性命圭旨全書》
(性空子胎息訣)

My original body is round and bright originally. What is round and bright? It is my real embryo of the heaven and the earth. My original body is empty and silent originally. What is empty and silent? It is the breathing of the sun and moon in my body. Only if there is a real embryo of the heaven and the earth in my body, then the embryo of the heaven and the earth (of nature) can be blended with my embryo and therefore carry my embryo as well. Only if there is a real breathing of the sun and the moon in my body, then the breathing of the sun and the moon (of nature) is able to blend with my breathing and therefore breathe my breathing. In this case, my original body will become insubstantial emptiness. (When this happens), the insubstantial emptiness of the (natural) insubstantial emptiness will blend with my insubstantial emptiness and insubstantially empty my insubstantial emptiness.

我之本體，本自圓明。圓明者，是我身中天地之真胎也。
我之本體，本自空寂。空寂者，是我身中日月之息也。
唯吾身之天地有真胎矣，而后天地之胎與我之胎，相為混合，而胎我之胎。唯吾身之日月有真息矣，而后日月之息與我之息，相為混合，而息我之息。為吾身之本體即虛空矣。而后虛空之虛空與我之虛空，相為混合，而虛空我之虛空。

Round and bright means a mind spiritually perfect and clean without a slight dirty thought (emotional disturbance). Then the real Spiritual Embryo can be derived in my body. My physical body was originated from emptiness and it is part of the

great nature. This great nature repeats its cycle through Qi exchange (breathing). Sun and moon are the cycle of the day and month. In our body, we have the Qi cycle through breathing. In order to have a deep and profound Qi exchange and circulation, after I have entered into a deep meditative state, all material around me gradually disappears and my body becomes transparent and empty. When I have reached this stage, the natural Qi exchange and my body's Qi exchange will be unified as one.

Through Qi exchange, millions of lives are derived between the heaven and the earth. Through correct Embryonic Breathing, due to the smooth Qi exchange and circulation, a Spiritual Embryo will be generated in my body. A human body is considered as a small heaven and earth while nature is considered as great heaven and earth. When my spirit and the natural spirit have been unified, then everything is empty since everything is originated from nothingness.

22. *The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo* (Liu Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,7}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(柳真人胎息訣)

Most people in this world do not know that the body we are using daily is (originated from) the creation and variation of the substances. Alas! This is (formalized by) the Qi from heaven. When the Original Essence does not weaken, then matter is formalized and becomes objects. Above, it relies on the heaven's clean Qi and therefore gathers, becoming the shape, and below, it connects with the earth's dirty Qi and condenses into a body. (In this body) is contained a "sole truth" (Yi Zhen). The world people do not recognize this and consequently leak out to outside (of the body). (This simple truth) means (the protection of) Jing (i.e. essence), Qi, and Shen (i.e. spirit). If (you) do not know how to keep and protect these three (things), then (you) are old and near death. Those holy men (i.e. persons who have reached the Dao) will not leave (i.e. stop training) these three methods (of protecting Jing, Qi, and Shen) even a minute in their walking, living, sitting, or lying (i.e. daily activities). After long time (of practice), the Spiritual Embryo will be conceived and (they) become immortal. It is praised as: "As a human living in this world does not know (his) root, all the time searching for the greedy mind and give up (his) original real (being) (i.e. natural temperament). If (he does) not know how to regulate the real breathing and Qi so as to nourish (his) original Yang, till today (i.e. consequently), the heaven will be angry and sickness will still tackle (his) body."

夫人往往在世間，不知自身日用，物所造化也。噫！乃上天之氣也。元精不衰，物結成器，上依天之清氣，聚而成形，下接地之濁氣，凝而成體，內包一真。世人不識，故泄于外，乃精、氣、神也。若不守此三者，老死近矣。聖人常不離此三法，行住坐臥，久結成胎神仙矣。頌曰：‘為人在世不知根，一向貪心棄本真。不管元陽真息氣，至今天怒病纏身。’

All living objects are the products of the heaven and the earth Qi (natural Qi). In all of them, there is an essence concealed within. Through absorbing the natural Qi, they are able to grow and formalize the shape (physical body). This is also true for a human. After the embryo is conceived, through absorbing the natural Qi, it grows into a baby. After being born, through conservation and training of this essence, and continuously absorbing the natural Qi, and cultivation of our spirit, we are able to extend our lives and reach the goal of spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, these Three Treasures (San Bao, 三寶) or Three Origins (San Yuan, 三元), Jing (精) (essence), Qi (氣), and Shen (神) (spirit) are the true values of our lives. It seems they are three items, in fact, it is only one. They are all related to each other and cannot be separated.

Generally, a human's mind is greedy and the thoughts have been contaminated by emotional desires such as glory, dignity, power, jealousy, etc. When our emotional mind continues to disturb us, we will continue to lose our Original Essence, affect our smooth Qi circulation, and naturally will dirty our original pure spiritual human being. In this case, it does not matter how much you are able to regulate your breathing and Qi, you will eventually become sick and lose your life.

The key to Embryonic Breathing is learning how to protect Original Essence, maintain smooth Qi circulation, and also how to raise up the spiritual vitality. In order to keep your mind steady and calm at the Upper and Real Lower Dan Tians, the most important is learning how to regulate your emotional mind. In summary, this paragraph offers you a crucial key to Embryonic Breathing. It is regulating your emotional mind and continuing to search for the truth in protecting your Original Essence, Qi, and Shen.

23. The Righteous Rules of Heavenly Immortality (The Straight Discussion of Embryonic Breathing)²

《天仙正理·胎息直論》

When a human being is just beginning to formalize, it is only a combination of two Qis (i.e. Yin and Yang Qis) and it is as empty as the air. Therefore, there is no embryo and also no breathing. It is because of mother's respiration, the embryo is formalized. When the embryo is formalized, it begins the Embryonic Breathing. It is marvellous that the embryo's respiration follows the mother's respiration and therefore, breathing all day without feeling stagnation (of the oxygen). This is achieved not from the (embryo's) mouth or nose respiration. Since there is only a connection through navel and thus as if there is no breathing at all. This is the scene of the real Embryonic Breathing.

夫人身初時，只二氣合一為虛空中之氣而矣，無胎也，亦無息也。因母呼吸而長為胎，因胎而長為息，及至胎全妙在隨母呼吸而為呼吸，所以終日呼吸而不逼悶，此緣不由口鼻呼吸，只臍相通，故能似無氣息一般，此真正胎息景也。

It is believed that a new life is originated from the combination of Yin and Yang Qis. Yin Qi implies the Qi coming from the mother, while Yang Qi implies the Qi coming from the father. Since Qi is an energy which does not have material form, it is empty. If there is no materialized form, there is no life yet and thus no breathing. Later, as the embryo is conceived and grows, it breathes following the mother and obtains oxygen and nutrition from her. This is how Embryonic Breathing occurs.

In this article, it is implied that the Qi originated from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) is Yin Qi (i.e. water Qi) while the Qi originated from the Post-Heaven Essence is Yang Qi (Post-Heaven Qi, 後天氣) (i.e. fire Qi). When these two Qis are unified at the Huang Ting (黃庭), the spiritual baby embryo can be conceived and formalized. In order for this embryo to grow, you must continue the Yin Qi nourishment. This Yin Qi is considered as the mother's Qi which is able to nourish the Spiritual Embryo and allow it to grow. However, in order to generate abundant Yin Qi (Original Qi), you must learn how to protect and conserve your Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精). To reach this goal, you must keep your mind at the center without being attracted by the outside world. Through the correct slender and soft breathing, the baby embryo can be grown in the Huang Ting cavity.

24. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Hai Chan Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(海蟾真人胎息訣)

What is the Original Qi (Yuan Qi)? It is the mother of the heaven and the earth, the root of the Great Dao (Da Dao), and the (original natural) quality of Yin and Yang. In objects, it is named "the Qi of purity and benefit." In human, it is named "Original Qi." This means the human physical life and temperament. Each day and night, there are thirteen thousand and five hundred respirations and often the Real Qi (i.e. Original Qi) leaks through nose and mouth during these respirations. Those holy men (i.e. persons who have reached the Dao) who practice Embryonic Breathing always take in (the Qi) and (store it in Real) Dan Tian, therefore, the air is out and in slenderly, the mind is steady and body is peaceful, consequently, gain longevity. What is longevity? It is the (result of) mutual harmonization of the Xin, Shen, and Qi. It belongs to the truth of the Dao.

夫元氣者，天地之母，大道之根，陰陽之質。在物名淳利之氣，在人名元氣者也，乃性命也。凡一晝一夜，一萬三千五百息，常常口鼻泄了真氣。聖人久煉胎息者，常納于丹田，故微微出入，定自身安而得長生。長生者乃心與神氣相合，與道同真也。

Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) is the root of all lives in this Great Nature (Da Dao, 大道). When it is manifested, it determines the Yin and Yang qualities of all

objects. Naturally, we humans also have this Original Qi which is converted from Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) in our bodies. If you are able to protect and preserve the Original Essence, the Original Qi converted from it will be abundant and pure. This implies that you will have a long and healthy life.

The key to Embryonic Breathing is through soft and slender breathing. Normally, we have 13,500 respirations each day. Since there are 86,400 seconds each day, that means it takes about 6.4 seconds for each respiration. This document explains that our Original Qi continuously leaks to the outside world through respiration. In order to protect and preserve our Original Qi, we must slow down our breathing and extend our respiration. Original Qi is also called “Zhen Qi” (真氣) which means “Real Qi.” When the breathing is slow, the Xin can be calm and the physical body will be relaxed and peaceful. Then the mind can be unified and harmonized with Shen and Qi. This is the key to conceiving a Spiritual Embryo.

In summary, the keys to reaching longevity through Embryonic Breathing are: 1. Slow, soft, and slender breathing; 2. Keep the mind in its extreme calm state (i.e. Wuji state at the Real Lower Dan Tian); 3. Harmonize your mind with Shen and Qi.

25. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Lang Ran Zi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (朗然子胎息訣)

Whoever wishes to cultivate his human nature (i.e. temperament), (should) burn incense and enter into an (isolated) room, sit quietly with profound Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind), bite the teeth and gather the Shen. Calm the Yi horse and tame the Xin monkey and place them together at (the Real) Dan Tian. Nourish them with warm (Qi). Do not allow the internal vision out. It is just like a commander marches his soldiers. The Shen is the commander and the Qi is the army. Where the Qi arrives, the Shen also arrives. Two things mutually chase each other, not allow to separate. (Thus,) ten thousand sicknesses will not be related, and thousands disasters all exterminated. If those who wish to study the Dao have already gained this method, (they) should practice diligently.

凡修性之人，焚香入室，靜坐冥心，叩齒集神。定意馬，伏心猿，都收在一處，放在丹田，令溫養之，內視勿出。如元帥行軍，神是主，氣是軍，氣到處神到，二物相逐，不得相離，萬病不干，千災皆滅。學道之人，若得此法，勤而行之。

This document emphasizes that the important key to practicing Embryonic Breathing is to place your Yi and Xin at the Real Lower Dan Tian and gradually build up the Qi there, to nourish the mind with Qi. The key to reaching this goal is to keep the vision inward (internal vision). That means paying attention to internal

feeling and cutting off all feeling and vision connecting with the outside world. This kind of internal feeling practice is called “Nei Shi Gongfu” (內視功夫) and means “The Gongfu of internal vision.” It is called “Gongfu” (功夫) because it will take a lot of time, effort, and practice to reach a profound level of this inner feeling.

The place you meditate must be quiet and not have any disturbance. When you sit, keep your mind in the Yin side. This is called “Ming Xin” (冥心). Ming (冥) represents the Yin Space (Yin Jian, 陰間) (spiritual world), which is opposite to the Yang Space (Yang Jian, 陽間) of the material world. Xin (心) is the emotional mind that links you together with the emotional and material world. If you are able to keep your mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you will be able to cut off your mental connection with the outside world, conserve your Qi and store it there. If you can do so, you will be healthy and the Shen will be high. This is the key to health and longevity. If your mind is away from this center, it will lead your Qi away, and naturally, consume the Qi.

26. *The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo* (*Li Shan Lao Mu's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing-Continuum*)^{2,3,7}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (續驪山老母胎息訣)

Classic said: “The heaven and the earth are the thieves of the million objects, million objects are the thieves of humans, and humans are the thieves of the million objects.” These three ways are mutually adverse with each other, which results in the loss of the real Qi, essence, and Shen, consequently the Embryonic Breathing cannot be formalized. Therefore, those who cultivate human nature (i.e. temperament) do not love million objects, and thus their human temperament will not be stolen naturally. Therefore, it is said: “Ben Fen’ (i.e. Keeping Honest).” What those Daoists do is, I don’t want what is yours, you don’t want what is mine, and I just simply keep what I have already (acquired) honestly (Shou Fen). Then, what is Shou Fen (i.e. keep what I already have)? It is without exit and without entrance, always keep myself (i.e. my human nature being) at its root and origin, not moving and not still, not going and not coming, as if it is there and as if it is not there. (I am just like) a dead living human, then immortality is near.

經云：‘天地，萬物之盜；萬物，人之盜；人萬物之盜。’故三道相反，走失了真氣精神也，不成胎息。故修性之人，不愛萬物，自不盜你本性也。故云：‘本分。’道人我不要你底，你不要我底，只守分。守分者何也？乃是不出，常守本源，不動不靜，不來不去，似有似無，是箇死的活人，仙道近矣。

When millions of objects die, they lose their essence and Qi to the heaven and earth, therefore, the heaven and the earth are the thieves of millions of objects. Humans consume the essence and the Qi of millions of objects (i.e. air, food, sub-

stance) and therefore, humans are the thieves of millions of objects. When humans die, the essence and Qi return to nature and are consumed by the millions of objects (i.e. animals and plants) and therefore, millions of objects are also thieves of humans. These are the natural cycles.

In order to practice Embryonic Breathing and achieve longevity, we must first restrain emotional desires, conserve the essence, and keep the mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian. In this case, your mind will not be attracted by the outside world, and consequently, your essence and Qi can be kept in their residences. “Ben Fen” (本分) means: keep “what you deserve” or “fulfill what you should fulfill.” “Shou Fen” (守分) means “to keep what you should keep” and do not go beyond it. Therefore, it implies to protect, to keep, and to preserve your Original Essence and be precious in keeping your Qi at its residence, the Real Lower Dan Tian. When you treat yourself like a dead person, your emotions will not be touched and attracted by the outside environment. In this case, you have regulated your mind and are able to keep it at the Real Lower Dan Tian.

In conclusion, the keys of longevity are: 1. Keep the mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian and not being attracted by outside events; 2. Protect and preserve your Original Essence and Qi.

27. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Xiao Yao Zi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)⁶

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (逍遙子胎息訣)

To cultivate means to establish a strong will and to nourish. Nourish means to take care, to tame, and to reach the truth sincerely. Those who wish to cultivate the breathing must first cultivate their essence; if they wish to cultivate the essence, they must first cultivate their Shen; if they wish to cultivate their Shen, they must first cultivate their temperaments; if they wish to cultivate their temperaments, they must first cultivate their physical lives. What the temperament and life mean, it means the Shen and Qi, the soul (Hun) and vigorous energy (Po), Yin and Yang, Kan and Li. After practicing for a long time, the Holy Embryo (Sheng Tai) can be formed. This is the real Embryonic Breathing.

夫修者，志也，養也。養也，頤也，伏也，真也。凡欲養息，先須養精；凡欲養精，先須養神；凡欲養神，先須養性；凡欲養性，先須養命。性命者，乃是神氣也，魂魄也，陰陽也，離坎也。久而行之，結成聖胎，乃真胎息也。

In order to cultivate anything, you need a strong will to accomplish it. Without this, you will fail. Therefore, the first step of practicing Embryonic Breathing is establishing your confidence and a strong commitment to yourself. Next, you must

understand that the cultivating process is long and time-consuming. The formalization of a Spiritual Embryo is through continuous Qi nourishment through correct breathing. Once this Spiritual Embryo is conceived, it is truthful, pure, simple, and restrained as a baby. Therefore the goal of nourishment is the truth, the purity, and the simplicity of this Spiritual Embryo.

To cultivate Embryonic Breathing correctly, first you must learn how to firm your essence, conserve it without wasting it. In order to do this, first firm your spiritual center. For this, first regulate your temperament, retrain your desires, and control your emotions. This is the inner side (Yin side) of a human being. However, you must also have a strong physical body (Yang side) to support your life. Without it, you will be sick, and your mind will be scattered, emotional, and confused. Therefore, the temperament (Yin) and the physical health (Yang) are the two most important things for your training. The way to reach this goal is through cultivation of Shen and Qi. When the Shen and Qi are cultivated, the soul (Hun, 魂) (Yin) and vigorous energy (Po, 魄) (Yang) can be strong. This is the way of Yin and Yang balance.

To summarize, this article emphasizes the importance of dual cultivation of both mental and physical bodies. It also points out that the entire success of Embryonic Breathing practice depends on how much you are able to cultivate your internal mentality first.

28. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Yan Meng Zi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)³

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (煙夢子胎息訣)

Those who are moving are originally moving, and those who are still are originally still. There was no such moving or stillness in ancient time originally. However, the origin of the movement and stillness is initiated through the unsteady thinking of all lives. Ancient wise men taught us how to stabilize (i.e. calm down) the breathing. (When this happens,) the Shen will follow (the Qi) and Qi is stabilized. Consequently, the Qi stays (at its residence) and the Shen is stable. If the Qi is agitated, the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) will be excited. When the Xin is excited, then the Shen will be fatigued (easily). Those who wish to cultivate the Dao, if they do not practice Embryonic Breathing, then there is an origin of the movement and stillness. In this case, how can they enter the door of "Wuwei" (i.e. doing nothing). Therefore, they are lost.

夫動者本動，靜者本靜，古者本無動靜，且動靜一源，蓋為一切眾生妄想不定，聖人留教，教人定息。神隨氣定，氣住神定。若氣動心動，心動神疲。凡修道之人，不行胎息，則有動靜之源，怎入無為之門戶也，走失了也。

The movement (or excitement) and stillness (or calmness) here means the mind's behavior. Movements are considered as Yang while stillness is considered as Yin. At the beginning of human history, humans were the same as all other animals, all behaved naturally and followed the Dao of nature. There was no desire or any emotional bondage. Therefore, there was no distinctness of movements or stillness of the mind. Everything was done in a natural way.

However, later humans started to create seven emotions and six desires, then the mind became active. Since then we have learned how to lie, to play tricks, to love, to hate, to be jealous, to be angry, etc. Consequently, we have been trapped in human emotional bondage. The seven emotions or compassions (Qi Qing, 七情) are: happiness (Xi, 喜), anger (Nu, 怒), sorrow (Ai, 哀), joy (Le, 樂), love (Ai, 愛), hate (Hen, 恨), and lust (Yu, 慾). The six desires (Liu Yu, 六慾) are the temptations generated from the six roots which are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Once we have generated these emotions and desires, the mind actively leads the Qi away from its residence and consumes it. In order to preserve the Qi and allow it to stay at its residence (i.e. the Real Lower Dan Tian), you must know how to keep your mind away from those human emotions and desires so you are able to calm down your mind. Only when your mind has been calmed, can your Shen be condensed, focused, and cultivated.

In order to reach this goal, the first step is to stabilize your breathing and make it peaceful and calm. Then the physical body will be relaxed, and the oxygen and Qi consumption will be reduced to its minimum. The mind will also be centered and calm. Only then can the Shen be focused and raised up to a high level. Once you are able to do so, you will have returned to the beginning stage of life and behave like a baby. This is the stage of no movement (action), of stillness of the mind. It is the stage of Wuwei (無為) (doing nothing) and Wuji (無極) (no discrimination of Yin and Yang)

29. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Zhang, Guo-Lao's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)³

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(玉云張果老胎息訣)

What is the embryo? It is (the fetus grown) in the palace (i.e. womb) (the place) where the life is originated. Through breathing, the Qi is received at the Yuan Hai (i.e. Original Ocean) which is located one cun and three fen under the mother's navel and named "Dan Tian" (i.e. Elixir Field). After accepting the real essence (i.e. sperm), the shape (i.e. embryo) is formalized and begins to receive the Qi of the heaven and the earth. After one month, it is (the size) as a (tiny) pearl, two months as a dewdrop, three months as a peach or plum, this results from the pure and simple harmonious Qi. The embryo is in mother's womb; when mother exhales, he exhales, and when mother inhales, he inhales. When ten months period is up, the Qi is abundant, the six emotions are generated and (the mind is) toward outside, does not return his vision (i.e. feeling) and pay attention to his origin, without protecting the inner breathing (i.e. Qi), con-

sequently, there is life and death. Therefore those holy men said: "I should not indulge my San Shi (i.e. three origins of temptations), the (activity of) six emotions ceases and (the mind is) always kept at the Dan Tian through breathing, keep there without slightly retreating (i.e. slackness). Those who cultivate the Dao, must first cultivate the entrance (i.e. way) of keeping the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) calm." Also said: "To end (i.e. terminate) the Xin so as to cultivate the Dao, then effort can be saved and (immortality) can be reached easily; for those who do not end the Xin first and cultivate the Dao, then in vain and useless. First, (you) must end the origin of the Xin, then (your mind) can be steady by itself. Consequently, the dragon and tiger (i.e. Yin and Yang) can be tamed and controlled, the success of immortality can be reached."

夫胎者，受生之宮也。息氣納于元海，在母臍下一寸三分，名曰丹田。受真精成形，納天地之氣，一月如珠，二月如露，三月如桃李，此名淳和之氣朴也。子在母胞胎之中，母呼則呼，母吸則吸，至于十月氣足，而生六情轉于外，豈于返視元初，不守內息，故有生死。故聖人云：‘我不縱三尸，六情常息于丹田，守而無退。凡修道之人，先修心靜之門。’又云：‘了心修道，則省力而易成；不了心修道，修道者返費功而無益。先了心源，然後自定，自然龍虎伏觀，仙道必成矣。’

“Yuan Hai” (元海) means “Original Ocean.” This is the Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田) (Lower Elixir Field) or Qihai (Co-6) (氣海) (Qi Ocean) which is able to produce the Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) unlimitedly like an ocean. One cun (寸) of Chinese length equals one-third of a decimeter and one fen (分) equals one-third of a centimeter. San Shi (三尸) means “three corpses” and are the three desires which could lead you to your death. They are the temptations of money, taste (food) and sex. Liu Qing (六情) is a special Buddhist term that means “six compassions” derived or generated from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

This paragraph explains that in order to formalize a Spiritual Embryo, you must learn how to lead the Qi to the Real Lower Dan Tian. In order to do so, you must first know how to regulate your emotional mind (Xin, 心). If your mind is tempted and excited, the Qi will be led away from its residence. In this case, the Spiritual Embryo cannot be conceived. Therefore, the first step in cultivation is to end the activities of the emotional mind (Xin, 心).

The location of (the Lower) Dan Tian is one cun and three fen under the navel and is the palace site (i.e. main location) which controls three hundred and sixty key positions (of the body). The essence, brightness (i.e. righteousness of the mind), and the Shen protect the Original Qi (Yuan Qi). There is a Spiritual Turtle (Shen Gui) inside who utters and receives the Original Qi, keeps the breathings to and fro. There are thirteen thousand and five hundred respirations each day and night. The Original Qi has been leaked from the mouth and the nose, consequently the evil Qi has entered and invaded (the body), thus sicknesses are ini-

tiated. (Lower) Dan Tian is the origin of the Qi's production. Named as "Dan Tian" (i.e. Elixir Field), second named as "Jing Lu" (i.e. Essence Path), third named as "Qihai" (i.e. Qi Ocean), fourth named as "Shou Gong" (i.e. Abide in the Palace), fifth named as "Da Yuan" (i.e. Great Origin), sixth named as "Shen Shi" (i.e. Spiritual Residence), seventh named as "Yuan Cang" (i.e. Original Treasure), eighth named as "Cai Bao" (i.e. Picking the Treasure), ninth named as "Shu Ji" (i.e. Earth), and tenth named as "Ben Gen" (i.e. Original Root). All these names mean the residence of the grand harmonious Original Qi. If (you) know how to preserve the Essence and Qi at the (Lower) Dan Tian, then (you) will gain the Dao of longevity. Those who wish to cultivate the Dao, it does not matter if they are walking, stopping, sitting, or lying down, they should always absorb and contain the Real Breathing (i.e. Embryonic Breathing) at the Dan Tian, then the Original Qi can be preserved firmly. After practicing for a long time, immortality can be reached. This is the Embryonic Breathing of the Truthful Persons (i.e. those who have reached the truth of the Dao).

夫丹田者，在臍下一寸三分，是元氣之宮位，管三百六十坐，精光神守護元氣，內有神龜一坐，吐納元氣，往來呼吸，一晝一夜，一萬三千五百息，皆元氣于口鼻中泄出，故引入邪氣，所侵而生病也。丹田者，生氣之源。一名丹田，二名精路，三名氣海，四名守宮，五名大源，六名神室，七名元藏，八名採寶，九名戊己，十名本根。皆是太和元氣，居止之處。若存精氣于丹田，則得長生久視之道。凡修行之人，行住坐臥，常含納真息于丹田，則得元氣成實，久煉而成仙矣。斯乃真人之胎息也。

“Shen Gui” (神龜) means “Spiritual Turtle.” Turtles can live for a long time. It is believed the reason for this is that they know how to keep their physical body calm, still, and their Shen centered. Therefore, often Spiritual Turtle implies the immortality of the Spiritual Embryo which resides at the Real Lower Dan Tian. The key to forming this Spiritual Turtle is through profound Embryonic Breathing. When the Original Qi is able to stay at its residence, the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived.

After so many thousands of years of Qigong study in countless schools, there are many names for the Qi's residence (i.e. Qi Origin or Dan Tian). This article points out only ten of many.

3.3 ABOUT THE DAN TIAN 丹田

1. Dialogue of Golden Elixir

《金丹問答》

Brain is Upper (Elixir) Field (Shang Dan Tian), the Xin (i.e. heart) is the Middle (Elixir) Field (Zhong Dan Tian), and Qihai is Lower (Elixir) Field (Xia Dan Tian). If (one) is able to turn around the situation through catching the pivotal function of the dipper's handle, then the circulation between the top (i.e.

Upper Dan Tian) and the bottom (i.e. Lower Dan Tian) will be just like the circulation of the heavenly river.

腦為上田，心為中田，氣海為下田。若得斗柄之機斡旋，
則上下循環如天河之流轉也。

In Chinese Qigong society, the exact positions of the three Dan Tians are often confusing and controversial. Due to more than two thousand years of independent study by different groups such as medical, scholar, Buddhist, Daoist, and martial arts, different names or locations are also somewhat different. Therefore, you should not be confused and simply believe just from one of the ancient documents. In fact, as long as you calm down and use the scientific, logical mind to analyze them, you will have no doubt about where the three Dan Tians are.

As explained in Chapter 2, “Dan” (丹) means “Elixir” and “Tian” (田) means “Field.” Therefore, Dan Tian means the place in the body where the elixir can be grown or stored. Elixir implies the Qi which is able to offer you health and longevity. Generally speaking, there are three recognized Dan Tians: Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田), Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田), and Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田). The Lower Dan Tian can again be subdivided into False Lower Dan Tian (Jia Xia Dan Tian, 假下丹田) and Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田).

The authors of most of the documents believe that the Upper Dan Tian is located at the central point between the two eyebrows and about three inches directly inward. In the document, *Embracing Simplicity* (抱朴子), it is said: “The space between the two eyebrows, one inch inward is Mingtang (明堂), two inches inward is Dong Fang (洞房), and three inches inward is Shang Dan Tian (上丹田) (Upper Dan Tian).”²⁸ This is the center of the brain at the bottom of the Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷). It is where the pineal and pituitary glands are located. These two glands are called “Ni Wan” (泥丸) (Mud Pills) and this central area of the brain is called “Ni Wan Gong” (泥丸宮) which means “Mud Pill Palace” in Daoist society. From this center, the unlimited Qi can be produced. In fact, as known today, due to the hormone production in the pineal and pituitary glands, the body’s biochemical reaction and metabolism can be smoothly carried out, and the Qi in the body can be abundant, with the Spirit of Vitality (Jing Shen, 精神) raised up to a higher level.

Some others believe the entire brain is the Upper Dan Tian. *Eastern Medical Advices of Maintaining Health* (東醫保鑒) said: “Brain is Upper Dan Tian... is the residence of the concealed Shen.”²⁹ The valley-like space between the two lobes of the brain is called “Shen Gu” (神谷) (Spiritual Valley) or “Tian Gu” (天谷) (Heaven Valley) where the “Gu Shen” (谷神) (Valley Spirit) resides. This valley acts as an energy chamber that allows your thinking to vibrate and resonate with the surrounding energy and communicate with other natural spirits. The front end of the valley is the

“Heaven Eye” (Tian Yan, 天眼) or “Heaven Gate” (Tian Men, 天門) and is what the Western world calls “The Third Eye.” It is believed that we humans had this third eye, just as other animals do, and it was opened for us to communicate with other spirits through telepathy a long time ago. Later, when we learned how to lie, cheat, and play tricks on each other, in order to hide our secrets behind the mask, we closed it down and stopped the brain communicating directly through telepathy.

According to Buddhist and Daoist societies, when this third eye is re-opened, we will be enlightened and suddenly comprehend the meaning of life and nature. Naturally, we will resume our capability of telepathy and read other peoples mind’s. When this happens, you must retire to the mountains and keep away from the masked human society. In order to reach this spiritual enlightenment, you must learn how to build up abundant Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian and lead it upward through the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (spinal cord) to nourish the brain. When the brain has been energized to a higher level, The Third Eye will be re-opened.

The Upper Dan Tian has also been called “Shang Dao” (上島), “Shang Tu Fu” (上土釜), or “Shang Tian Guan” (上天關), among other names. To avoid complexity, we will not explain all of these alternative names here.

Generally, the Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田) is believed to be located on the Shanzhong (膻中) area which is the center between the nipples. In the Daoist document, *Embracing Simplicity, Inner Chapter, Di Zhen Roll* (Bao Pu Zi Nei Pian, Di Zhen Juan, 抱朴子內篇·地真卷), it is said: “Under the heart is Jiang Gong (絳宮) (Crimson Palace), Jin Que (金闕) (Golden Palace), and Middle Dan Tian.”³⁰ Therefore, Middle Dan Tian is also called Jiang Gong or Jin Jue. This has also been mentioned in the document, *Eastern Medical Advice for Maintaining Health* (東醫保鑒): “The heart is Jiang Gong, Middle Dan Tian,...is the residence of storing Qi.”³¹ In Chinese Qigong, it is known that the Middle Dan Tian is the residence of the “Fire Qi” (Huo Qi, 火氣) while the Lower Dan Tian is the residence of the “Water Qi” (Shui Qi, 水氣). The Fire Qi is produced from the air and food essence taken into our bodies after the birth and therefore called “Post-Heaven Qi” (Hou Tian Qi, 後天氣). The Water Qi is converted from the Original Essence (hormones) from the kidneys (adrenals and testicles) and therefore called “Pre-Heaven Qi” (Xian Tian Qi, 先天氣).

In actuality, behind the Middle Dan Tian area is the diaphragm. Through the diaphragm’s up and down movements, we are able to take in oxygen and get rid of carbon dioxide. Due to these heavy exercise occurring in every second of our lives, the diaphragm is thought to be made of highly electrically conductive tissue. On the top and the bottom of the diaphragm are the fasciae, which are poor electric conductors.³² When a good conductor is sandwiched between two poor conductors, the charges can be stored as a battery. I believe that this is how this area is able to accumulate the Qi (bioelectricity).

The Middle Dan Tian has also been called “Huang Tang” (黃堂), “Tu Fu” (土府), and “Huang Ting” (黃庭), etc. Again, we will offer no further interpretation for these names.

There are many names for the Lower Dan Tian such as “Qihai” (氣海) (Qi Ocean), “Guan Yuan” (關元) (Key Origin), “Mingmen” (命門) (Life Door), “Shen Lu” (神爐) (Spiritual Furnace), “Tian Gen” (天根) (Heaven’s Root), “Ling Gu” (靈谷) (Divine Valley), etc. It is named so because the Lower Dan Tian is the root and the origin of our physical and spiritual lives. You should remember that it (Yang pole) is one of the Two Polarities which constitute our body’s central energy system. The other pole, the Yin pole, is the Upper Dan Tian. These Two Polarities are connected by the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal Cord), a very highly electrically conductive material. Therefore, though physically there are Two Polarities, in function, they are actually one, because they correspond and synchronize with each other.

According to Daoist Qigong practice, there are actually two Lower Dan Tians, one is called “False Lower Dan Tian” (Jia Xia Dan Tian, 假下丹田) and the other is called “Real Lower Dan Tian” (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). The location of the False Dan Tian is located about three inches below the navel. In the document, *Eastern Medical Advices of Maintaining Health* (東醫保鑒), it is said that: “The place three inches under the navel is Lower Dan Tian... it is the residence of storing the essence.”³³ This place is also commonly called Qihai (氣海) (Qi Ocean) by Chinese medical society. This place is also often called “Elixir Furnace” (Dan Lu, 丹爐) since it is able to produce elixir (Qi). This False Dan Tian is located on the Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) which is connected with the Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈) at the Huiyin (會陰), thus connecting the path of Small Cyclic Heaven Circulation (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) (Figure 3-5). Through this circulation, the Qi can be distributed to the twelve primary Qi channels to support the physical body’s life and activities. Therefore, whenever the Qi is built up to a higher level at the False Dan Tian, the Qi will be distributed immediately, and cannot be stored to an abundant level. The Daoists called it the False Dan Tian, because if it were a Real Lower Dan Tian, it should be able to store the Qi to an abundant level.

Then, where is the Real Lower Dan Tian? In the document, *Seventh Bamboo Slips of the Bamboo Bookcase* (云笈七籤), it is said: “What is Dan Tian? It is the root of a human(s) life, the hidden place of the essence and Shen, the origin of five Qis (i.e. five internal Yin organs), and the residence of the embryo. Males use it to conceal the essence and females use it to preserve the liquid. It is the place for production of the baby and the door of unification and harmonization of Yin and Yang. It is located three inches underneath the navel (in the body) attached to the spine, and the root of two (internal) kidneys.”³⁴ From this document, we can see the place of the Real Lower Dan Tian is recognized as the place underneath the navel and in front of the kidneys.

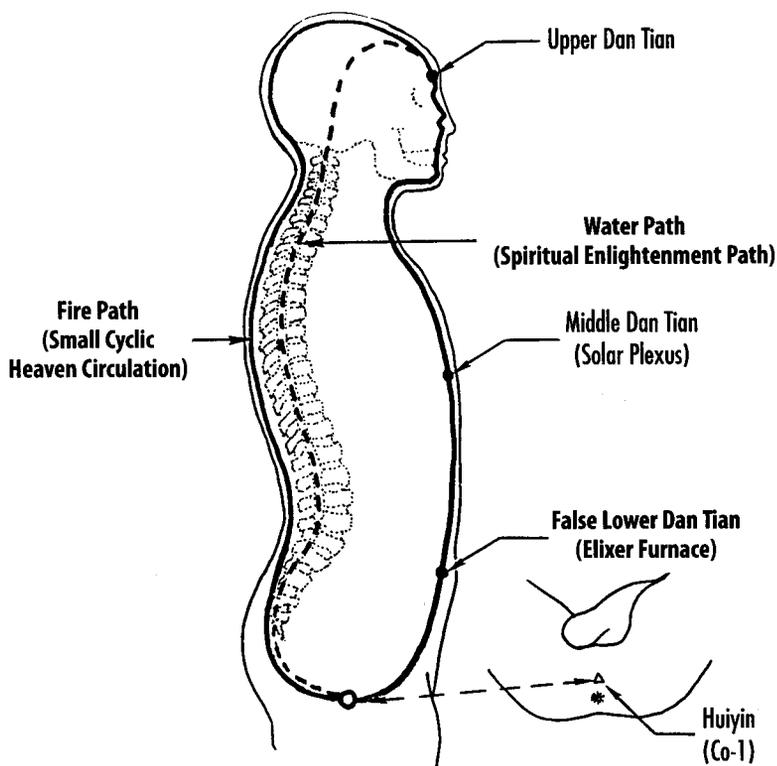


Figure 3-5. The Water and Fire Paths of Qi Circulation

2. Observing Vessels²

《脈望》

Dan Tian, is the root of life. This is the reason why those Daoists who ponder (i.e. meditate) for their spiritual (cultivation) and Buddhists who meditate for (their Buddhahood), all gather the real Qi (i.e. Original Qi) under the navel. There is a Spiritual Turtle (Shen Gui) in the Dan Tian who inhales and exhales this Real Qi (Zhen Qi). This respiration is not the breathing through the mouth and nose. The mouth and the nose are only the doors for respiration. Dan Tian is the origin of the Qi and is the place for those holy men to begin their cultivation. This is the place where they keep and store the "Real Singularity" (Zhen Yi), therefore, it is called "Embryonic Breathing."

丹田，性命之本。道士思神，比丘坐禪，皆聚真氣于臍下，良由此也。丹田內有神龜，呼吸真氣，非口鼻之呼吸也。口鼻只是呼吸之門戶，丹田為氣之本源，聖人下手之處，收藏真一所居，故曰胎息。

Meditation is called “Da Zuo” (打坐) or “Zuo Chan” (坐禪). It does not matter whether those who meditate are Daoists or Buddhists, when they meditate they all learn how to keep the mind inside the body and the body relaxed. In this way, they are able to store the Qi to a higher level at the Lower Dan Tian, which is located under the navel.

“Zhen Yi” (真一) means “Real One” or “True Singularity.” This real one means the central Qi system that is constituted by the Two Polarities: the Yang pole at the Real Lower Dan Tian, that provides the quantity of the Qi and the Yin pole at the Upper Dan Tian, which controls the quality of the Qi’s manifestation (life). Physically, there are Two Polarities, however, in function, there is only one since these Two Polarities are the Yin and Yang of the same thing (Real One). If you are able to keep your mind in this “Real One” or “True Singularity,” you will be able to raise up your Spirit of Vitality (Jing Shen, 精神) and also establish an abundant storage of Qi.

As explained in Section 2-2, the air (Kong Qi, 空氣) we inhale through the nose is called “Shang Ceng Qi” (上層氣) which means “Upper Level Qi” or “Wai Qi” (外氣) which means “External Qi.” The bioelectricity stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian is called “Xia Ceng Qi” (下層氣) which means “Lower Level Qi” or “Nei Qi” (內氣) (Inner Qi.) Please review Section 2-2 for more detail.

3. Classic of Difficulties; 66th Difficulty

《難經·六十六難》

The site between (the place) under the navel, and between the kidneys, where the Qi is initiated, is the life of a human and the origin of Qi in the Twelve Primary Qi Channels. (Jing) Yang, Xun-Cao explained: “The site between (the place) under the navel, and between the kidneys is Dan Tian. Dan Tian is the root and foundation of a human.”

臍下腎間動氣者，人之性命也，十二經之根本也。楊玄操注：‘臍下腎間動氣者，丹田也。丹田者，人之根本也。’

From this document, it is believed that the Dan Tian is below the navel, and that means the abdominal area. However, it is also between the kidneys. Here, you should know that the Chinese define kidneys as internal kidneys (Nei Shen, 內腎) and also external kidneys (Wai Shen, 外腎). Internal kidneys are the same kidneys as defined by Western medicine. However, the external kidneys means testicles or ovaries. All of these places are capable of producing “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精) (hormones).

This document talks about the Real Lower Dan Tian, which is considered to be the “second brain” located in the intestines. This place is able to store Qi or bioelectricity to an abundant level, and can be considered to be the bio-battery in the human body. This place is the root of human physical and spiritual life.

4. Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic; Appendix

《易筋經·附錄》

Huang Ting: The place which the immortals use to form the elixir. Huang Ting Classic said: "Underneath the heart, above (i.e. in front of) the kidneys, spleen on the left, and the liver on the right. The life door (Sheng Men) is in the front, the closed door (Mi Hu) is in the rear, they are connected like a ring, it is white like cotton with an inch diameter. It encloses the Essence and the refinement of the entire body... This place is opposite the navel and is the root of a human life."

黃庭：神仙結丹處。曰：“心下腎上，脾左肝右，生門在前，密戶居后，其連如環，其白如綿，方圓徑寸，包裹一身之精粹。．．．其處與臍相對。人之命脈根蒂也。”

“Huang Ting” (黃庭) (Yellow Yard) is also called “Yu Huan Xue” (玉環穴) (Jade Ring Cavity). The name Jade Ring is first used in the book, *Illustration of the Brass Man Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (銅人俞穴針灸圖), by Dr. Wang, Wei-Yi (王唯一). The Daoist book *Wang Lu Shi Yu* (王錄識餘) said: “In the *Illustration of the Brass Man Acupuncture and Moxibustion* it was recorded (that) within the body’s cavities of viscera and bowels, there is a Jade Ring (Yu Huan, 玉環), (but) I do not know what the Jade Ring is.” Later, the Daoist Zhang, Zi-Yang (張紫陽) explained the place which the immortals use to form the elixir: “The Heart is on the top, the kidneys are underneath, spleen is on the left, and the liver is on the right. The life door (Sheng Men, 生門) is in the front, the concealed door (Mi Hu, 密戶) is in the rear—they are connected like a ring, it is white like cotton with an inch diameter. It encloses the essence and the refinement of the entire body. This is the Jade Ring.”³⁵

“Sheng Men” (生門) means “Life Door”, namely the navel which allows a fetus to absorb the supplies for its life. “Mi Hu” (密戶) means “Concealed Door” which implies the Mingmen (Gv-4) (命門) cavity located between L2 and L3 vertebrae (Figure 3-6). It is said in *Classic of Huang Ting’s External Scene* (黃庭外景經):

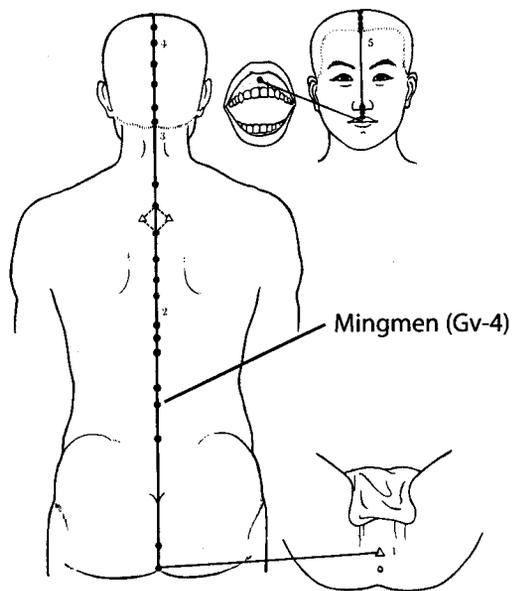


Figure 3-6. The Mingmen (Gv-4) Cavity

“Above Mingmen, there are two esoteric marvellous apertures, left is Xuan (玄) and right is Pin (牝) (two internal kidneys). There is an empty place between named ‘Huang Ting.’”⁶ From this, we can see that Huang Ting actually is the second brain where the guts are. This place is also called “Real Lower Dan Tian” (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) or the bio-battery of a human body. This place is able to store the Qi or bioelectricity to an abundant level.

5. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament (About Large and Small Tripod and Furnace)

《性命圭旨全書》 (大小鼎爐說)

Huang Ting is the tripod, Qi Xue (Qi cavity) is the furnace. Huang Ting is just on the top of the Qi Xue, mutually connected with numerous Luo (i.e. secondary Qi channels), and is the meeting place of hundreds of Qi vessels (and channels) in a human body. Original Qi (Yuan Qi) is dense between these two cavities (i.e. between Huang Ting and Qi Xue) and is called “Small Tripod Furnace.” If “the position of Qian is the tripod and the position of the Kun is furnace,” then it means the Ni Wan (i.e. Upper Dan Tian or brain) is the tripod and the Lower (Real) Dan Tian is the furnace. This is called “Big Tripod Furnace.”

“黃庭為鼎，氣穴為爐。黃庭正在氣穴上，縷絡相連，乃人身百脈交會之處。”元氣氤氳二穴之間，謂之“小鼎爐。”“乾位為鼎，坤位為爐。”即泥丸宮為鼎，下丹田為爐，謂之“大鼎爐。”

Chinese Daoists liked to think of the training of longevity cultivation as the method of purifying elixir in the tripod above the furnace. Elixir implies the Qi circulating in the body. When it is cultivated and manifested correctly, you can obtain health, longevity, and even spiritual enlightenment.

Through thousands of years, Daoists continued their search for the tripod and furnace, to be able to accumulate the herb inside the tripod and then purify it through cultivation. They identified the two most important places and called them “Small Tripod Furnace” (Xiao Ding Lu, 小鼎爐) and “Big Tripod Furnace” (Da Ding Lu, 大鼎爐).

In “Small Tripod Furnace,” the Real Lower Dan Tian is considered as the furnace since it provides the energy for cooking, while the Huang Ting (黃庭) is the tripod, believed to be the place for producing the Spiritual Embryo. Since the “Real Lower Dan Tian” is able to store the Qi to an abundant level and distribute it to the entire body, it is the center which connects with all Qi channels and vessels.

In “Big Tripod Furnace,” the head or Upper Dan Tian which is located at the Qian (乾) position of the human Trigram (Bagua, 八卦) is the tripod while the Lower Dan Tian area (including the Real Lower Dan Tian) located at the Kun (坤)

position of the human Trigram is the furnace. The Lower Dan Tian provides the quantity of the Qi while the Upper Dan Tian, through meditative cultivation (refining the elixir), enables the Qi manifestation to reach a higher level of efficiency. Consequently, the quality of physical and spiritual life can be improved. Please refer to Section 1-10 for a description of tripod and furnace.

6. Testimonial Thesis of Golden Immortality

《金仙証論》

Those who wish to pick up the herb (i.e. Qi) and transport it (i.e. circulate it) in the Cyclic Heaven (i.e. Small and Grand Circulations), should start the fire from Qi cavity Kun furnace (i.e. Lower Dan Tian). Ascend it to the Qian head as the tripod and descend it to the abdomen as the furnace. This is what the ancient people said about using Qian and Kun as the tripod tool. When there is a rise and fall of the Shen and Qi, then the Qi is existing in tripod. Note: "Qian is at the top and is the tripod while Kun is at the bottom and is the furnace. Whenever there is a Shen and Qi, then there is a furnace and tripod. If there is no Shen and Qi, then there is no furnace or tripod."

采藥運周天者，當從氣穴坤爐而起火，升乾首以為鼎，降坤腹以為爐。即古人所謂乾坤為鼎器者是也。見神氣之起伏，而鼎氣在是矣。注：“乾在上為鼎，坤在下為爐。有神氣即有爐鼎，無神氣即無爐鼎。”

In Daoist Qigong society, Qi is commonly thought of as herb (Yao, 藥) (elixir). Traditionally, Daoists were searching for the way of longevity through the purification and refinement of herbs and called it Dan (丹) (elixir). Later, they realized that the elixir was actually concealed in the body and was the Qi circulating in the body.

From the previous document, it is understood that the Lower Dan Tian (including the Real Lower Dan Tian) is the large furnace that produces the Qi (fire) while the Upper Dan Tian is the tripod where the Shen resides and receives the Qi so it can be raised up to a higher spiritual state.

In order to reach this goal, you must understand that the Lower Dan Tian provides the quantity of the Qi while the Upper Dan Tian, through Shen, controls the quality of the Qi manifestation (physical and spiritual life). Therefore, in order to reach a high level of achievement of immortality cultivation, Shen and Qi must be unified and harmonized with each other. This training is called “the unification and harmonization of Shen and Qi” (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合) in Qigong practice.

Theoretically, in order to reach the goal of longevity and enlightenment, you must have a strong healthy physical life and a high level of spirit. The way to achieve healthy physical life is through Small Cyclic Heaven (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) (Muscle/Tendon Changing Qigong) meditation practice. The method of reaching spiritual enlightenment is from spiritual Grand Cyclic Heaven meditation (Da Zhou

Tian, 大周天) (Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong). If you are interested in these two subjects, please refer to the book: *Qigong—The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

3.4 REGULATING THE BREATHING 調息

1. Dao De Jing (Chapter 5)¹

《道德經·五章》

Heaven and Earth (i.e. Nature) does not have benevolence, therefore, all millions of objects (i.e. lives) are treated just like Chu Gou. Those holy men do not have benevolence, therefore, the populace are treated as Chu Gou. Between the Heaven and the Earth, is it just like the Tuo Yue? Empty but cannot be bent (i.e. resources cannot be exhausted), the more it moves, the more it produces. If (we) talk too much about it, then it will be often limited (i.e. parted from the Dao). Therefore, it is better if (we) keep (ourselves) at the center (i.e. neutral thinking).

天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗；聖人不仁，以百姓為芻狗。
天地之間，其猶橐籥乎？虛而不屈，動而愈出。多言數
窮，不如守中。

Nature does not have emotions such as love, hate, glory, happiness or sadness. Even though millions of objects living in this nature are full of emotions and limited life, to nature, they are just like the sacrificial offering, Chu Gou (芻狗). Chu Gou were sacrificial dogs that were made from straw and used for ceremonies of worship in ancient China. The holy men cultivated their emotional minds to the neutral state, therefore, they were not touched by any emotional disturbances from laymen society. All events are only part of the natural occurrences.

The space between the heaven and the earth is just like Tuo Yue (橐籥). Tuo Yue is the bellows that was used to assist the air circulation in ancient times. This implies that through the natural Qi circulation, millions of lives are living within and relying on it to survive. Though it is empty, the blow of the air can never be exhausted. The more you act, the more the flow of the air will be generated.

All of these principles are the natural rules and the Dao of nature. The more we talk about it, the farther it is separated from nature. Therefore, you should think about it and comprehend it with your natural instinct. In this case, you will be able to feel it and understand it from your heart.

From the Qigong point of view, the head is considered as heaven (Qian, 乾) while the abdominal area is considered as earth (Kun, 坤). The space between is where the lungs are located which is just the space of the natural heaven and earth. In this space, the Qi (Kong Qi, 空氣) (air) circulates and keeps millions of cells alive. The mind (or the Shen) is the motive force which makes the internal Qi (bioelectricity) move or stop. The

more the mind acts, the more the Qi circulation is excited and out of control. Therefore, in order to calm down the body and keep the Qi at its residence, you must keep your mind centered at the neutral state. When this happens, there is no emotional disturbance no matter what happens around you. Your mind is not moved away from this center.

2. The Question from A Buddhist Guest about Listening to the Heart

《聽心齋客問》

Expanding the bellows means to regulate the real breathing. When exhaling, then the air exits and when inhaling, the air enters. When exiting, then it is like the earth Qi's ascending, and when entering it is like the heaven Qi's descending. This is the same as the heaven and the earth. Therefore, isn't the space between the heaven and the earth just like the wind bellows?

鼓橐籥，曰調真息。呼則氣出，吸則氣入，出則如地氣上升，入則如天氣下降，與天地同。故天地間，其猶橐籥乎？

As mentioned, “Tuo Yue” (橐籥) means “the bellows” that was used to assist the air circulation in ancient times. Breathing is considered as a strategy in Qigong practice, which is able to make the Qi circulate smoothly in the body. The lungs are considered as the air bellows while the Lower Dan Tian is considered the Qi bellows. When the air is taken in by the lungs, the Qi is sunken to the Lower Dan Tian like the Qi descending in nature. When the air is expelled by the lungs, the Qi in the Lower Dan Tian is rising up and being distributed to the body like the Qi ascending in nature. The human body is a small microcosm of heaven and earth. The tricky key to taking in the air and expelling it is the nose, while the piston of the Qi bellows in the Lower Dan Tian is at the Huiyin (Co-1, 會陰) (Perineum). Once you know how to regulate your breathing to a natural way (regulating without regulating), it is called “Real Breathing” (Zhen Xi, 真息).

3. An Essay about Regulating the Breathing

(The Complete Book of Zhu-Zi, Song Dynasty)

《調息箴》

(朱子全書·宋·朱熹撰)

The tip of the nose has white, I observe it (i.e. pay attention to it) all the time and all the places. Allow it soft, gentle, and pliant. When calmness has reached its extremity, it hisses like a spring fish in the pond. When action has reached its extremity, it is harmonized like hundred insects' torpidity. Open and close harmoniously and its marvelousness is unlimited. What else is able to preside? It is achieved from not presiding. The clouds lying in the sky and the heaven (i.e. nature) cycling as it is. Who dares to question it? Keeping in one place harmoniously. (Then, able to live) one thousand and two hundred years.

鼻端有白，我其觀之，隨時隨處，容與猗猗。靜極而噓，
如春沼魚，動極而翕，如百蟲蟄。氤氳開闔，其妙無窮，
誰其尸之？不宰之功。雲臥天行，非予敢議，守一處和，
千二百歲。

The white at the tip of the nose means the air. I should always pay attention to how I breathe, to be able to regulate it until it is soft, gentle, and pliant. When I am extremely calm (inhale to a profound level), then I exhale like a fish in the spring time. When I am extremely active (exhale to an efficient level), then I retain it calmly and harmoniously like insects' torpidity or dormancy. If I am able to breathe this way harmoniously, what else can I improve? All of the success depends on regulating without regulating. Once I have reached this state, it is like the clouds in the sky, and nature repeating its cycles. Who else dares to say I am wrong? When I am in this state, I am able to keep my mind at the "Real Lower Dan Tian" (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) harmoniously. In this case, there is nothing strange in being able to live one thousand and two hundred years.

This clearly implies that in order to obtain longevity, you must learn two important things. First, regulate your breathing until no regulating is necessary. Second, keep your mind at the "Real Lower Dan Tian" so the Qi can be kept at its residence. This means "Embryonic Breathing" (Tai Xi, 胎息).

4. Regulating the Breathing?

(Original Truth of Using No Herbs, Qing Dynasty)

《調息》

(勿藥元詮·清·汪昂輯)

The method of regulating the breathing has been thoroughly studied by three educational groups (i.e. Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism). (When reaching) the great achievement, (it) is able to enter the Dao and (when reaching) the small achievement, (it) is able to preserve health. Therefore, Sanskrit documents (i.e. Buddhist records from India) teach us to use the eyes to look at the nose tip, count the breaths in and out internally. This is the beginning practice of Stopping Vision (Zhi Guan) (attraction by sight). Zhuang Zi in his book Nan Wa Jing said: "A sage will breathe through the soles." Great Yi (i.e. Yi Jing, The Book of Change) explains in its trigram which stated: "When getting dark, gentlemen enter Yan Xi (i.e. meditation or profound breathing)." Wang, Long-Xi said: "The ancient sages had deep breathing without sleeping. Therefore, it is said when getting dark, (they) enter the Yan Xi." The method of Yan Xi is when it is getting dark, the ears do not hear, the eyes do not see, the four limbs are not moving, and the heart (i.e. Emotional Mind) does not have thinking or worry. It is just like a seed fire. The Pre-Heaven's Original Shen and Original Qi gather to nourish each other mutually. The real Yi is soft as cotton, open and close naturally. (The self-being) exists in the same body (i.e. space or dimension) as insubstantial emptiness. Therefore, it is able to live as long as insubstantial emptiness. Those

world people (i.e. laymen) are bothered with daily management, the spirit is bound and tired. It depends on the single night sleep to be able to be used during the day. A point of spiritual light (i.e. self-subconscious spiritual being) all covered by the Post-Heaven's dirty Qi. This is, the Yang falls into the Yin.

調息一法，貫徹三教，大之可以入道，小用可以養生。故迦文垂教，以視鼻端，自數出入息，為止觀初門。莊子《南華經》曰：‘聖人之息以踵。’大易隨卦曰：‘君子以向晦入晏息。’王龍溪曰：‘古之聖人，有息無睡，故曰向晦入晏息。’晏息之法，當向晦時，耳無聞，目無見，四體無動，心無思慮，如種火相似，先天元神元氣，停育相抱，真意綿綿，開闔自然，與虛空同體，故能與虛空同壽也。世人終日營擾，精神困憊，夜間靠此一睡，始夠一日之用。一點靈光，盡為后天濁氣所淹，是謂陽陷于陰也。

The techniques of regulating the breathing in Qigong practice have been popularly studied and practiced in three major philosophic schools, namely Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Breathing is considered to be the strategy of Qigong practice. If you practice correctly, you may gain good health and longevity. In Buddhist and Daoist societies, through correct breathing practice, the Qi can be stored and led upward to the brain to nourish the Shen for enlightenment. Entering the Dao (Ru Dao, 入道) means to enter the path of searching for the truth. The Daoists who have comprehended the truth of nature are called “Truthful Persons” (Zhen Ren, 真人).

Regulating the breathing in Buddhist society is considered a crucial key to regulating the mind. In order to stop the mind from continuous attraction and wandering in meditation, first place your attention at your breathing (use the eyes to look at the nose tip) (Yan Guan Bi, 眼觀鼻) and then count the breathing. From this you make the breathing deeper and calmer. Slowly, the thoughts connecting with the surroundings, the past, present and future will be stopped. In Buddhist meditation, this method is called “stopping the vision” (Zhi Guan, 止觀). Remember, when it is said: “to use the eyes to look at the nose tip,” it does not mean physically you are using the eyes to look at the nose. It simply means to bring in your attention from outside attraction, to concentrate on your breathing (i.e. nose).

The Daoist scholar Zhuang Zi (莊子) said: “A sage breathes through the soles.” This means the Two Gates’ breathing through the Yongquan (K-1, 湧泉) cavity. Later, it was developed into Four Gates breathing (two Yongquan and two Laogong at the palms), and finally reached the practice of “Five Gates” breathing (Wu Xin Hu Xi, 五心呼吸). Not only that, *Yi Jing* said: “When getting dark, gentlemen enter the Yan Xi (晏息) (Meditation or profound breathing).” This reveals that one of the best times for regulating the breathing is during or after sunset. At this time, nature and the body are turning from Yang to Yin state. If you practice regulating the breathing

at this time, you can easily calm down your physical and mental body and reach a profound level of meditation. This is also mentioned by Daoist Wang, Long-Xi (王龍溪). He implies that ancient sages (who have reached the Dao), through practicing regulating the breathing did not have to sleep or needed just a little sleep, because they were able to obtain a deep level of rest from meditation.

The way of “Yan Xi” (晏息) is during or after sunset, stop the ears from attractions by the noises around you. Close your eyes to stop the vision which can therefore allow you to enhance your feeling instead of looking. Keep the body extremely calm and relaxed. The mind should not worry or think. It is just like a tiny fire (little Yang within Yin) in the darkness. When this happens, the subconscious mind (Yin mind) will be awakened while the conscious mind (Yang mind) will be calm. In this case, the Original Spirit (Yuan Shen, 元神) will be raised and harmonized with the Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣). When you are in this deep profound meditative level, your Shen will unify with the natural Shen. This is different from normal people who must rely on the night’s sleep to overcome their tiredness. Even during sleeping, their minds are still confused by the dreams generated from human emotion and desires. In this case, the healthy mind and body will degenerate quickly, that is, the Yang falls into the Yin.

5. The Method of Regulating the Breathing² (Original Truth of Using No Herbs, Qing Dynasty)

《調息法》
(勿藥元詮·清·汪昂輯)

The method of regulating the breathing is: do not be restricted by the timing, sit (anywhere and anytime) you wish. The body is balanced and upright, and allow it to be comfortable and natural. Do not lean and curve (forward) (i.e. bowing forward). Take off the clothes and ease the belt to make sure (the body) is regulated properly. Circle the tongue in the mouth several times. Gently and slowly release the dirty air (from the lungs) and then gently and slowly take in (the air) from the nose. Repeat three to five times or one to two times. When there is saliva generated, swallow it. After biting the teeth a few times, the tongue touches the palate of the mouth. The lip and the teeth are closed, two eyes are closed like the new moon. Then gradually begin regulating the breathing. Do not pant and do not be coarse. Either count the exhalation or inhalation, from one to ten, from ten to hundred. Restrain (your) mind in counting and do not be disordered. If the mind and the breathing have harmonized with each other mutually and the random thoughts are generated no more, then stop counting and allow it be natural. The longer (you are) able to sit, the more marvellous it will be. If wish to raise up the body, (you) must slowly and comfortably extend your arms and legs. (You) should not raise up suddenly. If (you) are able to practice this intelligently, the various sceneries appearing in the calmness are peculiar. This is able to direct (you to the path of) enlightening (your) mind and comprehending the Dao. It is not just for preserving health and extending life.

調息之法，不拘時候，隨便而坐，平直其身，縱任其體，不倚不曲，解衣緩帶，務令調適。口中舌攪數遍，微微呵出濁氣，鼻中微微納之，或三、五遍，或一、二遍，有津咽下；叩齒數通，舌抵上齶，唇齒相著，兩目垂帘，令臚臚然；漸次調息，不喘不粗，或數息出，或數息入，從一至十，從十至百，攝心在數，勿令散亂，如心息相依，雜念不生，則止勿數，任其自然，坐久愈妙。若欲起身，須徐徐舒放手足，勿得遽起。能勤行之，靜中光景，種種奇特，直可明心悟道，不但養身全生而已也。

From the same source as the last one, this is another paragraph describing the method of regulating the breathing. From here, you can see that there are many methods of regulating the breathing, though the principles and the theory remain the same. These principles and theory are: keeping the body relaxed (regulating the body), keeping your mind calm and profound (regulating the mind), and breathing softly, deeply, and naturally (regulating the breathing). In order to regulate your breathing to a profound level, you must also regulate your body and mind. They must harmonize and coordinate with each other. The key to regulating the breathing is not to hold it, but to regulate it until it can be natural, smooth, and slender.

6. Four Demeanors of Regulating the Breathing² (Original Interpretation of Using No Herbs, Qing Dynasty)

《調息四相》

(勿藥元詮·清·汪昂輯)

There are four demeanors in regulating the breathing. Those when they breathe, there is a sound, it is classified as the wind breathing. If the wind persists, then (the Qi and the mind are) dispersed. Those when they breathe, there is no sound but when obstructed in the nose, it is classified as panting breathing. If the panting persists, then (the Qi and the mind are) stagnant. Those when they breathe, there is no sound and no stagnation but to and fro has the shape, it is classified as the Qi breathing. If (the mind) keeps in the Qi, then fatigued. (Those when they breathe) do not have sound and stagnation, (the air) exits and enters softly, as if it is existing and as if not existing. The Shen and the breathing are mutually relying on (i.e. harmonized with) each other. This is the demeanor of (real regulating) the breathing. When the breathing is truly regulated, then the mind is steady, the real Qi can be to and fro (naturally). This will allow (you) to capture the variations of the heaven and the earth (i.e. nature). Every breath returns to its origin. This is the stalk (root) of the life.

調息有四相：呼吸有聲者風也，守風則散；雖無聲而鼻中澀滯者喘也，守喘則結；不聲不滯而往來有形者氣也，守氣則勞；不聲不滯，出入綿綿，若存若亡，神氣相依，是息相也。息調則心定，真氣往來，自能奪天地之造化，息息歸根，命之蒂也。

This paragraph explains how, from the demeanors of a meditator, we can tell how correct and how deep is his breathing. Those who breathe heavily will make noise. When this happens, the Qi is dispersed and not gathered. Those who breathe without smoothness and uniformity, the Qi circulation will be stagnant. Those who pay too much attention to their breathing will be fatigued. Only those whose breathing is soft, slender, uniform, deep, natural and smooth, the Shen will be peacefully harmonized with the Qi circulation. When this happens, the Original Spirit (sub-conscious mind) will be awakened, which allows you to trace back the origin of our lives. Di (蒂) means “stalk” of a fruit or flower. Here it means the key passage connecting to the life.

7. Li Zhen Ren's Sixteen Marvellous Longevity Secret Words (Eight Notes of Life Abidance, Ming Dynasty)

《李真人長生一十六字妙訣》
(遵生八箋·明·高濂撰)

Once inhaling, immediately lift up (the perineum) to return the Qi to the navel (i.e. Lower Dan Tian); once lifting, immediately swallow (the saliva to allow) the water and fire to meet each other.

一吸便提，氣氣歸臍；一提便咽，水火相見。

Kan (坎) (water) means the water Qi produced from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精), while Li (離) (fire) means the fire Qi generated from the Post-Birth Essence (food and air). When these two sources meet each other, the Shen can be raised up to a higher level.

These sixteen words in Chinese reveal the secret of how to make the fire Qi and water Qi meet and interact with each other. This secret is at the Huiyin (Co-1, 會陰) cavity (perineum). When you inhale, gently lift up your perineum and lead the Qi to the Lower Dan Tian. Immediately right after the inhalation, swallow your saliva and lead the Qi down to the Lower Dan Tian. From this sentence, we can see that Reverse Abdominal Breathing should be used for this practice.

8. Recording of Marvellous Relations of Temperament, Heaven, Wind, and Moon²

(Teaching the Dao Between Teacher and Students)

《性天風月通玄記》
(師徒傳道)

There is a movement within the calmness and the fire is burning. This is the best time to train Da Fan (i.e. Great Returning). When (you) pick up this correct timing, it is called "herb" (i.e. elixir). In (the refinement of) the herb, there is a fire. If asked what is "martial fire?" Then, it is the great action of the strong wind. If asked what is the "scholar fire?" Then, it is the soft, continuous, and slender Embryonic Breathing.

靜中一動火正燃，此時正好煉大返。采時謂之藥，藥中有火焉。若問武火，大舉巽風；若問文火，胎息綿綿。

There are four steps in spiritual cultivation in Daoist society: A. Refining the Essence (Semen) and Converting it into Qi (Lian Jing Hua Qi, 練精化氣); B. Purifying Qi and Converting it into Shen (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 練氣化神); C. Refining Shen and Returning it to Nothingness (Lian Shen Fan Xu, 練神返虛); D. Crushing the Nothingness (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空). This training process is called "Da Fan" (大返) (Great Returning), meaning to "return the human temperament to the natural state." This term also means the re-unification of the human spirit with the spirit of nature (Tian Ren He Yi, 天人合一).

When your physical body has reached its extremely calm state, you will bring your Shen downward to the Real Lower Dan Tian to unify with the Qi. When this happens, through Embryonic Breathing, the Qi (fire) can be established. Once this fire is built to an abundant stage, the Qi is led upward to Huang Ting (黃庭) (tripod) to conceive the Spiritual Embryo. There are two ways of building up the fire to an abundant level. One is called "Martial Fire" (Wu Huo, 武火) and the other is called "Scholar Fire" (Wen Huo, 文火). In Martial Fire practice, you use heavy and faster breathing with the coordination of the abdominal up and down movements. This kind of breathing is called "Xun Feng" (巽風) and means "Great Wind." When this happens, the fire can be built up to an abundant state in a short time. This kind of breathing is commonly used in external martial arts. Here, you should understand that since in the martial fire practice, your physical body is more tensed and the breathing more shallow, the fire built up will be consumed immediately into physical manifestation. Therefore, through martial fire practice, it is harder to keep the fire built up internally for "Internal Elixir" (Nei Dan, 內丹) Qigong practice.

To build up the fire (Qi) to an abundant level and use it for the cultivation of internal elixir, you must use scholar fire. In scholar fire practice, your breathing is deep, slender, soft, and long. It is said in *Anthology of Daoist Village* (道鄉集): "What

is scholar fire? It is as if it stays, as if it exists. There is no decease (perish) and there is no assistance.” It is the state of “extremely slender when uttering (exhaling) and extremely soft when receiving (inhaling).”³⁷

9. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament²

(Xu, Qi-Yan's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)

《性命主旨全書》
(許棲岩胎息法)

Those who cultivate the Dao should always observe self internally, send away San Shi (i.e. Three Corpses), and get rid of Liu Zei (i.e. Six Thieves), receive the Qi in Dan Tian, stabilize the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) in Awakened Ocean (Jue Hai). When the Xin is steady, then the Shen is peaceful. When the Shen is peaceful, the Qi stays (at its residence). When Qi stays, then the embryo will grow. The growth of the embryo is due to the residence (i.e. the existence) of the breathing. If there is no breathing, there is no embryo and if there is no embryo, there is also no breathing. When the breathing stays (i.e. exists), the embryo will grow and (this is) the holy mother and spiritual baby. Therefore, it is said that when the Embryonic Breathing is steady, the metal and the wood will interact and when the Xin and Yi are peaceful, the dragon and the tiger will meet together.

凡修道者，常行內觀，遣去三尸，驅除六賊，納氣于丹田，定心于覺海。心定則神寧，神寧則氣住，氣住則胎長矣。胎之長者，由于息之住也。無息不胎，無胎不息。住息長胎，聖母神孩。故曰胎息定而金木交，心意寧而龍虎會也。

“Nei Guan” (內觀) means “Internal Observation.” Ancient documents often speak of “Gongfu of internal vision” (內視功夫). It is called Gongfu simply because it will take you a long time and great effort of practice to reach a profound level of internal observation (internal feeling). Only if you look internally, will you be able to understand yourself both physically and mentally. Therefore, if you wish to reach a profound level in your Qigong practice, you must first learn to feel internally. Remember, feeling is a language that allows communication between your mind and body. The more sensitive and clear your feeling is, the more you will be able to cultivate your being.

“San Shi” (三尸) (Three Corpses) are also commonly called “San Chong” (三蟲) (Three Worms). These are: the worm of desire which likes treasures and precious things; the worm which likes the tastes, easily loses its temper, despises those who are good and kind; and the worm that likes sex and makes one confused. If you know how to avoid these three worms, then you are able to stabilize your mind and keep it calm. “Liu Zei” (六賊) means: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and emotional mind (Xin, 心), which could disturb your feeling and increase your six desires (Liu Yu, 六慾).

If you wish to cultivate your Embryonic Breathing, you must first learn how to calm down your mind and keep it clean and pure. When this happens, you will be able to reach the awakening stage of your cultivation. When you awaken, you will see through millions of human emotional affairs and occurrences. Since these affairs and events are so abundant and confused, there is no limit to your awakening. That is why this state of awakening is called “Jue Hai” (覺海) which means “Awaken Ocean.”

Once your mind is regulated, your Shen will be able to stay at its residence (Upper Dan Tian). The trick of regulating your mind is through the correct way of breathing. When this happens, the metal (Jin, 金) and wood (Mu, 木) will harmonize with each other smoothly. Metal implies the lungs or the breathing, while the wood implies the liver which relates to the Shen. Through correct breathing, the Shen can be condensed and brought to a high level of concentration. With the calm mind, dragon and tiger (i.e. Yin and Yang) will meet and interact with each other. When this happens, the holy Spiritual Embryo (Sheng Tai, 聖胎) can be conceived at the Huang Ting (黃庭).

10. Miscellaneous Secrets of Embryonic Breathing³
(Mr. Yan Ling's Collections in New and Old Qigong Classics)
(Tang Dynasty)

《胎息雜訣》
(延陵先生集新舊服氣經·唐·延陵先生集)

One of the classics said: “Just leading the (air) Qi in and out (i.e. breathing) slowly, consequently, the Original Qi (Yuan Qi) will not exit as well. In this case, the internal Qi and external Qi (i.e. air Qi) will not be mixed together, this is what is named as ‘Embryonic Breathing.’” However, those beginners who just start this Gong (i.e. Gongfu), though the internal Qi has already been steadily firmed, the nose should still allow the (air) Qi in and out slenderly. Do not let (the air) reach to the throat (only) and return (to the nose). This will make the Qi adverse and full and this will result in the Qi's rising upward. Therefore, it (i.e. the breathing) should not be suppressed and restrained (this way). If it happens, then allow (the air) out slenderly, smoothly, and comfortably. After the breathing has been regulated, then again seal (i.e. control the breathing). (You) must allow it (i.e. air) to exit and enter through the nose slenderly and slowly. (You) must not let it reach the throat and suppress it with great effort. (You) just need to practice for a while, then (you) will suddenly feel comfortable and natural. In this case, the internal and external are harmonious. If (you) have reached this stage, then even (you) have completed the Thousand Breathings, (you) will not be tired.

一經云：但徐徐引氣出納，則元氣亦不出也，自然內外之氣不雜，此名胎息。然初用功之人，閉固內氣訖，亦鼻中微微通氣往來，使令不至咽喉而返，氣即逆滿上沖，不可抑塞。如此，則徐徐放令通暢，候氣調，即復閉之。切在徐徐鼻中出入，勿令至喉，極力抑忍，為之須臾，忽然自得調暢，內外泰矣。到此，即千息亦不倦矣。

“Yuan Qi” (元氣) means “Original Qi” which is produced from “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精). In Chinese medical and Qigong societies, it is believed that the “Original Essence” is the essence of your physical life and spiritual life which you inherited from your parents. If you are able to conserve this essence and also know how to convert it into Qi efficiently, then your life span can be extended significantly.

As explained in section 2-2, Chinese Qigong and medical societies distinguish between two Qis. One is called “Wai Qi” (外氣) and means “External Qi.” This Qi is the Qi (energy) of the air. The air is called “Kong Qi” (空氣) and means “Qi of Space.” When this air enters the body, it can be converted into “Nei Qi” (內氣) that means “Internal Qi” (bioelectricity) circulating in the body. The chamber that takes in and repels the external Qi in the body is the lungs, the diaphragm is the pump (or piston) and the nose and the mouth are the door for the air to enter and exit. This Qi is also commonly called “Shang Ceng Qi” (上層氣) and means “Upper Layer Qi.” Please refer to Section 2-2 for details.

When the “External Qi” is absorbed into the blood system, through the biochemical reaction processes, the food (glucose) can be converted into “internal energy” or “Internal Qi.” We should understand that the more oxygen we have, the more efficiently this biochemical reaction can be accomplished. That is why whenever we need to manifest more power (for example, pushing a car or lifting a heavy weight), we must first inhale deeply so we can take in more oxygen. The more oxygen is provided, the more power can be manifested. Once the “Internal Qi” is produced, then it can be stored in the Real Lower Dan Tian. Therefore, the Real Lower Dan Tian is the storage or bio-battery of the “internal energy or Qi.” The abdominal area and the Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) cavity are the pump (or piston) of the Qi’s in and out. This Qi is also commonly called “Xia Ceng Qi” (下層氣) and means “Lower Layer Qi.”

From the above, you can see that the “External Qi” and “Internal Qi” are not the same but are closely related to each other. When the external Qi is absorbed appropriately, the production and usage of the internal Qi can be significantly more efficient. In order to increase the efficiency of converting the external into internal Qi, at the end of the inhalation, you normally hold the breath for a few moments. For example, when you push a car or lift a heavy weight, you first inhale deeply and then exhale while manifesting your power. When you reach the end of the manifestation, you normally hold your breathing in order to increase the power to its maximum. In

the same way, if you wish to store the Qi in the body, once you inhale all the way, you hold your breath for a while. However, you should not hold it too long and choke yourself or even feel uncomfortable. If you experience any unease and discomfort, your body will be tensed up, increasing the consumption of oxygen and Qi. Naturally, in this case, you are not storing the Qi but consuming it. This is not desired in Embryonic Breathing.

In order to lead the Qi to the Real Lower Dan Tian and keep it there, you must be in an extremely relaxed and mentally calm state. The first task is to neutralize your Emotional Mind. When this happens, your Shen will not be wandering around, and can be condensed at its residence. With this highly focused Shen (quality of life) at the Upper Dan Tian and the abundant storage of Qi (quantity of life) at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you are able to reach the goal of longevity and enlightenment.

In addition, (classic) said: "The marvelousness of Embryonic Breathing is that there is no thinking and no worries. The bodies (i.e. spiritual and physical bodies) are in harmony with nature. The Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) is like the dead ash and the shape (i.e. physical body) is like dried wood. In this case, (the Qi circulating in) hundreds of meridians and vessels will be flowing without obstruction, the joints will be opened wide. However, if there are hundred initiations of worries and concerns, initiated and exterminated constantly, then if (you) wish to reach the final Dao, (you are) wasting (your) time and effort. This will not lead (you) to success at the end." This Dao is immensely delicate and extremely marvellous, it can be successfully achieved only by those who have separated from laymen society. If (you) have not parted from fame and wealth, then all the effort will be in vain. Another classic said: "After completing the practice of swallowing Qi, then seal (i.e. control your) Qi and keep (your) mind there (Dan Tian). Yi is like flowing water. When the front wave is gone the coming wave has arrived." Whenever (you) have finished (your) Gong in Embryonic Breathing, all the joints are opened wide, (the Qi circulating in) hair is smooth and comfortable. When this happens, then inhale (the air) slenderly from the nose and image it exits through hundreds of pores, gone without returning (i.e. skin breathing). The air arrives continuous and simply lead it inward without letting it out. But remember, it must be slow and gradual. Though it is said that to lead the air in and not out, what (you) are leading will not be obstructed at the throat. (Simply) let it be dispersed slowly. In this case, the internal Qi will not be dispersed and lost.

又：“胎息之妙，切在無思無慮，體合自然，心如死灰，形如枯木，即百脈暢，關節通矣。若憂慮百端，起滅相繼，欲求至道，徒費艱勤。終無成功。”此道至微至妙，出塵之士，方可為之，未離名利之間，徒勞介意。一經云：“咽氣滿訖，便閉氣存想，意如流水，前波已去，后浪續起。”凡胎息用功后，關節開通，毛髮疏暢，即依此，但鼻中微微引氣，想從四肢百毛孔出，往而不返也，后氣續到，但引之而不吐也。切在于徐徐。雖云引而不吐，所引亦不入于喉中，微微而散。如此，內氣亦不流散矣。

As explained in the last paragraph, in order to reach the goal of Embryonic Breathing, you must first regulate your mind to the neutral state. It is believed in Chinese medicine that your emotions closely influence the Qi circulation in your body. In order to conserve the Qi and prevent it from leaving its residence and being wasted, the first task is to avoid emotional disturbance, so that the Qi can circulate smoothly in all channels. Not only that, when your mind is in a neutral and free state, your breathing will be smooth, natural, calm, deep and slender. This will allow the oxygen and carbon dioxide to be exchanged more efficiently, and also allow the internal Qi to be converted to stay in the Real Lower Dan Tian. However, if your breathing is shallow, then the body's metabolism will not be efficient, and naturally the Qi converted will not be abundant. In addition, if your mind is disturbed, the consumption of the Qi will be increased and this will result in its exhaustion.

Pay attention to your inhalation and allow the air to be taken in slowly and profoundly. Then simply allow the air to exit slowly by itself. When this happens, the internal Qi can be built up and kept internally.

3.5 REGULATING THE MIND 調心

1. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament; Development of Heaven and Human's Unification, Picking up the Herb and Returning it to the Pot

《性命主旨全書·天人合發，采藥歸壺》

Nothing in the heart (i.e. mind) is Xu (i.e. emptiness), no initiation of the thought is Jing (i.e. calmness). Approaching Xu to its extremity and maintaining Jing to its final sincerity. Yin and Yang will interact with each other naturally. When Yin and Yang are interacting, then the Yang essence is produced.

心中無物為虛，念頭不起為靜，致虛而至于極，守靜而至于篤。陰陽自然交媾，陰陽一交而陽精產矣。

This document explains two main concepts of the Wuji state which were originally written of by Lao Zi. *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 16, states: "Approaching the nihility (i.e. nothingness or emptiness) to its extremity and maintaining the calmness with sincerity."³⁸ This is the state of returning your spiritual being to the beginning of life which is originally complete emptiness and calmness. "Xu" (虛) means "emptiness" (nihility) and "Jing" (靜) means "calmness." Therefore, Xu here means to empty the mind so there is nothing there to be bothered by. Jing means to keep the mind calm so new thoughts will not be initiated.

When you have reached this Wuji state, your mind is in its neutralized state. This allows the interaction of Yin and Yang. When the Yin and Yang interact, the new life will be initiated. The Yin here means the Shen while the Yang is the Qi. When these

two interact with each other, the Yang Essence (Yang Jing, 陽精) of the life will be generated. This is the state of “crushing the nothingness” (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空) in Daoist cultivation.

2. The Righteous Rules of Heavenly Immortality; Straight Discussion of Pre-Heaven and Post-Heaven Two Qis

《天仙正理·先天后天二氣直論》

Those who apply this Qi, how do they know it (i.e. the practice) is the truth of pre-heaven (i.e. true pre-heaven practice)? When calmness (Jing) and emptiness (Xu) have reached to their extremities, there is no single slight thought involved in the consciousness. This is the real state of truthful pre-heaven (practice).

夫用此氣者，由何以知先天之真也。當靜虛至極時。亦未涉一念覺知，此正真先天之真境界也。

Pre-Heaven truth (Xian Tian Zhi Zhen, 先天之真) means the truthful state before the birth. In this stage, the mind is simple and pure, extremely calm and sincere. However, how do you know that you have reached this state of extreme calmness and nihility in your practice? The way to know this is if there is not even a tiny thought existing or initiating in your conscious mind. Then your subconscious mind (Pre-Heaven truthful mind) will be awakened and active.

It is believed in Chinese Qigong society that the conscious mind is classified as Yang and is generated from the brain since your birth. However, the subconscious mind is classified as Yin and is born with you. The conscious mind and memory are generated from education (or brainwashing) by the environment, and are not truthful. Often, there are thick masks on our faces to cover the untruthful fact of this conscious mind. However, the subconscious mind is truthful, and is connected with your spiritual memory which can be sensed and felt only when your physical body is calm and activities of your conscious mind have ceased.

In order to return to the stage of Pre-Birth, you must first cease your activities both physically and mentally. Then the subconscious mind will be acting, and direct you to the true path of spiritual cultivation.

3. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament; Hen Anthology

《性命主旨全書·亨集》

When the physical body does not move, the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) will be peaceful automatically. When the Xin does not move, the Shen will abide automatically.

身不動而心自安，心不動而神自守。

The first step in keeping your Shen at its residence (the Upper Dan Tian) is to keep your physical body calm and relaxed. Whenever the body is acting or tensed, the Qi is excited and manifested into external forms. This will also cause the mind to be disturbed and moved away from its center. Once the emotional mind can be calm and centered, then your mental body can also be centered, steady, and peaceful. Then you have provided favorable conditions for the Shen to stay at its residence.

4. Concealed Treasure of Dao; Thesis of Sitting Forgetfulness

《道藏·坐忘論》

The Xin (i.e. mind) is the master of the entire body, the commander of hundred spirits. When it is calm, wisdom is generated and when it is moving, then confusion is initiated. Bewildered or not is decided within the moving (i.e. excitement) or the calmness (of the mind).

夫心者一身之主，百神之帥，靜則生慧，動則生昏，欣迷動靜之中。

Xin (心) is the Emotional Mind while Yi (意) is the logic and Wisdom Mind. Xin is classified as Yang (陽) since it excites and energizes the mental and physical bodies. Yi is classified as Yin (陰) since it allows you to keep the Emotional Mind under control and direct your thinking and behavior to the correct path. Therefore, Xin is the initiation of the thought which decides the entire body's action. It is like the commander who controls the entire army. The Yi is like a minister who offers advice and directs the commander's decision to the correct path. When the commander is calm, he will be willing to accept the advice and consider it, thus, acting wisely. However, if a commander is excited and aggressive, then his mind will be confused and bewildered. Therefore, the first step in meditation is using the Yi to calm down the Xin. When the Xin is calmed down, then the action or cultivation can be correct and effective.

5. Thousands of Golden Important Prescriptions for Emergency; Scroll #27, Temperament Cultivation²

《備急千金要方·卷二十七·養性》

Too much of longing, then the Shen will be precarious. Too much of obsession, then the will can be dispersed. Too much of desires, the aspiration will be bewildered. Too much of laboring, then the shape (i.e. physical body) will be weary. Too much of talking, then the Qi is exhausted. Too much of laughing, then the internal organ (i.e. heart) can be damaged. Too much of worry, then the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) is fearful. Too much of joy, then the Yi (i.e. Wisdom Mind) will overreact. Too much of delight, then make mistakes and confused. Too much

of anger, then (the Qi circulation in) hundreds of meridians are not steady. Too much of indulgence, then (the mind is) strongly fascinated and ignore (others). Too much of wickedness, then emaciated without joy. If these twelve too much (i.e. things) cannot be removed, then Guardian and Managing (Qis) will lose their control, the blood and Qi will circulate disorderly. This is the basic cause of losing the life.

多思則神殆，多念則志散，多欲則志昏，多事則形勞，
多語則氣乏，多笑則臟傷，多愁則心懾，多樂則意溢，
多喜則忘錯昏亂，多怒則百脈不定，多好則專迷不理，
多惡則憔悴無歡。此十二多不除，則榮衛失度，血氣妄
行，喪生之本也。

From Chinese medical and also scholar Qigong, it is known that the Qi circulation in the internal organs is closely related to the emotions. For example, too much excitement and happiness can make the heart too Yang and thus trigger heart attack. Too much sadness can make the lungs too Yin, and too much anger can disrupt the smooth circulation of liver Qi. (Table 3-1) Therefore you must first understand the relationship between your Emotional Mind and the Qi status in the body. This document lists twelve emotional disturbances for your reference.

Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) is the Qi spread on the surface of the entire body's skin. When this Qi is strong and abundant, the immune system will be effective and powerful, so you will not get sick easily. Managing Qi (Ying Qi, 營氣) is the Qi required for the internal organs' normal functioning. Whenever this smooth circulation is disrupted, then illness of the internal organs will be initiated. Therefore, the first step in regulating your Qi is regulating your Emotional Mind (Xin, 心)

	WOOD 木	FIRE 火	EARTH 土	METAL 金	WATER 水
Direction	East	South	Center	West	North
Season	Spring	Summer	Long Summer	Autumn	Winter
Climactic Condition	Wind	Summer Heat	Dampness	Dryness	Cold
Process	Birth	Growth	Transformation	Harvest	Storage
Color	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Taste	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent	Salty
Smell	Goatish	Burning	Fragrant	Rank	Rotten
Yin Organ	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidneys
Yang Organ	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
Opening	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
Tissue	Sinews	Blood Vessels	Flesh	Skin/Hair	Bones
Emotion	Anger	Happiness	Pensiveness	Sadness	Fear
Human Sound	Shout	Laughter	Song	Weeping	Groan

Table 3-1. Table of Correspondences Associated with the Five Phases

6. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament; Concealed in Qi Cavity, All Marvelousness Returns to its Roots²

《性命主旨全書·蟄藏氣穴，眾妙歸根》

(If you are) capable of reaching the deep and profound breathing like a Truthful Person (Zhen Ren) (i.e. Daoist who has reached the Dao), then the Xin and breathing will be interdependent, which will thus result in a regulated breathing and a calmed Xin.

合真人深深之息，則心息相依，息調心靜。

“Zhen Ren” (真人) means “truthful person.” Daoists often call themselves “Zhen Ren” since they are aiming for “the truth of the Dao.” One of the major trainings to reach the goal of enlightenment is through regulating the breathing. When the breathing has reached a profound level of Embryonic Breathing, it is called “Zhen Xi” (真息) and means “Real Breathing” or “True Breathing.” In this stage, your emotional mind is extremely calm and harmonized with the breathing. This is simply because when the mind is emotionally disturbed, the breathing will be fast, and when the mind is peaceful and stays at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田), the breathing will be calm, slender, and peaceful. Not only that, when the breathing is faster and excited, the emotional mind will also be disturbed. Therefore, the emotional mind (Xin, 心) and breathing (Xi, 息) must be interdependent and harmonized with each other (Xin Xi Xiang Yi, 心息相依)

7. The Question from A Buddhist Guest about Listening to the Heart²

《聽心齋客問》

(Our) Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) has been attached with (laymen) affairs for a long time, once it is attached to the (laymen) environment, it cannot be independent (easily). Therefore, (we) must use the Gongfu of regulating the breathing (Tiao Xi) to restrain this Xin and allow the Xin and breathing to mutually depend on each other. The word of regulating (Tiao) does not mean using the Yi (i.e. Wisdom Mind). It is only using one exhalation and one inhalation (i.e. respiration) to keep the thought there. Once the Xin is able to separate from the (laymen) environment, then there is no body, and neither it nor I exist. Then there is no breathing needing to be regulated. It is so soft as if it is existing (and as if it is not). After a long time (of practice), it will become proficient naturally.

心依著事物已久，一旦離境，不能自立。所以用調息功夫，拴系此心，便心息相依。調字亦不是用意，只是一呼一吸系念耳。至心離境，則無人無我，更無息可調，只綿綿若存，久之，自然純熟。

“Xin” (心) means “Emotional Mind” (Yang mind), which is commonly analogized as “monkey” while “Yi” (意) means “Wisdom Mind” (Yin mind), which is often analogized as “horse” (Xin Yuan Yi Ma, 心猿意馬). Though the monkey is small and weak, it is able to generate a great disturbance, whereas, although the horse is large and powerful, it can be calm and easily restrained. In order to regulate the monkey mind, you will need a banana to lead the monkey mind into the cage and lock it there. This banana in Qigong practice is the breathing. When you regulate the emotional monkey mind, you cannot just use your Yi to restrain it. The more you intend to restrain it, the worse it will be. It is just like when you cannot fall asleep, the more you intend to sleep, the more awake you will be. The way to reach the goal of regulating the emotional monkey mind is simply to pay attention to the breathing. The more you are able to regulate your breathing to a profound, slender, calm, and soft stage, the easier the emotional mind can be controlled. Once your emotional mind has been restrained, then regulation of the breathing is no longer important since it has become natural. This is the stage of “Embryonic Breathing.”

8. Collection of Neutral Harmony

《中和集》

(If we) carefully look at the writings by those holy men in Three Teachings (San Jiao) (i.e. Three Schools), the word of Xi (i.e. ceasing) is the simplest and most straightforward. If (you are) able to put (your) Gongfu in ceasing, then (you) will not need too much effort to reach Buddhahood and immortality. To cease the feeling of affinity (Yuan) so (you) can reach the pivotal function of original Chan. To cease the Xin (i.e. actions of emotional mind) so (you) can comprehend and understand the theory of Confucianism profoundly. To cease the breathing so (you) can reach the marvellous Dao of condensing the Shen. These three ceases are mutually required from each other without any conquest.

諦觀三教聖人書，息之一字最簡直。若于息上做功夫，
為佛為仙不勞力。息緣達本禪之機，息心明理儒之極，
息氣凝神道之玄，三息相須無不克。

“San Jiao” (三教) means “Three Teachings” or “Three Schools.” These three schools are Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. All of these three schools talk about the methods of “ceasing” (Xi, 息). Literally “Xi” means “to stop” or “to cease” any action or initiation of something. Here, it means the stage of “regulating without regulating” (Bu Tiao Er Tiao, 不調而調). This implies that when regulating is no longer necessary, all of the regulating processes will naturally cease.

The key practice of Buddhists is to cease the “affinity” (Yuan, 緣) related to laymen affairs. When this affinity ceases, then the Emotional Mind will be calm and peaceful. Then the Shen, which is related to the subconscious mind, will be awakened, and Buddhahood can be achieved. This kind of cultivation in Buddhism is

called “Chan” (禪). The Buddhist document, *The Transliteration of Wisdom Garden* (慧苑音義) said: “Chan, it means to calm down the Xin to ponder.”⁹⁹ It is the method of stabilizing the Xin’s activity (i.e. meditation).

The cultivation of “ceasing” in the Confucian school is to cease the Xin’s activity so the scholar philosophies can be comprehended. These philosophies include the relationship between humans, as well as between nature and humans. When these philosophies are understood, the mind can be peaceful and calm.

However, to the Daoists, the “ceasing” means to cease the regulating process of the breathing. In order to reach this goal, you must learn the method of “Embryonic Breathing” with the condensed mind. This is the necessary path to reach the goal of enlightenment.

9. Four Books; Great Study

《四書·大學》

Confucius said: “Only knowing (how to) cease, can you then have steadiness. When there is steadiness, then (your mind) can be calm. When (your mind is) calm, then (you) can be peaceful. When (you are) at peace, then (you) are able to ponder. When (you) ponder, then (you) will gain.”

孔子曰：“知止而后有定，定而后能靜，靜而后能安，安而后能慮，慮而後能得。”

To the Confucian scholar, the final goal of meditation is to gain understanding of the meaning of life and the rules of nature. In order to comprehend this deep philosophy, you must go through a few necessary procedures. The first step is to stop or to cease (Zhi, 止) the initiation of a thought. Only then will your mind be steady and under control, both calm and peaceful. Once you have reached this state of peace, then your mind is clear for you to ponder. Through deep pondering, you will comprehend the reason for all events around us.

10. Anthology of Daoist Village²

《道鄉集》

“Once (you) can be calm, then pay attention to the Lower Dan Tian. Where (your) eyes (i.e. focus) are, that is where (your) Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) should follow. When Xin and eyes have reached the place and ceased, then the Xin and the breathing should accord to each other and gradually enter the Great Steadiness (Da Ding).” Also, “The Shen can be stabilized through coordination with the breathing. The breathing can be peaceful through coordination with the Shen. Both accord with each other, then the Great Steadiness can be reached.”

“能靜時觀照下田，目之所在，心亦隨之，心目得其所止，而后心與息依，漸入大定。”又“神依息而定，息依神而安，互相依附，始歸大定。”

Eyes mean to focus and pay attention, and means the Yi (意). It is often said in ancient documents that: “The eyes observe (Guan) the nose (i.e. breathing) and the nose observes the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind).⁴⁰ Guan (觀) here means “to observe,” or “to pay attention.” Therefore, the first part of this sentence means to retrain your eyes or pay attention to your breathing. The second part implies that through the breathing, the Emotional Mind can be watched and regulated.

In Chinese Qigong society, it is often said: “Xin-ape and Yi-horse” (心猿意馬). According to Chinese tradition, there are two minds that can be classified as Yang and Yin; the emotional mind called “Xin” (心) is Yang while the wisdom mind called “Yi” (意) is Yin. Xin literally means “heart”, because the heart is related to our emotional disturbance. For example, if your mind has too much emotional disturbance that prevents you from falling asleep, then if you are able to pay attention to the breathing and keep your mind at the Lower Dan Tian, you will be able to regulate the emotional monkey and fall asleep.

When your emotional mind is under control, then can you stabilize your Shen and keep it at its residence. In this case, the Shen and the breathing will be mutually harmonized and accord with each other. This is called “Great Steadiness” (Da Ding, 大定) in Qigong meditation practice. In Buddhist society “Da Ding” means: “When the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) for Buddhism is clear and bright, it is called ‘Da Ding.’”⁴¹ This implies the calm and peaceful state of mind, where the body is extremely relaxed. The Shen and the physical body harmonize and coordinated with each other, leading to steadiness and calmness of both mental and physical bodies.

11. Theory of Evaluating Wisdom

《智度論》

Justify (i.e. Regulate) the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) to where it should be. Cease the worry (i.e. mind of affinity) and condense (i.e. stabilize) the Xin. When the Xin is steady at one place without moving (i.e. being disturbed), thus, it is called “steadiness.” Justify (the Xin) so it can accept the solution through observation (i.e. self-investigation), thus it is called “acceptance” (Shou). To regulate the violence (i.e. aggressive actions) of the Xin, and to straighten the curve (i.e. intricacy) of the Xin, and stabilize its dispersion (i.e. distraction), thus it is called “regulating; straightening, and stabilizing.” To justify the actions of Xin and allow it to accord to the rule as it should be, thus it is called “justify the Xin to the proper place.” Cease the mind’s affinity and worry so as to condense and focus the thought of Xin, thus it is called “cease the worry and condense the Xin.”

正心行處，息慮凝心，心定于一處而不動，故曰定；正受所觀之法，故曰受；調心之暴，直心之曲，定心之散，故曰調直定；正心之行動，使合于法之依處，故曰正心行處；息止緣慮，凝結心念，故曰息慮凝心。

In Buddhist society, “Ding” (定) (steadiness of the emotional mind and the physical body) is always emphasized in meditation. The process of entering this steadiness is called “Ru Ding” (入定) (Entering the Steadiness). In order to do so, you must first cut off any emotional disturbance and keep your mind at the Upper and the Real Lower Dan Tian. The Upper Dan Tian (brain) is the residence of the Shen and Real Lower Dan Tian (second brain) is the residence of the Qi. When the Qi can be kept at its residence, the physical body can be calmed without stimulation or excitement. When the Shen can be condensed at its residence, the mind will be calmed and clear.

In order to reach the above goals, you must learn how to face your Emotional Mind, analyze it, understand it, and then learn how to remove the mask from your face. Only when these affinities of Xin can be removed, can your mind then be steady and kept at one place. This is the method of reaching “Steadiness” (Ding, 定).

12. Great Conveyance in Hundred Methods of Comprehension; Discussing Sincere Advice²

《大乘百法明門·論忠疏》

When observing the environment (i.e. situation), if one is able to concentrate (his mind) without dispersion (i.e. distraction), it is the “Xing” (i.e. natural temperament), (thus) the wisdom can be built upon. Therefore, if (one only) observes the gain or loss, (he) will not enter the situation (i.e. the root). (It must be) from stability of the Xin and not allow it to be from dispersion. If (one) follows this, there (he) will make decision from wisdom.

于所觀境令人專注不散為性，智依為業。謂觀得失，俱非境中，由定令心不散，依斯便有決擇智生。

“Da Sheng” (大乘) in the title of this document means “Great Conveyance.” “Sheng” (乘) means the Buddhist teaching, a conveyance to bring the truth to men and help them. Comprehending the meaning of life and the truth of nature is called “Wu” (悟) (enlightenment).

To comprehend the human temperament (Xing, 性) is not easy. You must first inspect, analyze and understand all of the events or affairs occurring around you carefully and accurately. Once you have established this capability, you will be able to concentrate and ponder. From this, wisdom can be generated, and you will be able to comprehend the human temperament.

If you only pay attention to the consequence of what has happened without knowing how to trace its cause or origin, then you will never understand the origin of the problem. In this case, you will not be able to comprehend the meaning of life and reach spiritual enlightenment. The first crucial key to reaching this concentration of the mind and wisdom is to have a stabilized Xin. When the Xin is calm and stable, you will be wise and your judgment will be accurate. This is the way to reach the Dao of wisdom.

13. Theory of Evaluating Wisdom²

《智度論》

What does it mean "stabilizing the Xin?" It means there is only one Xin without disorder. When disordered, then the Xin cannot see through the fact and truth. It is just like the wave on the water which makes (you) unable to see the face (in the reflection). It is just like lighting a lamp in the wind, cannot be lighted.

定心者，定名一心不亂。亂，心中不能得見事實，如水波蕩，不得見面；如風中燈，不能得點。

In order to reach spiritual enlightenment, you must first comprehend the meaning of life. The first task here is to stabilize your Xin (心) (Emotional Mind). Only when the emotional mind can be kept calm and steady, then can your wisdom mind (Yi, 意) be clear in its judgment. Otherwise, if the emotional mind is in disorder and out of control, you will not be able to see yourself clearly. It is like being unable to see the reflection of your face clearly, when the emotional mind has generated ripples on the surface of the water. This emotional mind is also like the wind which keeps you from lighting your lantern of enlightenment.

14. The Inner Mental Method of Reaching the Heavenly Immortality Through Golden Elixir²

《天仙金丹心法》

Establish a determination, straighten out the morals, repent the errors, shift toward goodness, build up the foundation, train self, install the furnace, pick up the herb, start the fire, cease the fire, conceive the embryo, nurse the baby, accumulate good deeds, train the Gong, face the wall, and spiritual ascending.

立志，端品，悔過，遷善，築基，煉己，安爐，採藥，起火，熄火，結胎，養嬰，積行，行功，面壁，飛升。

According to Daoist society, these are the sixteen steps of training to reach the final goal of spiritual enlightenment. First establish a strong will aiming for your goal. Next, re-evaluate your morality by removing the mask on your face and facing your true self. According to Buddhism, in order to reach this goal, you must learn

Self-Internal Vision (Zi Guan, 自觀) that allows you to see yourself clearly, the step of Self-Recognition (Zi Shi, 自識). To enter the Self-Internal-Vision (Ru Guan, 入觀) is to analyze and understand yourself. You must first understand your Xin so you can see your human temperament (Ming Xin Jian Xing, 明心見性) (Liao Wu, 了悟), and only then can you face the truth.

Having recognized and understood the real you, then you learn how to change your morality towards goodness and truth. Only then can you establish a firm foundation for your spiritual cultivation. If your subconscious mind remains at the stage of laymen morals, with an untruthful mask on your face, then you will not be able to face the truth. You must learn to remove the mask on your face, first by facing the Self Inner-Comprehension (Zi Wu, 自悟) or Self-Awareness (Zi Jue, 自覺). Only then, can you find the way to awaken your Shen, the stage of Self-Awakening (Zi Xing, 自醒).

Once you are able to wake up your Shen (related to the subconscious mind), then you will find the way to set your Shen free from spiritual bondage. This is the stage of Self-Spiritual-Freedom (Zi Tuo, 自脫). To reach this enlightened stage, you must convert the Original Essence into Qi (Lian Jing Hua Qi, 煉精化氣), convert (nourish) the Qi to the Shen (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 煉氣化神), and then refine your Shen and lead it into emptiness (Lian Shen Huan Xu, 煉神返虛). Finally, you must crush the emptiness (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空) so as to establish an independent Shen that is able to survive even if the physical body is dead. To the Buddhist society, this is the stage of Buddhahood. When you have reached this stage, your spirit will gain eternal life and will not be reincarnated into a human form again.

Train the self (Lian Ji, 煉己), install the furnace (An Lu, 安爐), pick up the herb (Cai Yao, 採藥), start the fire (Qi Huo, 起火), and cease the fire (Xi Huo, 熄火); these are the trainings of converting the essence into Qi. Conceive the embryo (Jie Tai, 結胎), nurse the baby (Yang Ying, 養嬰), and accumulate good deeds (Ji Xing, 積行); these are the trainings of converting the Qi into Shen. In order to establish an independent Shen, you must train the Gong (Xing Gong, 行功). Face the wall (Mian Bi, 面壁) is for crushing the emptiness, and finally spiritual ascending (Fei Sheng, 飛升) means the separation of the spiritual body and the physical body.

15. Anthology of Daoist Village

《道鄉集》

Those talks (in Dao De Jing) such as: “when there is a Xin (i.e. intention), it is used to observe the ways (i.e. constant changes) of nature; when there is no Xin (i.e. no intention), it is used to observe the marvelousness of nature,” are actually the applications of the Dao. In addition, (the sentence) of “when having (the Xin), it is to observe the ways (of nature)” is again the application of (the sentence): “when without having (the Xin), it is to observe the marvelousness (of nature).” Furthermore, (the sentence) of “without having (the Xin), it is to observe the marvelousness (of nature)” is again the main core (of the sentence):

“when having (the Xin), it is to observe the ways (of nature).” (You) must understand that (the sentence of) “when having (the Xin), it is to observe the ways (of nature)” means there is an action and is the time of returning the Qi to nourish the Shen. “Without having (the Xin) so as to observe the marvelousness (of nature)” is doing nothing. There is no body around and no self, no mountain, rivers, grass, or wood. It is the timing of no consciousness and no feeling. This means the extreme calm and peaceful conscious state of “approaching the nihilicity (i.e. nothingness or emptiness) to its extremity and maintaining the calmness with sincerity.” Follow this extreme calmness, then a Yang (state) can be generated and therefore the marvellous lives can be conceived.

有心觀竅，無心觀妙等語。乃道之功用也。有欲以觀竅，又為無心觀妙之用。無心以觀妙，又為有心觀竅之體。要知有欲觀竅有為也，神返氣自回之時也。無欲觀妙無為也，無人無我，無山川草木，混混然不知不覺之時代也。指“致虛極，守靜篤。”之意識活動的寧靜，靜而後一陽生，萌發奇妙生機。

The first sentence originated from Lao, *Zi's Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 1. It is said: “Always keep nothingness, so as to observe the marvelousness (of nature). Always having, so observe the returning (recycling or ending) of million objects.”⁴² The word Qiao (竅) is actually the word Jiao (徼) which means returning to its root. Therefore, “Qiao” (竅) implies “the changes or variations of the nature.” When you have a heart (You Xin, 有心) (intention) to observe the changes of nature, then your mind is paying attention to it and pondering on it. However, when your mind is not paying attention to (Wu Xin, 無心) (no intention) the changes of nature, you are experiencing the marvellous manifestation and interplay of natural power and forces. All of these are the applications of the Dao. This is simply because the Dao itself cannot be interpreted and talked about. Once you talk about it, you are using the limited human knowledge to judge the great nature. In this case, the Dao will not be accurate. All we try to observe and understand is not the Dao itself, but its applications.

However, when you have an intention to observe the natural changes and variations, it is due to the experience you have gained from nature in which you do not pay attention. Thus, the intention of observing the applications (consequences) of experiencing, originated without intention. Naturally, the experience without intention is the cause and the root of observation with intention.

To approach the goal of Embryonic Breathing, you must begin with an intention which allows you to observe the changes and variations of your Qi and Shen. However, the final goal of Embryonic Breathing is the doing of no doing, the intention having disappeared. You are able to approach the Dao and experience nature. When this happens, you are able to trace back to the root of life.

The first step is to observe the Xin (心) (Emotional Mind) and understand its

behavior. From this you learn to understand yourself. This is the process of regulating and your intention is there. However, after you have regulated your mind into a neutral state, you regulate it without regulating. Then, your intention is not there any more, and you have approached the Dao of nature and will find the original human nature. That is why all of the Buddhist or Daoist societies have focused on the regulating of the Xin (心). It is said in the document, *Important Script of Similar Contents* (同指要鈔), that: “The religious doors (i.e. styles), in generations, all considered ‘observing the Xin’ (Guan Xin, 觀心) is the most important (in cultivation).”⁴³

Only after you are able to cease the activity of Xin, can you then calm down and keep peace within. Then your mind is clear and Shen will stay at its residence, and you will be able to see through the cycling of nature (creations and variations). Lao, Zi (老子) (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 16) said: “Approaching the nihility (nothingness or emptiness) to its extremity and maintaining the calmness with sincerity. Millions of objects (lives) are in actions which allow me to observe their cyclic repetitions. Though there are so many objects, each individual must repeatedly return to its root (origin). When it returns to the root, it means ‘calmness.’ When it is calmed, then it means ‘repetition of a life.’”⁴⁴

16. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament; Nourishing the Origin, Precious Key of Saving and Protecting the Life

《性命圭旨全書·涵養本源·救護命寶》

It is marvellous that the (key) method of Observing the Xin (Guan Xin) is on the sole key gate, Ling Guan (i.e. Spiritual Gate). When a human begins to conceive (his) life through feeling (i.e. receiving) the Qi, endowed with a tiny Original Yang (Yuan Yang) from heaven and the earth (i.e. nature) and derived into this key gate so as to conceal the Original Shen. It is completely empty within, but extremely insubstantial and utmost bright. It is the master of our lives. Truthfully, when (we) have it, (we are) alive and without it, (we are) dead. Alive, dead, flourishing, and withering, all depend on this (Spiritual Gate). Scholars called it Lingtai (i.e. Spiritual Platform), Daoists called it Ling Guan (i.e. Spiritual Gate), and Buddhists called Ling Shan (i.e. Spiritual Mountain).

觀心之法，妙在靈關一竅。人自受生感氣之初，稟天地一點元陽，化生此竅，以藏元神。其中空空洞洞，至虛至明，乃吾人生生主宰。真所謂有之則生，無之則死。生死盛衰，皆由這個。儒曰靈臺，道曰靈關，釋曰靈山。

To observe the Xin (Guan Xin, 觀心), you must remove the mask from your face and encounter the real you, and understand your thinking and actions. In order to do so, you must first build a strong Yi (意) (Wisdom Mind) that allows you to analyze your Xin and then restrain it. The key to reaching this goal is to keep your Yi at

the Ling Guan (靈關) (Upper Dan Tian), “Ling Guan” (靈關) (Spiritual Gate) implies “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) between the two lobes of the brain, the residence of the spirit. This place is called “Lingtai” (靈臺) (Spiritual Platform) by scholars, “Ling Shan” (靈山) (Spiritual Mountain) by Buddhists. Although this place is empty, the power manifested there can be mighty and marvellous.

17. Zhi You Zi; Collection of Important Papers²

《至游子·集要篇》

Do not be afraid of the initiation of a thought but be afraid of the delaying of its perception (i.e. awareness).

不畏念起，惟畏覺遲。

The thoughts generated related to the past, the present, and the future can be emotionally disturbing, preventing you from keeping your mind in a calm state. Therefore, the first step in regulating the mind is to stop the thoughts which are lingering in your mind. You must also stop the initiation of a new thought.

However, it is not easy to stop the initiation of a new thought. You must have an awareness so you are able to stop this new thought from getting deeper and wider. This awareness is the first step in eliminating its initiation.

18. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament; The Rules of Training the Shape by Jade Liquid

《性命主旨全書·玉液煉形法則》

If (you) wish to cease the initiation and termination of Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind), (you) must begin from the thought of no thought.

欲除生滅心，必自無念始。

To stop the initiation of a new thought or the disturbances of old thoughts lingering in your mind, the best way is learning how to keep the mind empty and think nothing. However, in reality, it is not possible since when you think of nothing, you are thinking of something. Therefore, the common way of regulating the mind is paying attention to the breathing. Slowly and gradually allow the breathing to become softer and more slender until it is as though it were there and yet as though it were not there. When this happens, you are in the state of deep meditation of no thought.

19. Anthology of Daoist Village²

《道鄉集》

Today, I would like to teach you the method of ceasing the thought. For example, when my Xin is looking at the water, my thought will be on the water; when my Xin is looking at the moon, my thought will be on the moon; assuming if my eyes (i.e. attention) are focused in looking at the Qi cavity (Qi Xue, Dan Tian), my Xin will be on the Qi cavity.

余今傳汝止念之法。譬如我心看水，此念即在水上；我心看月，此念即在月上；設想此眼光專看氣穴，我心即在氣穴矣。

This article talks about the key trick of stopping the thought is paying attention to the Qi Xue (氣穴). “Qi Xue” means “Upper Dan Tian” or “Real Lower Dan Tian.” Naturally, the way of doing so is through the breathing. Once you pay attention to the breathing and keep your mind at the Dan Tian, the thought will disappear gradually.

20. Zhuang Zi, Laymen World²

《莊子·人間世》

With a sole will, do not listen with ears but listen with Xin (i.e. sincere mind); do not listen with Xin but listen with Qi. Listening ceases at the ears and Xin is stopped in accordance (Fu). What is Qi? It is insubstantial and attached to (i.e. existing in) all objects. Only (following) the Dao can you gather this insubstantial (Qi). What is this insubstantial? It is (obtained from) the purification of Xin (Xin Zhai).

若一志，無聽之以耳而聽之以心；無聽之以心而聽之以氣。聽止于耳，心止于符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛，虛者心齋也。

In order to regulate your emotional mind (Xin, 心), you must stop your listening contact with the outside world and pay attention to your emotional mind. Once you can bring your thoughts from outside to inside of your body, then you should pay attention to your Qi through breathing. “Fu” (符) means “to accord,” “to match,” “to harmonize,” “to coordinate,” or “to cooperate.” This means the way of stopping the activities of Xin is through the coordination of breathing.

In order to gather the Qi at the Dan Tian, you must first have a calm and non-disturbed Xin. “Xin Zhai” (心齋) means “purified Xin” and implies a simply calm and sincere mind. Only then, the Qi can be preserved at its residence. This is the way of Dao (道)

21. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament; Hen Anthology²

《性命圭旨全書·亨集》

If there is an initiation of a thought, then everywhere is fire. The quiet place where the millions of affinities (of the thoughts are ceased), then the spring can blossom.

一念動時皆是火，萬緣寂處即生春。

This sentence emphasizes two important things in regulating the mind. First is to stop the initiation of a thought. When the thought is initiated, then the mind is excited and becomes Yang (fire). Second is to cut off all of the thoughts which are lingering in your mind.

22. Wei Mo Classic²

《維摩經》

“To restrain the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) from its emotional affinity is called stop. To see deep and reach far clearly is called observation.” It is also said: “Every thought returns to one (i.e. the origin) is called stop, and everything can be discriminated clearly is called observation.”

“系心于緣謂之止，分別深達謂之觀。” “念念歸一為止，了了分明為觀。”

These two sentences explain the meaning of “Zhi Guan” (止觀), which literally means “to stop the observation” and implies that the observation of the Xin’s activities is stopped. In order to do so, you must have regulated your emotional mind to a stage where the regulating is no longer necessary.

The first phrase explains that, in order to reach this goal, you must first stop the emotional affinity with the outside world. This is the meaning of “stop” (Zhi, 止). Once you have reached the stage where your mind is so clear and profound that it allows you to analyze the situation through observation and thus you are able to stop the old thought and the new thought’s initiation, then it is called “observation” (Guan, 觀) (see through thoroughly)

The second phrase explains that when you bring all of the disturbing thoughts into a place and pay attention to it, this is called “stop” (Zhi, 止). Naturally, this place is the Dan Tian (Embracing Singularity). That implies that if you are able to pay attention to the Dan Tian (either Upper Dan Tian for Shen or Real Lower Dan Tian for Qi) and coordinate with your deep breathing, all of the disturbing thoughts will be replaced with one thought, thus, the disturbing thoughts can be stopped. To see through thoroughly so your mind is clear and calm is called “observation” (Guan, 觀).

23. Anthology of Daoist Village

《道鄉集》

“The real meaning of Buddhahood which has been handed down (to us) is: observation is stopped.” “What is observation? It means to place my vision warmly on the ultimate goodness.” “What is stop? It means to place and stop (i.e. focus) my real intention at the ultimate goodness.”

“佛之真傳，在于觀止。” “觀者何？將我目光，溫煦于至善地之義也。” “止者何？將我真意止于至善地之義也。”

According to Buddhist society, there are three observations (San Guan, 三觀): 1. Observing Emptiness. It is to observe the emptiness of all natural laws and events. 2. Observing Falseness. It is to observe the falseness of all natural laws. 3. Observing Between. It is to observe non-emptiness and non-falseness of the natural laws. This means to keep the neutral viewpoint. It also means double observation.⁴⁵ “Zhi Guan” (止觀) (Stop Observation) is the way of reaching “Guan Zhi” (觀止) (Observation is Stopped). In order to reach this, you must first have observed and analyzed all of the events and natural occurrences. Once you have seen through all of the events in your mind, then nothing will bother you. Then you have reached the stage of “Guan Zhi.”

This document explains the best way of reaching “Guan Zhi” is simply paying attention to cultivating your self-mind until the stage of ultimate goodness. When you pay attention to all of the goodness, then nothing bothers you. You are kind, righteous, and gentle. Then you have no inner conflict in your emotional mind. That means you are free from the affinity of emotions and desires.

24. Thesis of Buddha Ground

《佛地論》

All laws (i.e. natural rules) and all different appearances (i.e. manifestations of nature) are able to bloom and be awakened by themselves. If (we are) also able to bloom and awaken from all emotional bondages, just like being awakened from sleep and like the blooming of lotus flower. Therefore, it is called ‘Buddha’.

于一切法，一切種相，能自開覺，亦開覺一切有情，如睡夢覺醒，如蓮花開，故名佛。

This is talking about the definition or the feeling of Buddhism. It is just like a lotus flower just emerges from the emotional mud and blooms. It is like having just woken up and suddenly realized that every occurrence or emotional bondage is unreal, as if it were happening in a dream.

Buddha means to achieve awareness and wisdom. For example, to awaken through understanding, to awaken through observation, to awaken through knowing

about the reasons (causes) for all laws and natural rules, and being able to discriminate them clearly. It is like just being awakened from sleep, and is called awakening through realization. Comprehend the vexations through observation so they are not harmful. It is like observing and sensing thieves in laymen society. Therefore, it is called the awakening through observation.⁴⁶ Thieves mean the emotions and desires which are able to steal away the purity of your heart and spirit.

According to Buddhist society, we are born and grow in the human emotional mud or dust (Chen Tu, 塵土) (human matrix). We have created dignity, glory, pride, happiness, sadness, jealousy, and all kinds of desires. We learn how to lie and place a mask on our face. However, we all experience significant spiritual pain living in this human matrix. We have been blinded by the mud and our hearing has been blocked by it. Nothing is clear in our minds. The conscious mind is active while the subconscious mind which is connected to the Shen is in its sleeping state. When this happens, we are dreaming in the human matrix and are not awakening.

Nevertheless, each of us has a lotus seed. Through meditation, this lotus seed will bud and start to grow from deep in the mud. Gradually, our subconscious minds will grow through meditation. After meditating a long time, this lotus flower will push you out of the human mud matrix and you will see everything clearly. To waken your Shen, you must learn to bring all thoughts to your Shen center and to keep the Shen there. This spiritual center (Upper Dan Tian) is called "Spiritual Mountain" (Ling Shan, 靈山). In this mountain, there is a Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷) where the Valley Spirit (Gu Shen, 谷神) resides.

There is a song in Buddhist society which says: "Do not search far for Buddha since he is in the Spiritual Mountain. Where is the Spiritual Mountain? It is actually in your mind. Everyone should have a pagoda at Spiritual Mountain so (he) is able to cultivate (his) being under the pagoda at this Spiritual Mountain."⁴⁷ Pagoda (Ta, 塔) implies good deeds you have done, and the comprehension of nature which you have accumulated in your spiritual cultivation.

In the document, *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命主旨全書), it is said: "When learning the Dao, (you) must first learn to comprehend your own Xin (Emotional Mind). The deep hidden place of your own Xin is the hardest place to find. Once you have found it and no more other places can be found, then you will have comprehended that the layman's Xin can be just like that of a Buddha."⁴⁸ This entire paragraph implies that the Xin of awakening is in a place deeply hidden within yourself. Once you have found it, then this Xin is nothing special and is just like a layman's Xin. This means every layman's Xin, once awakened, can be just like a Buddha's.

25. Dao Scriptures; Fifteenth Religious Thesis of Chong Yang²

《道藏·重陽立教十五論》

The world with desires, the world with colors, and the world with no color are the three worlds. When the Xin (Emotional Mind) has forgotten (been isolated from) the worries and the thoughts that are hanging around, then (you) have passed the territory of desiring world. When the Xin has forgotten the surrounding environment (laymen world), then (you) have passed the color world (material world). When (the Xin) is not attached to anything (illusion) but emptiness, then (you) have passed the world of no color.

欲界、色界、無色界，此乃三界也。心忘慮念，即超欲界；心忘諸境，即超色界；不著空見，即超無色界。

This paragraph explains the three worlds (San Jie, 三界) defined in Buddhist society. These three worlds are: the world of emotional bondage and desires; the world of laymen activities and material existence (color world), and the world of imagination and fantasy. When your Xin can be separated from these three worlds, then you have reached the stage of regulating your mind.

26. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo

(Yu Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (于真人胎息法)

Those who wish to cultivate their temperaments must first stabilize their Xin and Qi. When Xin and Qi are stabilized, the Shen can be condensed (i.e. focused). When Shen is condensed, then the Xin is peaceful. When Xin is peaceful, then the Qi can ascend upward (to nourish the brain). When Qi has ascended upward, then the surrounding environment will be empty. When the surrounding environment is empty, then it (i.e. the entire being) is pure and quiet (i.e. calm). When it is pure and quiet, then there are no objects (i.e. emptiness) around. If there is no object (in the mind), then (the cultivation) of life can be completed. When the life is completed, the Dao can be derived. Once the Dao is derived, then all appearances (i.e. illusion generated from desires and emotions) can be cut off. If the appearances can be cut off, then the consciousness can be bright (i.e. clear). When the consciousness is clear, then the Shen can be communicative (i.e. enlightened). The classic said: "When the Xin is communicative, then millions of methods are also communicative. When the Xin is calm, then millions of occurrences are all eliminated. This is the door to achieving real stability of Ru Lai (i.e. Buddha)." (Therefore), those who cultivate the Dao must first cultivate the methods of stabilizing the Xin. Once the methods of stabilizing the Xin can be obtained, then it is not difficult to return the elixir, the golden liquid (Jin Ye) (saliva) will not be far, and immortality can be achieved.

凡所修行，先定心氣，心氣定則神凝，神凝則心安，心安則氣昇，氣昇則境空，境空則清靜，清靜則無物，無物則命全，命全則道生，道生則絕相，絕相則覺明，覺明則神通。經云：‘心通萬法皆通，心靜萬法皆滅，此一門如來真定者也。’凡修道者，先修心定之法，既得定法，還丹不遠，金液非遙，仙道得矣。（亦見于性命圭旨全書；王方平胎息訣）

This document talks about the sequential consequences of cultivation. From stabilization of Xin and Qi to the Shen's condensing. From the Shen's condensing results the peace of Xin. From peaceful Xin, the Qi can ascend upward to nourish the brain. When this happens, the surrounding environment will disappear and this will set you free from emotional bondage and the desires of the material world. If there is no object in the mind, then the cultivation of human temperament can be completed. This will result in the unification of human Shen and the Dao. Finally, it will lead you to spiritual enlightenment. "Jin Ye" (金液) means "golden liquid" which implies the generation of precious saliva during Enlightenment Grand Cyclic Heaven meditation. This implies the Qi has been successfully led upward to nourish the brain.

27. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Yuan Xian Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(元憲真人胎息訣)

Those who wish to study Embryonic Breathing through Wuwei (i.e. doing nothing) can only be reached through (cultivation of) a pure and calm Xin. It is also named "Zhen Ru" (i.e. Real Buddhahood). (In this state,) there are no objects (i.e. emptiness) at all originally. It is just like the Grand Nihilism (Tai Xu): no to or fro, no up or down, no moving or still, very quiet and simple. It shares the same body as the real emptiness (i.e. coexistence) and has the same origin as Great Dao (Da Dao), and is able to meet the original face (of life). If (you) wish to cultivate the Great Dao, (you) must cultivate Wuwei. The mind is clear and insubstantial, quiet but not quiet, calm but not calm, the Xin is clean and isolated from the surrounding environment. When the Xin and environment are both forgotten, then (you) have entered the real Dao of Wuwei. Those who cultivate this method, the (refinement of) elixir can be achieved. (In this case,) the Qi can be stabilized naturally and the Embryonic Breathing can be achieved.

夫學無為胎息者，只是本清靜心也。亦名真如，本無物也。有若太虛相似，無去無來，無上無下，非動非靜，寂寂寥寥，與真空同體，與大道同源，與本面目相逢者也。若修大道，當修無為，其心清虛，寂而無寂，靜而無靜，心澄境謝，心境雙忘，則入無為真道也。學道之人，若修如是法門，則其丹自成，自然氣定而得胎息矣。

“Wuwei” (無為) means “doing nothing,” and implies “regulating without regulating.” Therefore, every thing has become natural. It happens without any intention or desires. In order to reach the goal of Embryonic Breathing where no regulating is necessary, you must have a clear and calm mind. “Zhen Ru” (真如) means “Real Buddhahood.” Once you have reached the stage of regulating without regulating your mind, you will then regulate your breathing until it has reached the stage of as if it is there and as if it is not there. When this happens, your spirit and the natural spirit will be united. This is the way of “Great Dao” (Da Dao, 大道), Dao is great, so it is often called “Great Dao.”

28. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Kan Cang Zi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(亢倉子胎息訣)

When (you) cultivate (your Shen) to enter the Dao, (you should) cease (your) Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) and not let it be disordered; the Spirit of Vitality (Jing Shen) should not be scattered (or dispersed); cease the Shen and do not let it be vigilant (i.e. active); cease snoring (i.e. heavy breathing) and do not let (the air) out (too fast); cease the words and not talk; cease the blood's circulation (from being too exciting) and not allow it be stagnant; cease the spittle and do not spit it far; cease tears and do not let it be discarded; cease anger and do not let events bother (you); cease the Shen and do not let it worry; cease resentment and do not keep it (in your mind); cease the ego and do not dispute (with others); and cease the misfortune and do not keep it in (your) mind. If a person can do so constantly whenever he is walking, residing, sitting, or lying (i.e. daily life), his Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) will be happy by itself and the accomplishment can be achieved naturally. If (you) do not cultivate these rules (of regulating), the efforts will be in vain and end up with no result. If (you) do the above rules, the elixir will be completed. (In addition,) if (you) are able to forget both movement and stillness (i.e. forget the activity of the mind and body), then the Dao can automatically be gained without asking for it.

凡修煉入道，息心勿亂，精神勿泄，息神勿惕，息艱勿出，息言勿語，息血勿滯，息唾勿遠，息涕勿棄，息嗔勿惱，息神勿憂，息怨勿念，息我勿爭，息害勿記。若人行住坐臥，常持如是，其心自樂，自然成就。不修此理，枉費其功，終無成法。但日日如是，其丹必就，若動靜雙忘，道不求自得矣。

This document points out that in order to regulate your mind and enter the Dao of cultivation, you must first regulate the thinking and behaviors of your daily life. Only if you are able to do so, can you then have a peaceful Xin. This is a crucial key to cultivation.

29. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Xuan Hu Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (玄葫真人胎息訣)

(To cultivate) the Great Dao (Da Dao), (you) must use the emptiness (Kong) as the origin (of cultivation). It is marvellous (if you are able) to cut off (the mind of) the appearances (i.e. material world), approach the original root, calm and stabilize the Tai Su (i.e. Grand Simplicity), absorb the Qi and store it at the (Real Lower) Dan Tian, refine the Shen in the Jin Shi (i.e. Golden Residence, Upper Dan Tian), and stabilize the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) deeply at the sea of consciousness (Jue Hai). When the Xin is stable, the Shen will be tranquil. When the Shen is tranquil, then the Qi will stay (at its residence). When Qi stays, then the Xin will be naturally delighted. (You) should keep (your mind) at the Zhen Xi (i.e. Real Breathing, Embryonic Breathing) at all times. It is also said: "When Shen and breathing are stabilized, the Jin (i.e. metal) and Mu (i.e. wood) will intercourse. When Xin and Yi are tranquil, the Long (i.e. dragon) and Hu (i.e. tiger) will meet together. This is the real (cultivation) of Internal Elixir (Nei Dan) and the applications of Embryonic Breathing. Those who cultivate the Dao, if (they) wish to live long without dying, (they) must first refine (their) Xin." Zhen Ren (i.e. Truthful Person who has achieved the Dao) said: "What is Xin? It is one inch and three centimeters under the lungs and is called 'Jade Kettle' (Yu Hu). There is a sole Qi of white nihility within." Classic said: "To generate the whiteness in the nihility, one name is "Jade Kettle," second name is "spiritual residence (Shen Shi)," third name is "Jade Hall" (Yu Guan), fourth name is "crimson palace" (Jiang Gong). Within it, there is a Buddha who could save those who suffer, there is an immortal who does not die, there is an efficacious precious Buddha, there is an incarnation of life, there is a grand sole Zhen Ren (i.e. Truthful Person or Buddha), and there is a Zhen Ren who saves those who suffer. (You should) always keep (your) Original Qi (Yuan Qi) and don't let it be dispersed. When the elixir is congealed, it is as big as a grain, the color is like gold. It is named as "Bao Lin" (Precious Jade). If one is able to know it, discriminate it, recognize it, and seal his Liu Men (i.e. Six Doors), always keep (his) original truth, Embryonic Breathing will be achieved automatically and live long without dying.

夫大道以空為本，絕相為妙，達本元，靜定太素，納氣于丹田，煉神于金室，定心于覺海。心定神寧，神寧則氣住，氣住則自然心樂。常于百刻之中，舍守于真息。又云：‘神息定而金木交，心意寧而龍虎會，此內丹之真，胎息之用也。凡修道之人，若要長生不死，先須煉心。’真人曰：‘心者，在肺之下一寸三分曰玉壺，內有虛白一氣。’經云：‘虛中生白，一名玉壺，二名神室，三名玉館，四名絳宮，中有救苦天尊，中有不死之神，中有靈寶天尊，中有元始符命，中有太一真人，中有救苦真人。常持元氣，勿令失散，丹砂結就，大如黍米，色如黃金，一名寶琳。若人識得、辨得、認得，塞其六門，常守天真，胎息自成，延年久而不死矣。’

In order to find the real Dao, you must first empty your mind. This is simply because the Dao itself is empty and there are no material or emotional desires. If you wish to understand and reach the Dao, the first step is to stop the mind which is attached to the material world and emotional disturbance. In order to establish a firm root of life, you must keep your mind in the state of Grand Simplicity (Tai Su, 太素) (emptiness), accumulate the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level, refine your Shen until it is focused, and stays at the Upper Dan Tian. “Jin Shi” (金室) means “Golden Residence” and implies “the brain” or “Upper Dan Tian.”

To reach this goal, you must first stabilize your Xin through the awakening of life. When the Xin is stabilized, the Shen can be peaceful. Then the Shen and Qi will stay at their residence, and you will be able to unify the Shen and Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian to reach the state of “Wuji” (無極). This will allow you to return yourself to the origin or the root of life. “Jin” (金) means “metal” and implies “lungs” since lungs belongs to metal in the Five Elements (Wuxing, 五行). “Mu” (木) means “wood” and implies “liver” since liver belongs to wood in the Five Elements. According to Chinese medical science, the lungs associate with your breathing and the liver associates with your Shen. Therefore, when your mind is calm and peaceful, the Shen can be condensed and the breathing can be slender, soft, and uniform. This is the key to Embryonic Breathing.

“Yu Hu” (玉壺) means “Jade Kettle,” “Shen Shi” (神室) means “Spiritual Residence,” “Yu Guan” (玉館) means “Jade Hall,” and “Jiang Gong” (絳宮) means “Crimson Palace.” All these alternative names imply “heart” (Xin, 心). “Liu Men” (六門) means “Six Doors” and implies two eyes, two ears, nose, and mouth, the six organs of sense.

30. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Hou Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (侯真人胎息訣)

What is the real sole rule (of cultivation)? It is not to separate from its Ben Yuan (i.e. Original Root). What is Ben Yuan? Then, it means a sole Xin (i.e. simplicity of emotional mind). (If the Xin) does not move and does not transport away (i.e. apart), then the Xin is (at) the origin. (If the Xin) does not stop (its activities) and does not stay (at the origin) (i.e. unsteady), then the origin (of problems) will be (initiated from) Xin. When the Xin is tranquil and calm, then the Great Herb (Da Yao) (i.e. elixir) can be completed; when the Xin is bewildered and disordered, then it will result in the production of great thief (Da Zei) which is able to take away (your) essence (Jing), to steal (your) Shen, to damage (your) furnace (i.e. Lower Dan Tian), to make (you) lose the herb (i.e. elixir), and bring disaster to (your) body, and finally end (your) life. Those who are cultivating the Dao must first cultivate the methods of keeping the Xin calm. When the Xin is calm, then it can be stabilized. When the Xin is stabilized, then the Shen will be

peaceful, lead (Qian) and mercury (Gong) will be mutually delighted with each other, and the dragon (Long) and tiger (Hu) will marry. After practicing cyclic heaven for plenty of number (i.e. time), the essence will be increased, the Qi will be enhanced, and the Shen will be nourished. If these three things are completed, then millions of spirits (i.e. all existing spirits) can gather and meet at the Dan Tian, Qi and blood can circulate around the entire body smoothly, and the Dao of longevity can be achieved freely and unfettered. It is also said: "how to keep (your mind) clear and tranquil, (you) must first clean (your) Shen, stop worries, forget self, extinguish the surrounding environment, and embrace the real (i.e. truth). This is what the marvellous tranquil Dao should be."

夫真一法界者，不離于本源。本源者，則是一心也。不動不行，心則是源；不停不住，源則是心。其心清靜，則成大藥；其心惑亂，則成大賊。奪其精，盜其神，敗其爐，失其藥，患其身，喪其命也。凡在道之人，必先修心靜之法。但于心靜，必得定心。心定則神安，鉛汞相投，龍虎親也。周天數足，添精、益氣、養神。此三法若全，則萬神感會于丹田，氣血周流于遍體，逍遙于長生之道。又云：如何清靜，當澄其神，絕其慮，忘其我，滅其境，抱其真，此謂妙靜之道。

This article emphasizes that the most important thing in spiritual cultivation is to keep the emotional mind (Xin) in its extreme simplicity (emptiness). When the Xin can be calm and peaceful, then the Qi (elixir) can be accumulated to an abundant level. However, if the Xin is confused and emotionally disturbed, then you will lose your essence, Qi, and Shen. Therefore, you must first learn how to stabilize your Xin. Only then can the Shen be peaceful and stay at its residence, and the Shen and the Qi (Yin and Yang) interact with each other at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Lead (Qian, 鉛) and mercury (Gong, 汞), dragon (Long, 龍) and tiger (Hu, 虎) imply Yin and Yang.

31. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Central Lao Jun's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(中央老君胎息訣)

What is the original root that establishes the heaven and the earth (i.e. nature)? It is generated from Yin and Yang. The clean Qi is the heaven and the dirty Qi is the earth. The clean Qi is Xin while dirty Qi is kidneys. (Humans) are distracted by laymen affairs, which gives rise to the Xin's actions, thus the cleanliness and the dirtiness are not able to be distinguished. How do we know this theory? Whenever there is an action and movement, the eyes see and the ears hear, thus the five thieves (Wu Zei) have caused the loss of Zhen Yuan (i.e. Real Origin). The Xin is lost due to the eyes (i.e. seeing), thus, the Xin is touched and the Shen is fatigued. In addition, the Xin is also lost due to the ears (i.e. hearing). This Xin then sends sounds into the kidneys, the Shen is labored and Xin is

annoyed, and thus damaged. If the mind is touched, then the Original Qi is leaking, consequently, the practice of Embryonic Breathing cannot be achieved. Then, how can (we) reach the goal? If a person sits quietly, the mind does not act, all thoughts cease and (the disturbances generated from) emotions are all forgotten, the Qi and the Shen are thus regulated uniformly and smoothly. After a long time (of practice), immortality can be reached automatically.

夫本立天地，生于陰陽，清氣為天，濁氣為地，清氣為心，濁氣為腎。被世牽惹，引動人心，故清濁不分也。怎曉此理哉！每動作處，經行處，眼見耳聞，五賊送了真元。眼送于心，心動神疲，又被耳送于心，心送音聲入腎，神勞心煩壞了也。若動念，則泄真氣，故胎息不成矣。如何得成？若人靜坐，念心不動，息念忘情，氣神調勻，久而自成仙矣。

Xin (心) is the origin of our actions. This Xin was originally clean and pure at the beginning of our lives. However, when we grow up, through our organs of sense, this Xin gradually becomes contaminated by the five thieves (Wu Zei, 五賊), and our thinking and internal organs become dirty. “Five thieves” are “five emotions” that are related to the five internal organs: anger-wood (liver), happiness-fire (heart), pensiveness-earth (spleen), sadness-metal (lungs), and fear-water (kidneys). “Zhen Yuan” (真元) means “Real Origins” and implies the “Original Essence, Qi, and Shen” (Yuan Jing, Yuan Qi, and Yuan Shen, 元精、元氣、元神)

In order to conserve our Qi and extend our lives, we must first regulate our Xin. Then the breathing can be slender, soft, natural, and smooth, which is the necessary requirement for Embryonic Breathing.

32. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Chen, Xi-Yi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)³

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(陳希夷胎息訣)

From Dao, the youths (i.e. new lives) are derived, youths are (then) derived into elders, elders are (then) derived into sickness, from sickness, deaths then result, (and finally), from deaths spiritual (energy) is derived. From this spiritual (energy), millions (of living) objects are derived; from (the existing) Qi, living spiritual beings can be created; from (parents') essence, the shape (i.e. physical body) can be formalized. When these, essence, Qi, and Shen are derived (correctly), (a human) can be refined into a real immortal. Therefore, it is said: “To conserve the essence, to nourish the Shen, and to refine the Qi, these three items are the three virtual spirits of nature. (One) must know it.” Zi (i.e. 11 P.M.-1 A.M.), Wu (11 A.M.-1 P.M.), Mao (5-7 A.M.) and Qiu (5-7 P.M.), four timings, are the four doors for the Yin and Yang's entrance and exit. Stabilize the Xin and do not be touched, it is called “Chan.” The Shen is transportable and changeable in millions of ways, it is called “Ling.” The wisdom is able to comprehend millions of

affairs, it is called "Hui." The Dao has returned to its root and harmonized with Qi, it is called "Xiu." When the Real Qi (Zhen Qi) has returned to its origin, it is called "Lian." When the dragon and tiger have intercourse, it is called "Dan." When three Dans (i.e. three Dan Tians) cooperate with each other, it is called "Liao." If those who cultivate their temperament are able to understand these roots, the path of entering the Dao will be near.

夫道化少，少化老，老化病，病化死，死化神。神化萬物，氣化生靈，精化成形，神、氣、精三化，煉成真仙。故云：‘存精、養神、煉氣，此乃三德之神，不可不知。’子午卯酉四時，乃是陰陽出入之門戶也。定心不動，謂之曰禪；神通萬變，謂之曰靈；智通萬事，謂之曰慧；道元合氣，謂之曰修；真氣歸元，謂之曰煉；龍虎相交，謂之曰丹；三丹同契，謂之曰了。若修行之人，知此根源，乃可入道近矣。

It is the Dao that conceives our lives; born as a child, we grow up becoming an adult, getting old, becoming sick, and finally we die becoming Shen. This is the repetition of the natural cycle. It is the Shen that allows the Dao to again derive millions of living objects. It is due to the existence of Qi that all of these living objects can exist. It is also due to the essence, that the material forms are sustained. Therefore, if you wish to become an immortal, you must refine and train your three treasures (San Bao, 三寶): essence (Jing, 精), Qi (氣), and spirit (Shen, 神).

Many practitioners believe that when you meditate to train your three treasures, the best times are: Zi (子) (11 P.M. — 1 A.M.), Wu (午) (11 A.M.— 1 P.M.), Mao (卯) (5 — 7 A.M.), and Qiu (酉) (5 — 7 P.M.). This is because the natural Qi changes at these times. Zi (子) (11 P.M.— 1 A.M.), the natural Yin is changing into Yang; Wu (午) (11 A.M.— 1 P.M.), the natural Yang is changing into Yin; Mao (卯) (5 — 7 A.M.), dawn; and Qiu (酉) (5 — 7 P.M.), dusk. In the document, *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命圭旨全書), it is said: “Zi, Wu, Mao, and Qiu are the four doors for Yin and Yang’s exit and entrance.”⁴⁹

However, many others believe that you should not be restricted by these four timings. Once you have reached a profound level of meditation, you may use any time for your cultivation. The key is learning how to create “Alive Zi Timing” (Huo Zi Shi, 活子時). That means the Zi timing is alive and can occur at any time and any place. Then how do we define this “Alive Zi Timing?” It is said: “When you practice Qigong, the shape (physical body) and the Shen are peaceful and calm, the Shen is condensed and stays at the Qi cavity (Upper Dan Tian) and at the same time, (you) feel the Qi’s action (aliveness) in the (Real Lower) Dan Tian. This is the time of the interaction of Yin and Yang.”⁵⁰ It is also said in the document, *Observing Vessels* (脈望), that: “When (you) begin to establish the elixir foundation (to produce the elixir), (you) should not be restricted to the Zi and Wu. When this is a (Qi) movement (gen-

erated in the Real Lower Dan Tian) within the calmness, then it is the time to produce Gui (i.e. kidneys), this is the time called “Alive Zi Timing.”⁵¹ “Gui” (癸) implies “kidneys,” and means the production of the Original Essence (i.e. hormone)

“Chan” (禪) is a Buddhist term and means meditation in which the mind is free from any emotional bondage. “Ling” (靈) is a super psychic capability that allows you to communicate with nature of other spiritual beings. “Hui” (慧) means the wisdom generated from accumulation of experiences and knowledge. “Xiu” (修) means to accomplish the cultivation which allows you to return to the root (i.e. origin) of the Dao. “Lian” (煉) means to refine the Shen and Qi so the Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) can be returned to its origin. Only then will the Yin and Yang interact to produce the elixir (Dan, 丹). Once you are able to lead the Qi upward to the Upper Dan Tian and keep the Shen there, all three Dan Tians are unified, coordinated and in harmony with each other, then it is the end of human emotions. That is the training of “Liao” (了). In order to reach this stage, you must first calm down your Xin located at the Middle Dan Tian, so the Qi can be preserved and stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian, and the Shen can be condensed at the Upper Dan Tian.

3.6 REGULATING THE SPIRIT 調神

1. Dao De Jing

(Chapter 6)¹

《道德經·六章》

The Valley Spirit (Gu Shen) does not die, then it is called “Xuan Pin.” The door (i.e. key) to reaching this “Xuan Pin” is the root of heaven and earth (i.e. nature). It is very soft and continuous as if it were existing. When it is used, it will not be exhausted.

谷神不死，是謂玄牝。玄牝之門，是謂天地根，綿綿若存，用之不勤。

The spirit (Shen, 神) resides at the space between the two hemispheres of the brain. This space acts as a valley between mountains, which is able to trap energy and generate resonant vibrations in the valley, that correspond with the energy outside the valley. Thus, the Shen residing in this valley is called “Valley Spirit” (Gu Shen, 谷神) and the valley in which the Shen resides is called “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷). It is understood that the Shen residing in this valley governs the energy vibration of the entire body and thus controls the Qi status and its manifestation. When this Shen is strong, the Qi manifestation in your life will be strong, and consequently you will have a long and healthy life (i.e. immortality)

“Xuan” (玄) means “Original” (Yuan, 元), and “Pin” (牝) refers to female animals and means “mothers.” Therefore, “Yuan Pin” means the “Origin or Root of

Lives.” When the Valley Spirit is centered (i.e. condensed) and functions actively, the life force is strong. Actually, “Xuan Pin” (玄牝) is what is called “Taiji” (太極) (Grand Ultimate) in *Yi Jing (The Book of Change)*. This Taiji is the Dao (道) of lives in the great nature. Therefore, we can conclude that “Xuan Pin” is: “the root of creation, variation, bearing, and raising of millions of lives, and is the mother of millions of objects of heaven and earth. It is another name for ‘Dao’.”⁵²

The door to reaching this “Xuan Pin” is the key to reaching natural Shen (i.e. heaven and earth). The Shen is very soft and continuous as though existing, and yet without existing. The Shen cannot be seen but felt through cultivation. When it is used, it will not be exhausted.

According to Daoist and Buddhist society, in order to reach the natural Shen, you must re-open your third eye. The Third Eye is called “Tian Mu” (天目) (Heaven Eye), or “Yu Men” (玉門) (Jade Gate) by religious societies, and Yintang (M-HN-3, 印堂) (Seal Hall) by Chinese medical society. The document, *Wudang’s Illustration of Cultivating Truth (武當修真圖)*: “(the place) under the Mingtang (明堂) (Ezhong M-HN-2, 額中) (central area of forehead), above the midpoint of the line connecting the two eyebrows, where the spiritual light is emitted, is named as ‘Heaven Eye’ (Tian Mu, 天目)”⁵³ It also mentioned in the document, *Seventh Bamboo Slips of the Bamboo Bookcase (云笈七籤)*, that: “The space between the two eyebrows is the ‘Jade Gate’ (Yu Men, 玉門) of Ni Wan (泥丸)”⁵⁴ “Ni Wan” (泥丸) is a Daoist term, literally meaning “Mud Pill” and implies “the brain” or “Upper Dan Tian.” The lower center of the Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷) between the two hemispheres of the brain is called “Ni Wan Gong” (泥丸宮) and means “Mud Pill Palace.”

2. Observing Vessels

《脈望》

The brain is the Upper Dan Tian and is the palace where the Original Shen (Yuan Shen) resides. If a person is able to grasp this Original Shen and make it stay at this Original Palace, then the golden Qi (i.e. precious Qi) will rise automatically and the Real Breathing can be stabilized naturally. This is what it means: “If one way is opened, then hundreds of ways will all be opened. When the big gate is opened, then hundreds of gates are all opened.”

腦為上田，元神所居之宮，人能握元神，棲于本宮，則金氣自升，真息自定，所謂一竅開而百竅齊開，大關通則百關盡通也。

The brain is considered to be the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田) the residence of the Shen. The Shen resides at the Upper Dan Tian since our birth and is thus called “Original Shen” (Yuan Shen, 元神). The document, *Detailed Outline of Galenical (本草綱目)* said: “Brain is the residence of the Original Shen.”⁵⁵ If

you are able to condense your Shen and make it stay at its residence, then the Qi in your body will be conserved. The way to keep the Shen at its residence is to keep your mind calm and peaceful, and avoid attraction of human affairs or temptations, and emotional disturbances. When this happens, the Qi storage at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) will be abundant and can be led upward to nourish the brain and Shen. In addition, the breathing can be slender, soft, and steady. This will result in the opening of obstacles to Qi in the entire body. This is the way of reaching health and longevity.

3. Development of Chan Tong Qi

《參同契發揮》

Following the Real Breathing's to-and-fro, allows the Real Qi to ascend and descend, from morning till evening, the Original Shen (Yuan Shen) should always reside at the Ni Wan (Palace).

隨真息之往來，任真氣之升降，自朝至暮，元神常棲于泥丸也。

Real Breathing (Zhen Xi, 真息) means the profound level of “Embryonic Breathing” (Tai Xi, 胎息). When you have reached the stage of “Real Breathing,” the Qi can circulate smoothly through the entire body without the slightest stagnation. Then you are able to lead it up to nourish your Shen, and down to store it at the Real Lower Dan Tian. However, it does not matter how the Qi is circulated and manifested, you must always keep your Shen at its residence so you will not be confused by laymen affairs.

4. Concealed Secret of Fong's Family

《馮氏錦囊》

There is a crux in the body which is named as “Xuan Pin.” This place is how the life can be alive by receiving Qi. In fact, this place is the residence of Shen and where the Three Origins (San Yuan) (Jing, Qi, and Shen) are gathered. This is the cavity where the essence (Jing), spirit (Shen), soul (Hun), and vigor (Po) meet. It is the root where the Golden Elixir (Jin Dan) (i.e. Qi) returns and the place where the immortals conceive their Holy Embryo.

身中一竅，名曰玄牝，受氣以生，實為府神，三元所聚，精神魂魄會于此穴，乃金丹還返之根，神仙凝結聖胎之地也。

This document explains the “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) or “Mud Pill Palace” (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮). The Shen resides at this place. When the Shen is gathered and the physical body is nourished by Qi, then there is a physical life. Once

this Shen departs from the physical body, then there is death. To nourish this Shen, you must gather the “Three Origins” (San Yuan, 三元) namely “Jing” (精) (Essence), “Qi” (氣), and “Shen” (神) (Spirit) at this place. Then the Shen can be raised up to a high level.

“Xuan Pin” (玄牝) has already been explained earlier. “Po” (魄) is the vital spirit that is supported by vital energy (Qi) when a person is alive. When a person dies, the “Po” becomes “Hun” (魂) (Soul) meaning the spirit after death. “Jin Dan” (金丹) means “Golden Elixir” and implies precious Qi. When the precious Qi is led upward to nourish the Shen, you are able to attain immortality. In Daoist society, there is a song which says: “There is a Shen in every human body. There is a supernatural divine light (Ling Guang, 靈光) (which can be developed) in this Shen. This supernatural divine light alone can shine into thousands of valleys. Its Dao of variations is unlimited, and spreads to millions of directions (i.e. ways).”⁵⁶ This means once you are able to cultivate your Shen to an enlightened level, this Shen is able to reach everywhere in the universe.

5. Songs of Valley Spirit³

谷神歌

(呂祖志·唐·呂岩撰)

Songs of Valley Spirit-1

谷神歌 - 一

I have an interior insubstantial empty valley. When talking about it, it seems it is there, again it seems it is not there. When talking about it, even if it is not there, however, (we) cannot ignore it. When talking about it, even if it is there, however, it cannot be resided in (i.e. occupied physically).

Valley, valley, it is so marvellous. Shen, Shen, it is the real Great Dao. Keep it, protect it, (you) can be on the list of those without death (i.e. longevity). Cultivate and refine it, (you) can be called “an immortal divine” (Xian Ren).

我有一腹空谷虛，言之道有又還無，言之無兮不可舍，
言之有兮不可居。
谷兮谷兮太玄妙，神兮神兮真大道，保之守之不死名，
修之煉之仙人號。

This song talks about the importance of the “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) and how crucial it is for the cultivation of the “Valley Spirit” (Gu Shen, 谷神) if you wish to reach enlightenment and immortality. This Spiritual Valley is between the two lobes of the brain (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮) that cannot be seen but felt. In this valley the Valley Spirit resides. To reach the Dao of enlightenment, you must feel the

existence of the Spiritual Valley and first learn how to keep the Shen there firmly, and then to cultivate it. This is the way to reach immortality. “Xian Ren” (仙人) means “those persons who have reached spiritual immortality (仙人) (i.e. enlightenment).

Songs of Valley Spirit-2

谷神歌 - 二

When the (Valley) Spirit obtains its singularity (Yi, i.e. simplicity), the Ling (i.e. ingenuity) can be developed. When the (Spiritual) Valley obtains its singularity (i.e. center), the fullness can be achieved. If a person is able to keep this singularity, then from this alone (he) will be able to achieve (his) longevity.

It is not too far (i.e. difficult) to obtain longevity originally. However, it cannot be achieved if (the training) neglects (the training of the physical) body. If trained and the accomplishment is achieved, then the ordinary bones (i.e. normal human physical body) can be changed (into immortality) naturally.

神得一以靈，谷得一以盈，若人能守一，只此自長生。
長生本不遠，離身還不見，煉之功若成，自然凡骨變。

“Yi” (一) here means “one,” “singleness,” “singularity” or “simplicity.” If the Shen is able to condense into a singleness at its residence without dispersion, then the spiritual vibration energy will be strong and powerful. Consequently, you are able to reach “Ling” (靈), which means “ingenuity,” “intelligence,” “dexterity,” and “cleverness.” This implies the capability of comprehension, which is the key to enlightenment.

When the Spiritual Valley obtains this concentrated Shen, the coherent resonant energy will be full and strong, and the Qi governed by the Shen will be efficient and effective. This is the key to longevity.

However, in order to obtain your longevity, you must also pay heed to your physical health, and not just mental and spiritual cultivation. The key to longevity is both physical and mental. Only if these two are able to balance each other with a strong foundation, can you then have a long healthy life. At this point, you should know that Daoists usually pay attention to both physical and mental cultivation. This dual cultivation is called “Xing Ming Shuang Xiu” (性命雙修) and means “the dual cultivation of temperament and physical life.”

Songs of Valley Spirit-3

谷神歌 - 三

If Valley Spirit does not die, (then you have gained) the gate (i.e. crucial key) to Xuan Pin. Exit and enter softly as the Dao is existing within. When (you) cultivate (your Shen) to return it to the insubstantial nibility at midnight, you must know how to use the river transportation to carry (the Qi) to Kunlun.

The dragon is singing and the tiger is also shouting, the wind and the clouds meet together and the old yellow lady is screaming. The fair lady in the fire is shy and charming. Look inward to see the cute baby in the water.

谷神不死玄牝門，出入綿綿道若存，修煉還虛夜半子，
河車搬載上崑崙。
龍又吟、虎又嘯，風雲際會黃婆叫，火中姤女正含嬌，
回觀水底嬰兒俏。

As mentioned earlier, “Xuan” (玄) means “Original” (Yuan, 元), and “Pin” (牝) means mothers. Therefore, “Yuan Pin” (玄牝) means the “origin or root of lives” and implies “the key of longevity.” In order to keep the Shen at its residence, you must follow the Dao, softly and gently. It will take a great deal of time to learn to keep the Shen at its residence. You must cut off all attractions and emotional disturbances from the outside world. Do this gradually and gently. If you try to force it to happen, the emotional mind will be even more disturbed and the result will be reversed. To lead the Qi upward through the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal Cord) to nourish the brain, you must train this at midnight, because the Qi is the strongest in the central energy system at that time.

“Dragon” (Long, 龍) and “Tiger” (Hu, 虎) mean the Yin and Yang Qis in the body. “Old Yellow Lady” (Huang Po, 黃婆) means the “matchmaker” who brings the Yin (female) and Yang (male) together. Through interaction of Yin and Yang, the spiritual baby embryo will be conceived. Huang Po can be the mind (Shen) and/or the breathing which is able to bring the Yin and Yang together.

The baby (Ying Er) and the shy lady (Cha Nu) meet old yellow lady (Huang Po), the son and the mother meet each other with the same Yi (i.e. mind). In the Golden Palace (Jin Dian) and Jade Hall (Yu Tang), there are twelve doors. Golden Male (Jin Gong) and Wood Female (Mu Mu) are just coming.

After passing layers of the important key doors, immediately lock the gate. Inspect cows in the Big Dipper (Dou Niu) and immediately start the fire. Advance the fire to eliminate Yin to initiate the sole Yang. Thousand years of peach has just started to bear fruits.

嬰兒姤女見黃婆，兒女相逢兩意合，金殿玉堂門十二，
金公木母正來過。
重門過後牢關鎖，點檢斗牛先下火，進火消陰始一陽，
千歲仙桃初結果。

The baby (Shen) and the shy lady (Qi) are now brought together by the “old yellow lady” (Huang Po, 黃婆) (mind or breathing) and harmonize with each other. Then they are led upward from the Huang Ting (黃庭) to the brain (Upper Dan Tian) passing through twelve doors (throat area). The Original Essence and the Shen

have therefore been unified. “Ying Er” (嬰兒) means “baby” (son) and implies “the Spiritual Embryo.” “Cha Nu” (姽女) (the shy lady, mother) implies “Qi.” Therefore, it means the Xin has been calmed and unified with the Shen at Huang Ting (黃庭). The baby embryo is then conceived. This spiritual embryo is then led upward to the Upper Dan Tian.

“Jin Dian” (金殿) is also called “Jin Shi” (金室). This means “Golden Palace” and implies “lungs.” “Yu Tang” (玉堂) means “jade hall” and implies “the palate of the mouth.” Twelve doors means the throat area. “Jin Gong” (金公) means “Golden Male” which implies “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精) and “Mu Mu” (木母) means “Wood Mother” and implies “liver” (Shen). Liver (Shen) belongs to wood in the Five Elements (Wuxing, 五行), which is able to produce the fire which relates to the heart (Xin, 心). When the Shen and the Xin are harmonious and unified with each other, the mind can be calmed and the spirit condensed.

After passing through the twelve doors (throat) to the Upper Dan Tian, then immediately keep the Spiritual Embryo there. “Dou Niu” (斗牛) means “Big Dipper”, which implies the process of condensing the Shen at the Upper Dan Tian. After practicing for a long time, the spiritual embryo can be born. This is the key to longevity (Figure 3-7).

The golden bird (Jin Niao) flies on the east coast of curved river (Qu Jiang). The jade rabbit (Yu Tu) shines with clear light on the west coast. The bird and the rabbit walk to the tip of the mountain. The fair lady in the furnace takes off her blue cloth.

After taking off the blue cloth, the pure clean body is exposed. The baby is then led to the layers of curtain. After ten months of strong and heavy emotion, a boy is born. Say he can live long and will not die.

(I) advise you to practice and to cultivate. If the Valley Spirit does not die, the goal (of immortality) can be achieved. (You) must comprehend (the theory) and carefully adopt those marvellous details. One day, (I) will reach the immortal land (Ying Zhou) with you.

曲江東岸金鳥飛，西岸清光玉兔輝，鳥兔走歸峰頂上，
 爐中姽女脫青衣。
 脫卻青衣露素體，嬰兒引入重幃里，十月情濃產一男，
 說道長生永不死。
 勸君煉，勸君修，谷神不死此中求，此中悟取玄微處，
 與君白日登瀛洲。

“Qu Jiang” (曲江) means “Curved Rivers” and implies “intestines” (Real Lower Dan Tian). “Jin Niao” (金鳥) means “Golden Bird” and implies “Original Spirit” (Yuan Shen, 元神). “Yu Tu” (玉兔) means “Jade Rabbit” and implies “Original

Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精). Therefore, the first sentence means that the “Original Spirit” and “Original Essence” are unified and both are led upward to the Upper Dan Tian. Furnace here means “Upper Dan Tian.” The lady with blue clothes takes off her clothes means to get ready to give birth to the baby. Blue clothes implies the manifestation of the Shen which is related to the liver. The liver belongs to the color between blue and green in Chinese medicine. That means when the Shen is manifested and implies the birth of the spiritual baby.

The spiritual baby is born after ten months of pregnancy, and kept behind the curtain for nursing. This baby is the beginning of eternal spiritual life. “Ying Zhou” (瀛洲) is the holy mountain in the east sea where the immortals dwell (in Chinese legend).

6. Thesis of Valley Spirit's Immortality

谷神不死論

(紫清指玄集·宋·白玉蟾撰)

What is the valley? It means the Heaven Valley (Tian Gu). What is the Shen? It means the Original Spirit of the entire body. The valley of heaven contains (the capability) of creation and variations, (though) it holds the insubstantial nihilism. The valley of the earth contains millions of objects, and holds the mountains and rivers. Humans have the same natural disposition as the heaven and the earth, (therefore we) also have a valley. There is a real singularity conceived in this valley where the Original Spirit (Yuan Shen) resides. Thus, there are nine palaces in the head which correspond with the nine heavens above (us). Among them, there is a palace at the center called “Ni Wan” (i.e. Mud Pill), also called “Huang Ting” (i.e. Yellow Yard), again named “Kunlun,” and additional name ‘Tian Gu’ (i.e. Heaven Valley). The names are numerous. It is the palace where the Original Spirit resides. It is empty as a valley and the Shen is living within. Therefore, (the Shen) is called “Gu Shen” (i.e. Spiritual Valley).

谷者，天谷也。神者，一身之元神也。天之谷，含造化，容虛空；地之谷，容萬物，載山川。人與天地同所稟也，亦有谷焉。其谷藏真一，宅元神，是以頭有九宮，上應九天，中間一宮，謂之泥丸，亦曰黃庭，又名崑崙，又名天谷，其名頗多，乃元神所住之宮，其空如谷，而神居之，故謂之谷神。

The space between the two hemispheres of the brain is called “Heaven Valley” (Tian Gu, 天谷). This is because in a human body, the head is considered the heaven while the perineum (Huiyin, 會陰) is considered the “sea bottom” (Hai Di, 海底). This Heaven Valley has many other names, such as “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷), “Yellow Yard” (Huang Ting, 黃庭), “Mud Pill” (Ni Wan, 泥丸), or “Kunlun” (崑崙).

It is named “Spiritual Valley” since the Shen resides in this valley. It is named “Yellow Yard” since it is an important place for cultivation. There is another place also called “Yellow Yard” located at the stomach area where the Spiritual Embryo is

conceived. It is named “Mud Pill” due to the appearance of the pineal and pituitary glands. It is called “Kunlun” because Kunlun is one of the highest mountains in China close to the sky.

Though the Spiritual Valley is empty and does not contain material objects like the valleys on the earth that contain rivers, trees, and many other objects, the Spiritual Valley has the capability and potential of creation and variation. Daoists believe that there are nine layers of heaven and this means there are nine layers of spiritual cultivation. There is a palace in each layer. The brain also contains nine palaces which correspond with the nine palaces of the heaven. However, among these nine palaces, the center one is the most important. This center is where the Original Spirit (Yuan Shen, 元神) resides. Therefore, this central palace is called “Ni Wan Gong” (泥丸宮) and means “Mud Pill Palace.” From the scientific point of view, when you concentrate your mind at this palace, the function of the pineal and pituitary glands will be activated due to the presence of abundant Qi. This will result in the long-term production of melatonin and growth hormone. These two hormones are the crucial keys to longevity and vitality.

When the Shen exists, then live; when the Shen is gone, then die. If (we) connect with the objects (i.e. human affairs) during the daytime and attached by the dreams during the night time, the Shen will not be able to reside at its residence peacefully. Yellow maizes are not yet ripe, the dream is not yet awakened, entire life's glory, splendor, wealth, and rank; hundred years of sorrow, worry, happiness, and joy, isn't it happening just like in a dream? Once (we are) dead, (the life) cannot reverse, (the Shen) roams around and can not return, then life and death are apart, the path between life and death is cut off. From this, (we) can see that if the Shen does not live, a person will not live by himself and if the Shen is dead, a person will also be dead naturally. If the Shen resides at its valley and does not die, how can a person also die? However, the reason that the Valley Spirit (Gu Shen) does not die is because of the Xuan Pin.

神存則生，神去則死。日則接于物，夜則接于夢，神不能安其居也。黃梁未熟，南柯未寤，一生之榮辱富貴，百歲之悲憂悅樂，備嘗于一夢之間，使其去而不還，游而不返，則生死路隔，幽明之途絕矣。由是觀之，人不能自生而神生之，人不能自死而神死之。若神居其谷而不死，人安得而死乎？然谷神所以不死者，由玄牝也。

If your mind is always attracted by human affairs and emotions, then your Shen will not be able to stay at its residence. A human life is very short just like a dream. If you waste your time in longing for glory, dignity, power and wealth, and forget how to cultivate your Shen and keep it steady at its residence, then you will wake up one day and realize that everything you have been longing for is only a dream. In order to have immortality for your Shen, you must keep the Valley Spirit at the Spiritual Valley. This is why Lao Zi said: “The Valley Spirit (Gu Shen) does not die, then

it is called “Xuan Pin” (玄牝). The door (i.e. key) of reaching this “Xuan Pin” is the root of heaven and earth (i.e. nature). It is very soft and continuous as if it were existing. When it is used, it will not be exhausted.”

What is Xuan? It is Yang and is the heaven. What is Pin? It is Yin and is the earth. However, Xuan and Pin two Qis all have profound implications. Without meeting those holy men to instruct (you) in the oral secrets, it cannot easily be understood. Inner Classic of Yellow Emperor said: “The Original Shen resides at the Heaven Valley. If (you) protect it, then it (i.e. the cultivation) can be real (i.e. truthful) naturally.” This saying implies that there is a heaven valley called “Ni Wan” in the top section of the body which is the residence of concealed Shen. There is a corresponding valley named “Jiang Gong” (i.e. heart) in the middle section of the body which is the residence of concealed Qi. There is a divine valley called “Guan Yuan” (i.e. Key Origin) at the lower section of the body which is the residence of concealed essence.

玄者，陽也，天也；牝者，陰也，地也。然則玄牝二氣，各有深旨，非遇聖人，授以口訣，不可得而知也。《黃帝內經》云：‘天谷元神，守之自真。’言人身中上有天谷泥丸，藏神之府也；中有應谷絳宮，藏氣之府也；下有靈谷關元，藏精之府也。

“Xuan Pin” (玄牝) here means the interaction of Yin and Yang. When Yin and Yang interact with each other, then life will be initiated. Therefore, “Xuan Pin” is the mother of life (i.e. creation and variations). However, it is not easy to understand and learn how to cultivate the Yin and Yang Qis, and allow them to interact with each other. Usually, you will need an experienced teacher to direct you to the correct path personally.

This document mentions that there are three valleys in a human body that you must cultivate. The one in the head is called “Spiritual Valley” (神谷) (Upper Dan Tian) where the Valley Spirit resides. There is another one located at the chest area called “Jiang Gong” (絳宮) (Middle Dan Tian) that provides you with Post-Birth Qi converted from food and air. There is the third valley called “Guan Yuan” (關元) (Lower Dan Tian) where the Pre-Birth Qi (Original Qi) is converted from Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精). Therefore, this valley conceals the essence of life.

The Heaven Valley is a mysterious palace, is the residence of the Original Shen, is the retention of human natural spiritual disposition, and is the important way of spiritual cultivation. Those holy men follow the important rules of the heaven and the earth, know the origin of variations, protect the Shen and keep it at this mysterious palace, and make the Qi abundantly stored at the residence of Pin. Shen and Qi mutually interact and this will enable (you) to accomplish the cultivation of the real (Dao) naturally, unified with the Dao, and enter the domain of without death and without life. Therefore, it is said that when the Spiritual Valley does not die, it is called “Xuan Pin.” Those holy men know how to apply their cultivation in Xuan Pin, know how to create and vary in a trice. When the Qi of Xuan Pin enters this root (i.e. residence or Real Lower Dan Tian), if (you)

seal (the breathing) too much, then urgent and if (you) allow it (i.e. breathing) to act freely, then it is out of control. Therefore, what (you) desire is to keep very soft and continuous without any gap or interruption.

天谷，玄宮也，乃元神之室，靈性之所存，是神之要也。聖人則天地之要，知變化之源，神守于玄宮，氣騰于牝府，神氣交感，自然成真，與道為一，而入于不死不生，故曰谷神不死，是謂玄牝也。聖人運用于玄牝之內，造化于恍惚之中，當其玄牝之氣，入乎其根，閉極則失于急，任之則失于蕩，欲其綿綿續續，勿令間斷耳。

“Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) is also called “Mud Pill Palace” (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮). The Original Shen (Yuan Shen, 元神) residing in this palace is so powerful and marvellous and is the origin of creation and variations. This Shen is related to your mind and thinking, and is the Taiji (太極) (Grand Ultimate) of the human’s heaven and earth (universe or small heaven and earth).

Those persons who obtained the Dao in the past knew how to follow the human Taiji and natural Taiji and therefore were able to know the Dao of nature. They knew that the way to unify their Shen with the natural Shen is to keep the Shen at its residence and nourish it with Qi continuously. In this case, the Shen in the human Spiritual Valley and the natural Shen will resonate with each other. This is the way to maintain immortality of the Shen, and is thus called “Xuan Pin” (玄牝), the mother of creation and variations.

The way to keep the Shen at its residence is through correct breathing, being soft as a baby. In order to reach this goal, you must have a baby’s heart (pure mind) without external attraction, which allows you to feel internally. Only then can you have soft breathing as if it were there and as if it were not there (regulated without being regulated.) That is why Lao Zi said: “When concentrating the Qi (air) to reach its softness, can it be as (soft as) a baby?”

What is the meaning of “as if it were existing?” It means maintaining it by following the nature. After maintaining the Shen (at its residence) for a long time, it will be tranquil naturally. After practicing breathing for a long time, it will be stabilized naturally. When the natural disposition (i.e. temperament) has become natural, then it can be used marvelously. In this case, (you) don’t have to try hard or force it urgently. Therefore, it is said: “When used, it cannot be exhausted.” From this, it can be seen clearly that Xuan and Pin are the two origins on the top and bottom (of cultivation) and are the correct paths of Qi mother’s ascending and descending. Those world people (i.e. laymen) do not know this root and do not study their origin, and say the nose and the mouth are Xuan and Pin. If the nose and the mouth are Xuan and Pin, how can they be named the doorways of Xuan Pin? This is all because these people cannot comprehend their marvellousness of training. How can these (theories) be understood if they are not great holy men?

若存者，順其自然而存之，神久自寧，息久自定，性入自然，無為妙用，未嘗至于勤勞迫切，故曰用之不勤。即此而觀，則玄牝為上下二源，氣母升降之正道明矣。世人不窮其根，不究其源，便以鼻為玄，以口為牝。若以鼻口為玄牝，則玄牝之門又將何以名之？此皆不能造其妙，非大聖人安能究是理哉！

This last paragraph talks about Lao Zi's concept of spiritual cultivation. In *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 6 it is said: "The Valley Spirit (Gu Shen, 谷神) does not die, then it is called 'Xuan Pin.' The key to reaching this 'Xuan Pin' (玄牝) is the root of heaven and earth (nature). It is very soft and continuous as if it were existing. When it is used, it will not be exhausted."⁵⁷

First, this document discusses the meaning of "as if it were existing" (Ruo Cun, 若存) it means that you must practice keeping the Shen at its residence (Upper Dan Tian) and maintaining and conserving the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian until it becomes natural. That means you have reached the stage of "regulating without regulating" (Bu Tiao Er Tiao, 不調而調).

Second, it explains that "Xuan Pin" (玄牝) is the interaction of the Shen from the top (Upper Dan Tian) and the Qi from the bottom (Real Lower Dan Tian), namely the unification and harmonization of the Shen and the Qi. When these two interact with each other, it is the mother of creation and variations, and immortality can then be achieved. Many laymen misunderstand that "Xuan Pin" means the nose and the mouth (breathing), but this is a mistake. Only those who can really comprehend the Dao of cultivation are able to grasp the marvellous trick of the training.

7. Secrets of Applying Qi with Concentrated Shen³

《用氣集神訣》

(延陵先生集新舊服氣經·唐·延陵先生集)

Shen is gathered (i.e. condensed) from insubstantial and peaceful (i.e. harmonized and stabilized) with substantial. Shen is wisdom of the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind). When (Xin) is peaceful without desires, then the Shen can be like a king with harmonious and righteous Qi. Once (you) have reached this stage, then (you) may let it (i.e. Shen) be free without restraints, the longer the better. Keep practicing ceaselessly, so the Qi in the body will reach an extremely peaceful state. This means delight for heaven (nature). If (you are) full of delight for heaven, then live long. When outside the body (i.e. material world) is substantially empty, then it is also (delightful) for heaven. When inside the body is empty and comprehensible (i.e. no emotional bondage or desires), then it is also (delightful) for heaven. After practice for a long long time, then brightness can be derived (i.e. enlightened). All these secrets are understood from internal. After practicing for a long time, then they (i.e. understandings) can be wide and refined. This will match the brightness of the top (i.e. heaven or nature). If bright, then (the Qi) can be developed from essence (Jing) internally. In such case, the Dao can be

reached and this Dao will correspond with De (the deed or virtue of nature). The completeness of the De is when it is used, it is (the manifestation of) Ren (i.e. benevolence) and when it is divided (i.e. developed or expanded), it is the demonstration of Yi (i.e. righteousness).

神集于虛，而安于實。神，心中知者也。安而無欲，則神王而氣和正。如此之時，則一任所之，唯久彌善。行之不已，體氣至安，謂之樂天，樂天則壽。身外虛空亦天也，身內虛通亦天也，習之久久，乃明生焉。密自內知之，久習彌廣而精，上合于明，明則內發于精，如是乃至于道，道應于德。德之成矣，用而為仁，分而為義。

Shen is insubstantial and cannot be seen. However, the Shen can be felt and condensed into a high spiritual level. Though it is insubstantial, it must nevertheless be harmonized with the material world (i.e. laymen society). The Shen is related to the wisdom mind (Yi, 意) and emotional mind (Xin, 心). However, the emotional mind makes you confused and excited while the wisdom mind directs you to focused thinking and decisions. Consequently, Shen can be raised and condensed. When this happens, the emotional mind will be under control and become peaceful and calm. This will result in the harmonization of the Shen and the Qi circulation. This is the stage of “unification of the Shen and the Qi” (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合). If you practice it often, you will reach a stage of regulating without regulating. In this case, health and longevity can be achieved. In addition, your mind will become neutral and bright, clear and wise, and reach far and wide. Internally, you are wise, and externally you are able to apply the Dao (道) of nature in your actions. This action of nature is called “De” (德). When the Dao and De are applied in human society, it becomes benevolence (Ren, 仁) and righteousness (Yi, 義).

Essence Qi exits from the head in the daytime and resides at the abdomen (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian) at night. Therefore, (we) should respect (i.e. pay attention to) the head and focus on the abdomen. The colors (i.e. materials) are settled (i.e. existing) externally while respecting the straight (i.e. righteousness) within (the body). Whenever there is an opportunity (i.e. advantage to be taken), there is not (even a slight) thought (of taking it). All in the mind is goodness. This is (the way of using) the Shen and Qi to engage the quality and to harmonize myself into a single body. This is called “Great Smoothness” (Da Shun). (Consequently) heaven will protect (you) and (you will be) auspicious and without any disadvantage. This is because all the marvellous (demonstrations of nature) have their roots. The Shen’s insubstantial nibility, though it stays in (our) Xin, can connect with its (i.e. natural) system. The Qi firmly concealed in the intestines (Real Lower Dan Tian) should be warmly nourished with patience. When (you) live daily, (you) should always close (your) eyes and observe the origin of the Qi internally. Whenever there is an event which causes the Ling’s (spiritual mind’s) disturbance, then close (your) eyes gladly and observe the Xin internally. Reject it as if (you are) saying: “My body’s Shen and Qi are concealed and developed from my

shape, which thus makes me able to reach the Dao.” In this case, heaven will endow (you) with auspiciousness. This is because the heaven is the Ling of the insubstantial Qi. If we are able to use it (correctly), then the Dao can be reached to its extremity.

精氣畫出于首，夜栖于腹，當自尊其首，重其腹。色庄于外，敬直于中，應機無想，唯善是與，此神氣事質，合吾一體，謂之大順，天保佑之，吉無不利。凡妙本有所，神在心中的虛，上通其系，氣蘊腸中之實，恆宜溫養之。平居常宜閉目內視氣源，每行一事利于生靈，則欣然閉目，內視其心，謝之若曰：‘吾身之神氣，明發于吾形，使吾達道也。’如是則天降之吉。故天者，虛氣之靈，吾能用之，道極于斯矣。

There are Two Polarities in your body, one in the head (Upper Dan Tian) and the other in the intestines (Real Lower Dan Tian). The Real Lower Dan Tian is considered to be a ‘bio-battery’, which provides you with the quantity of Qi (bioelectricity), while Shen resides in the Upper Dan Tian, and controls the quality of the Qi manifestation. In the daytime, due to the usage of the brain, the body’s Qi is led upward to maintain the brain’s function, and when nighttime comes, the Qi returns to its residence (Real Lower Dan Tian) for charging. When you cultivate immortality, you must cultivate both the Shen at the top (quality) and also the Real Lower Dan Tian’s Qi in the abdominal area (quantity).

There are many abstractions outside of your body which can cause you emotional disturbance and increase your desires. Whatever thinking in your mind and whatever action you are taking, you must be in the goodness of the Dao (道) and De (德). If you can do so, you will feel righteous and bright internally. From this righteous feeling, your spirit will naturally be in the state of peace and harmony. This is the way of matching nature, and nature will protect you.

8. Historical Record; Autobiography of Tai Shi Gong

《史記·太史公自序》

How can a person be alive? It is because of (the existence of) the Shen. How can this (Shen) be relied on (depended on for its existence), it is because of the shape (physical body). When the Shen is greatly used, then exhausted. When the shape is greatly labored, then worn out. When the shape and Shen are separated, then die. Those who are dead cannot be revived and those who are separated cannot be returned (reunited). Therefore, those holy men (i.e. persons who have reached the Dao) take it (i.e. spiritual cultivation) very seriously. From this, it can be seen that the Shen is the root of the life while the shape is the tool (i.e. vehicle) of the life.

凡人所生者，神也；所托者，形也。神大用則竭，形大勞則敝，形神離則死，死者不可復生，離者不可復反，故聖人重之。由是觀之，神者，生之本也，形者，生之具也。

According to the Buddhist concept, the spiritual body is the main part of a human, while the physical body is only a vehicle which is used temporarily by the Shen for its cultivation. Therefore, to reach Buddhahood, you must pay more attention to the cultivation of the spiritual body. However, to Daoists, the cultivation of the spiritual body and the healthy condition of the physical body are both equally important. This is because it will take many years to cultivate the Shen to reach its enlightenment. If the physical body is weak and unhealthy, then you will not have a long physical life for spiritual cultivation.

Therefore, to Buddhist spiritual cultivators, the material world does not exist and there is nothing to be cultivated or considered. In the Buddhist document,

Altar Classic of Sixth Ancestor (六祖壇經), it is said: "There is no tree in Bodhi originally, and there is also no stand for the shining mirror. If there is nothing at all originally, how can it be dusted?"⁵⁸ Bodhi means an illuminated or enlightened mind. It is said that Buddha was enlightened under the Bodhi tree. Shining mirror means a pure and clean Shen. When you cultivate your Shen, all the material world disappears. Thus, there is no tree or any mirror stand. If there is no material concept in your mind, how can your mind have the laymen emotions and desires dusted off.

However, to a Daoist the material world is as important as the spiritual world, and we must maintain our physical health. In the Daoist document, *The Thesis of Nourishing Life* (養生論), it is said: "Uttering and receiving (Tu·Na) (the Qi) through breathing, absorbing the food to nourish the physical body, thus allow the shape (i.e. physical body) and Shen to be mutually harmonized. This means the mutual coordination of external and internal."⁵⁹ "Tu Na" (吐納) which literally means "uttering and receiving," is an ancient Qigong term. It means the cultivation of Qi through breathing.

9. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (*Guo Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing*)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(郭真人胎息訣)

What does the "training" mean? It means to cultivate, to nourish, and to empty. The ears do not hear, the eyes do not see, the nose does not smell, the tongue does not taste, and cease (i.e. to calm) the breathing and stabilize the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind). This method is (to achieve the stage of) "having" from "not having," "nothing" from "something," "color" from "colorless," "empty" from "exist-

ing;” consequently, there is “no having” but “having,” “something” but “nothing,” “colorless” but with “color,” “not empty” but “empty.” This is the real method of nourishing the Qi and regulating the Shen in Real Embryonic Breathing. It is also said: “When see, I cannot see myself (i.e. forget self), when hear, I cannot hear; separated from various boundaries (i.e. attachments). This is named ‘marvellous Dao,’ and is the uppermost method.”

夫煉者，修也、養也、虛也。耳不聽也，眼不見也，鼻不聞也，舌不味也，息氣定心也。此法從不有中，有中無中，無中無，不色中色，不空中空，非有為有，非無為無，非色為色，非空為空，此乃真胎息養氣調神之法。又云：‘視不見我，聽不得聞，離種種邊，名為妙道，此法最為上也。’

“Cultivate” (Xiu, 修) is to cultivate the human temperament so the Shen is able to grow. “Nourish” (Yang, 養) means to build up an abundant Qi which can then be used to nourish the physical body and spiritual body. Empty (Xu, 虛) implies the emptiness of the human emotions and desires.

In order to reach these three goals, you must get rid of the connection of your mind with the outside material and emotional world, and also avoid the temptation of desires from your organs of sense. Therefore, there is no difference between with or without color, whether material exists or not, or there is an attempt or not. In all, there is no discrimination of Yin or Yang, and this means the state of Wuji (無極) (No Extremity). If you are able to reach this Wuji state, your Embryonic Breathing will be profound.

10. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Xu Shen Gong's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(徐神公胎息訣)

What is the Shen? It is the application of insubstantial nihility (Xu Wu). What is breathing? It is the application of the Original Qi (Yuan Qi). (You should) train to get rid of the bondage of laymen world and become an exceptional person. It does not matter if I gain or lose the treasures or colors (i.e. sensuality), dislike or favor, all being treated the same (i.e. neutral emotional feeling). (In this case, nature) will protect (you) naturally, and the Xin of Dao (Dao Xin) (i.e. the will to pursue the Dao) has been achieved. The classic said: “What is the Shen, is actually insubstantial nihility. Once it is used for essence (Jing), Qi, and Shen, then it is Lingtai (i.e. platform of ingenuity) (Upper Dan Tian). Those who cultivate their temperament, if they are able to stabilize their breathing, from essence, Qi, and Shen, three things, truly they can obtain longevity, and become the divine renunciation of the world.”

夫神者，虛無之用。息者，元氣之用。煉去塵世之境，若是非人，我財色取舍得失，冤親平等如一，自然祐護，道心成矣。經云：“神者虛無，用之精氣神三者，便是靈台。修性之人，若是息定，精氣神三件可長生不死，必為出世之仙，則不虛矣。”

To reach immortality, you must learn to cultivate your Shen and Qi. The Shen is insubstantial and cannot be seen, however when it is used, it is marvellous and powerful. To cultivate your Qi, you must know how to accomplish it through correct breathing. In order to cultivate your Shen, you must first stop thinking as a layman, and not be attracted by human emotions, desires, and material satisfaction. If you can see through this and keep your mind in a neutral state, then you are able to preserve and protect your Three Treasures (San Bao, 三寶): essence (Jing, 精), Qi (氣), and Shen (神). When these three treasures are led upward to meet at the Upper Dan Tian, immortality can be achieved.

11. Anthology of Daoist Village

《道鄉集》

What does “to condense” mean? It means “to gather.” What is Shen? It is the righteous thought in the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind). What is Xi (i.e. profound breathing)? It is (to induce) the Pre-Heaven Real Qi (i.e. Original Qi). There is no shape and no appearance. It (i.e. Pre-Heaven Qi) is generated at the time of extreme nihility and sincere calmness. Xue (i.e. cavity, namely Real Lower Dan Tian) is the original root of producing this Pre-Heaven Qi. Why (do we) condense (our) Shen at this Qi cavity? It is to place and condense our righteous thought at this Qi cavity and not allow the Shen to be distracted and move away (from the body). When the Shen is condensed, then the fire (i.e. Qi) can be gathered. When the fire is gathered and led downward, the water will rise automatically. This is the important key to fire and water’s mutual coordination. It is also the marvellous crucial way to condense the Shen at the Qi cavity. What is “Xi”? It is breathing. What is Xi-Xi (i.e. Continuous Breathing)? It implies that (the breathing) is very soft and unbroken. What is Gui (i.e. Returning)? It means to reverse the path (of life) and return it (to its origin). What is Gen (i.e. Root)? It is the root and foundation (of life). Every breath is soft and continuous and returns to this root. This means that the breathing does not separate from the basic foundation of producing the Qi. It is as if it were existing and as if it had been forgotten, and it seems to be there while not being there. This is what it was about “Embryonic Breathing” (practiced) in ancient times. (You) must understand that this breathing follows the natural (way). If the Shen can be condensed at the Qi cavity, then the breathing will also be stabilized at this original root.

夫凝者聚也，神者心中之正念也。息者，先天之真氣也。無形無象，生于虛極靜篤之時，穴即生先天氣之本根。所以凝神氣穴者，即將我心中之正念，凝聚于氣穴，不令神往外馳。神凝則火聚，火聚于下，水自上升，此水火調濟之要訣。亦凝神氣穴之妙諦也。息者，呼吸也。息息者，綿綿不斷之義也。歸者，返回也。根者，基本也。息息歸根，即呼吸不離生氣根本。若存若忘，似有似無，昔所謂胎息者是也。須知此息，本乎自然，神既凝于氣穴，息也定于本根。

This article talks about the mutual unification, coordination, and harmonization of the Shen and the Pre-Heaven Qi (Xian Tian Qi, 先天氣) (Original Qi) which is conceived at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Shen is considered as fire (Yang) while the Pre-Heaven Qi is considered as water (Yin). If you are able to lead your Shen down and unify it with Pre-Heaven Qi, then the mind can be calm and peaceful within your body. Then the Qi can stay at its residence and be stored.

The way to reach this goal is through a soft, slender, and continuous breathing, while focusing your Shen at the Real Lower Dan Tian. This is the crucial key to Embryonic Breathing. This is also the root of life. From this breathing, the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived.

12. Marvellous Applications of Maintaining the Shape and Cultivating Internal Truth by Great Teacher Da Mo

《達磨大師住世留形內真妙用訣》

If (you) don't know how to keep the son and mother (i.e. Shen and Qi) together, then even though the Qi can be stored internally through (the practice of) breathing, nevertheless the Shen is constantly labored (i.e. acting) externally, and can become dirty and confused. Once the Shen is not clean, then the original harmonious Qi will be dispersed gradually and cannot stay (with the Shen). Many Daoists often make this mistake and do not know that the shape and the Shen are main core of practice. If a person does not know how to keep them (i.e. Shen and Qi) internally but keeping them externally, naturally, the residences (of Qi and Shen) will be dangerous and gradually rotten. Furthermore, those non-Daoists (always) labor (their) Shen and fatigue (their) thinking, there is not even a single breath which allows (them) to lead the Qi and Shen to the Qihai (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian). If (they) expect to have longevity, isn't it too far to be reached?

若不知子母相守，氣雖呼吸于內，神常勞役于外，遂使神常穢濁而神不清。神既不清，即元和之氣漸散而不能相守也。道人常用之，而不知根本以形神為主。若人不知守于內而守于外，自然令宅舍虛危，漸見衰壞矣。況非道之人，勞神役思，無一息神氣注于氣海之中，而欲望其長生，豈不遠乎！

The son and the mother imply the Shen and the Qi which must act like son and mother and never separate from each other. This is called “Shen Qi Xiang He” (神氣相合) and means “the unification or the harmonization of the Shen and Qi.” In order to reach this goal, you must first stop the mind’s attractions and emotional disturbances from the outside world. Once your mind is attached to them, your Shen will become dirty. Through correct Embryonic Breathing, while you keep your Shen and Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you are able to reach the goal of longevity.

13. Chapter of Clear Understanding

(Mao, Ri-Xin; Song Dynasty)

《宋·毛日新；了明篇》

Qi follows Shen and Shen follows Qi, Shen and Qi mutually follow each other and penetrate into Ni Wan (i.e. Mud Pill). Keep Jin Guan (i.e. Golden Gate) locked and sealed constantly, once (you) have caught the Jin Pin (i.e. Golden Product), then (you will increase your) joy internally. Practice diligently and establish (your) strong will. Do not give up this Gongfu in twelve timings (i.e. twenty-four hours). When the Yin ends and the Yang has completed, the Shen will be able to exit from the body. When this Gong has been accomplished, (your) name will be on the list of immortality.

氣隨神，神隨氣，神氣相隨，透入泥丸裡。長把金關牢鎖閉，捉得金晶，暗地添歡喜。下辛勤，須發志，十二時中，莫把功夫棄。陰盡陽全神出體，功行成時，名列神仙位。

This poetry talks about the mutual dependency of the Shen and the Qi. Once the Shen and the Qi can be led upward to the Ni Wan Gong (泥丸宮) (Upper Dan Tian), then you should immediately keep it there firmly. “Jin Guan” (金關) means “Golden Gate,” which implies “Upper Dan Tian.” “Jin Pin” (金品) means “Golden Material” and implies “Spiritual Embryo.” “Shi Er Shi” (十二時) means “twelve timings” which are the traditional Chinese divisions for one a day.

14. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament

(Mr. Huan Zhen’s Secret of Embryonic Breathing)²

《性命圭旨全書》
(幻真先生胎息訣)

It is said that human’s Original Shen is hidden in the Qi cavity. It is just like millions of objects hidden in the Kun earth. The Shen enters the earth just like the heaven’s Qi descends and reaches down to the earth. When Qi and Shen are combined, it is as the Dao of the earth has been supported by the heaven.

謂人之元神，藏于氣穴，猶萬物藏于坤土。神入地中，猶天氣降而至予地。氣與神合，猶地道之承于天。

Original Shen (Yuan Shen, 元神) means the Shen which came with you when you were born. This Shen is concealed at its residence (Upper Dan Tian) originally. When this Shen descends into the Real Lower Dan Tian (Qi cavity) (Qi Xue, 氣穴), it will be just like the heaven's Qi descending to the earth (Kun Tu, 坤土). When this happens, the Shen and the Qi are unified and harmonized with each other. This is the key to life and longevity. "Kun" (坤) represents the earth in the Eight Trigrams, that is why it is called "Kun Tu" (坤土).

15. Ten Books of Cultivating Truth; Short Cut of Miscellaneous Writing

《修真十書·雜著捷徑》

Qi is nourished by Qi, and Qi then meets Shen. Shen and Qi are not separated, then it is the cultivation of truth (i.e. true cultivation). The son does not leave the mother and the mother will not let the son go. When the son and mother stay together, then live long without dying.

氣養于氣，氣會于神，神氣不散，是為修真。子不離母，母不放子，子母共守，長生不死。

In order to build up the Qi to an abundant level at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田), you must know where to find the extra Qi and how to store it in the Real Lower Dan Tian. You must also know how to keep your Shen there. When the Shen and the Qi can be unified and harmonized with each other, the Spiritual Embryo (Sheng Tai, 聖胎) can be conceived. The Shen and the Qi are just like the son and the mother who will not part from each other. This is the way of reaching longevity.

3.7 METHODS OF EMBRYONIC BREATHING 胎息法

1. Embryonic Breathing Inscription^{2,3}

《胎息銘》

Thirty-six swallowings, each one must be treated as first priority (i.e. most important). When uttering (i.e. exhaling), it should be extremely slender and when receiving (i.e. inhaling), it should be very soft and continuous. It does not matter whether (you are) sitting, lying down, or standing, all should be done naturally. Abstain (yourself) from noise and disturbance, avoid eating meat or fish. Though it is given the name "Embryonic Breathing," it actually is the (training of) internal elixir. It is used not only for treating sickness, but also for longevity. After (you have) practiced for a long time, (your) name will be on the top list of immortality.

三十六咽，一咽為先。吐為細細，納為綿綿。坐臥亦爾，
行立坦然。戒于喧雜，忌以腥羶。假名胎息，實為內丹。
非只治病，決定延年。久久行之，名列上仙。

This document emphasizes the importance of swallowing saliva during Embryonic Breathing meditation. When you meditate, the tongue should touch the palate of the mouth to connect the Yin Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) and the Yang Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈). Then saliva (heavenly water) will be generated. The head is considered the heaven (Tian Ling Gai, 天靈蓋) while the groin area is considered to be the sea-bottom (Hai Di, 海底). The water generated in the mouth is thus called “heavenly water” (Tian Chi Shui, 天池水).

Whenever the saliva is full in the mouth and starts to bother you, you should swallow it. First, you inhale and then swallow and immediately follow with the exhalation while leading the swallowed saliva to the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). Naturally, your saliva will never reach the abdominal area. However, the mind leads the Qi down to return to the Real Lower Dan Tian.

In order to generate saliva, your breathing must be soft, slender, and calm. Your body must also be in an extremely relaxed state. If your breathing is fast, the Qi will easily be manifested into external physical activity, which can prevent you from storing the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian. You should meditate until you have accumulated thirty-six mouthfuls of saliva and swallowed them. If you are able to do so, you will be able to reach health and longevity. Naturally, when you practice Embryonic Breathing, you must select a quiet and peaceful place so your mind can enter a profound meditative state. This is the crucial key to Embryonic Breathing meditation.

2. Interpretation of Embryonic Breathing Inscription

(Eight Notes of Life Abidance)

(Gao, Lian, Ming Dynasty)³

《胎息銘解》
《遵生八箋》
(明·高濂撰)

Gao Zi said: “The secret of Embryonic Breathing mentioned earlier is the same as Li, Zhen-Ren’s sixteen-words-secret. However, this (practice) must be done after Zi (11 P.M.-1 A.M.) at the time of Chou (1-3 A.M.) or Yin (3-5 A.M.). This is because it is too cold at the Zi during winter. During summer time, Wu (11 A.M.-1 P.M.) is also too hot (for practice). Therefore, use Yin (3-5 A.M.) in winter time and Qiu (5-7 P.M.) in summertime. These requirements are only for beginning. After practicing for a long time, whenever (you) sit down, it is the right Zi and Wu (timing). It is not necessary to restrict the set time (for practice any more). At the beginning (of practice, the hands are) held to firm (Wo Gu) (the mind), bend (your) legs and use the heels to press the root of the jade stem

(i.e. penis) to firm the Qi of the essence. Sitting in this position with crossed legs, and hands in place, (use the mind) to transport the Qi. (You) must follow this exposition. One swallowing and one uttering (i.e. breath), all from the nose. The sound generated (from breathing) must be slender (i.e. weak) and not allowed to be heard by the ears. After thirty-six swallowings, extend the four limbs comfortably. Take in the clean air through the nose, and do not lead it down the throat. Simply raise up (your) head and lead (the Qi) to the entire body and four limbs. Lead (the Qi) followed by the gradual and slow extending motion of the arms and legs. Whenever the Qi in the abdominal area becomes stagnant, (you should) also not allow it to reach the throat and exit through the mouth. Again, raise the head up and lead the Qi to circulate through the entire body with the extension of the arms and legs. During the practice, if (you) suddenly feel the Qi circulating upward, (you) should also use the same way to lead. If (you) have extra time and leisure, then also practice Li, Zhen-Ren's sixteen words of Tang Dynasty. In this case, (you) will not be hungry or thirsty. It seems as (you) have just taken a meal. (You) should not get tired and stop. After (you) have practiced for a long time, the achievement is hard to be described in words."

高子曰：“前胎息訣與后李真人一十六字訣相同。但此條每于半夜子后，或丑、寅時候，冬月恐子時嚴寒，夏月恐午時太熱，故冬以寅時，夏以酉時。初起如此，習久坐下即是子午，何必固時。初起握固，以腳后跟曲轉，頂住玉莖柯根，使精氣固定，手跌足盤，以行其氣。務依此銘，一咽一吐，皆以鼻竅中出入，出聲宜細，不令有聲聞之于耳。三十六咽數畢，舒伸四肢，鼻引清氣，亦勿咽入喉中，只昂頭引向遍體四肢，以手足徐徐伸縮而導引之。凡腹中氣轉噦上，亦勿使之直放口中出，亦用昂頭徐徐舒伸手足導而引之，使氣遍轉四肢。凡行持間忽遇此氣轉動上達，皆如此以導之。餘則日得空閒，即以唐·李真人十六字行之。自然不飢不渴，如嘗飲食一般。不可厭倦間斷，久久行之，功不盡述。”

Li, Zhen-Ren's sixteen words were translated and commented on earlier. These sixteen words are: "Once inhaling, immediately lift up (the perineum) to return the Qi to the navel (Lower Dan Tian); once lifting, immediately swallow (to allow) the water and fire to meet." This is the method of swallowing saliva with the coordination of the perineum (Huiyin, 會陰). Please refer to the earlier explanation of these sixteen words.

Concerning the timing of practicing Embryonic Breathing, many documents explain that the best time is midnight (Zi, 子) and also noon (Wu, 午). This is because the Qi is strongest in the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (Spinal Cord) at midnight and therefore, it is the most effective time to lead the Qi to the center and store it there. The reason for practicing at noontime is that your body is then in its most Yang state, and you will not need too much Qi to maintain the strength of the Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) for your immune system. This is the best time to store the extra Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian.

However, according to this document, beginners should not use these two times, due to the body's state and the environment's Qi status, being extreme Yin (midnight) and extreme Yang (noon). It will be harder for beginners to adopt these times and effectively store the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian. This document suggests that the best time for beginners should be Chou (1-3 A.M.) or Yin (3-5 A.M.) in wintertime and Qiu (5-7 P.M.) in summertime. As a matter of fact, once you have grasped the key to practice, you may practice Embryonic Breathing at any time.

The posture of meditation is to hold the hands in front of the abdominal area and to firm the mind there. This exercise is called "Wo Gu" (握固) and means "to hold and firm." In *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 55, it is said: "When the bones are weak and tendons are soft, (one) should Wo Gu."⁶⁰ When you hold your hands at the abdominal area, you are firming your mind at the abdominal area, consequently, the Qi will stay in its residence and be conserved. Only when the Qi can be firmly stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian, can the physical body be developed and conditioned.

In Buddhist society, "Wo Gu" is also called "Shou Yin" (手印) which means "hands' stamp." Stamp here means to "press against." According to Buddhist documents, there are two functions of holding stamps: 1. To assist the mind to stay at the abdominal area which allows you to calm and meditate; 2. After the mind is able to stay at the abdominal area, it can be used to maintain the mind and Shen at the breathing. Consequently, the achievement of meditation can reach its highest level. This is the goal of Buddhahood.⁶¹

The methods of holding the hands are many. In the document, *Thesis on the Origins and Symptoms of Various Diseases* (諸病源候論), it says: "What is Wo Gu? Four fingers of both hands hold the thumb inside individually."⁶² That means to use four fingers of each hand to hold the thumb at the center of the palm and keep them in front of the abdominal area. However, another document, *Required Anthology of Reaching the Dao's Entrance* (道門通教必用集) said: "Wo Gu is to use the thumb to press the middle joint of the middle finger. Four fingers are bending toward the palm center."⁶³ From this, you can see that there are many possible ways of holding the hands in front of the abdominal area. From my personal experience, the best way is to lay both hands comfortably and naturally over each other right in front of the abdominal area. As to which hand should be on the top and which should be on the bottom, it depends on your natural feeling. The most comfortable one is the correct one for you. If you force yourself to change to the other way, your mind and central feeling will be distorted and affected.

When you meditate, you should cross your legs and sit. However, if you experience numbness of the legs or uncomfortable feeling, this will affect your meditative mind. Then you may meditate in any comfortable posture you like. You should understand that when you practice Embryonic Breathing, there is no problem with any kind of posture, since you are simply storing the Qi at its residence. However, if

you practice using the mind to lead the Qi for circulation, such as Small Cyclic Heaven and Grand Cyclic Heaven meditation, then the specific posture becomes crucial. Wrong posture can cause serious problems or dangers.

This document also mentions that right after your meditation, you should extend your four limbs and stretch your torso. This is to prevent the Qi circulation from becoming stagnant due to the long sitting position. When you do this, extend your limbs while using your mind to lead the Qi to the limbs.

3. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Li Zhen Ren's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (李真人胎息訣)

Those who practice the real Qi from Embryonic Breathing should enter a quiet room, burn incense, face the wall, sit down with crossed legs facing east south, the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) does not have any worry, the Yi (i.e. Wisdom Mind) does not have any thinking, keep the Shen clear and stabilize the breathing, always observe (i.e. pay attention to) the entire body, then (the Qi) will circulate smoothly and fluidly. Those learners (i.e. beginners) must not seal the breathing completely. If (you) seal the breathing entirely, then the Shen can be damaged (i.e. fatigued mentally). Just gauge the length of the breathing by yourself, allow the air to enter and exit (the nose), do not make the sound audible by your own ears. In this case, it will be marvellous. If (you) always regulate this breathing and have reached the stage of no exit and no entrance (of the air), then (the Shen) will be able to stay at the Real Lower Dan Tian firmly. Staying means the 'Real Holy Embryo' (is conceived) and the cultivation of the Dao can surely be achieved.

夫胎息真氣者，入于一靜室，焚香面壁，東南結跏趺坐，心無掛念，意無所思，澄神定息，常于遍身觀之，自然通暢。諸學之人，不得全閉定氣，全閉則傷神。但量自家息之長短，放氣出入，不得自耳聞之，如此則妙也。若常常調息，不出不入，久而在于丹田固守，在之者，名為真胎也，道必成矣。

This document mentions a few things about practicing Embryonic Breathing. First, you must find a quiet room and avoid any disturbance from outside. Second, you should burn incense. Ancient Daoists had a common habit of burning incense when they meditated. They believed this would help them calm down their mind. In addition, burning incense was one of the ways of measuring the duration of meditation.

Third, when you meditate, you should face either east (daytime) or south (night time) so you are able to absorb the natural Qi offered by the sun and the earth's magnetic field. Fourth, your Xin and Yi must be calm and neutral. Nothing bothers you. Fifth, you should always pay attention to the body and feel the Qi status in the body.

If you are not able to feel any stagnation of the Qi, then you allow the Qi to be led and circulated smoothly and naturally.

When you store the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you should learn to extend your breathing gradually and slowly. You should not hold your breath, as this will make you tense, and disturb your mind and Shen. After you have practiced for a long time, you will feel as if you were breathing, and yet as if you were not. In this case, you will have reached a profound meditative state of “regulating of no regulating.” The mind and the Shen are able to stay at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Then you have found the key to Embryonic Breathing.

4. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Bao Pu Zi's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》 (抱朴子胎息訣)

Those who cultivate human temperament must practice the stabilization of the breathing. What is stabilized breathing? It means: righteous, peaceful, smooth, return (to the root), tamed (i.e. controlled), tranquil, and calm breathing. If (you) are always able to do so in (your) four living manners (Si Wei Yi) (i.e. walking, residing, sitting, and lying) and catch the secret to enter the Real Dao (Zhen Dao), the mind is not distracted by surrounding environments, empty the Xin and solid abdomen (i.e. full Qi in the Lower Dan Tian), then it is the most marvellous. When the breathing is clarified, the Xin will be stabilized; when the Xin is stabilized, then the Qi will be quiet; when the Qi is quiet, then the Shen will be calm; when the Shen is calm, then the surrounding environment is empty (i.e. emptiness of material world); when the surrounding environment is empty, then (everything is) quiet and nothing exists (i.e. nothingness of the mind); when quiet and nothing is existing, then clear and calm; when it is clear and calm, the Dao is generated; when the Dao is generated, then it becomes natural; when it has become natural, then free and unfettered. Once (you are) free and unfettered, then this is no limitation (of cultivation) and everything can be achieved as you wish, which can therefore result in immortality. The Five Elements (Wu Xing) will all gather, the Six Qi (Liu Qi) will be unified and harmonized, the Eight Trigrams (Bagua) will match accordingly; this will result in the formation of internal elixir and the physical body will never be damaged.

凡修性之人，須要定息。息者，正也、安也、順也、歸也、伏也、寧也、靜也。若四威儀中，常作如是，訣入真道，勿著諸境，虛心實腹，最為妙也。但澄息心定，心定則氣寂，氣寂則神靜，神靜則境空，境空則寂滅，寂滅則無事，無事則清靜，清靜則道生，道生則自然，自然則逍遙。既入逍遙，則無量自在，得做神仙。自然五行總聚，六氣和合，八卦配偶，成于內丹，身形永劫不壞矣。

“Xi” (息) literally means “to cease” or “to calm.” However, in Qigong society, Xi also often means “breathing.” Therefore, it often confuses Qigong beginners. Cease means to stop thinking about your breathing (Zhi Xi, 止息). An ancient Daoist named Li, Qing-An (李清庵) said: “Regulating breathing means to regulate the breathing until (you) stop.”⁶⁴

This document emphasizes the stabilization of the breathing. In order to reach this goal, the breathing must be regulated until it is righteous, peaceful, smooth, rooted, tamed (i.e. controlled), tranquil, and calm. When this happens, the physical body will be relaxed, the emotional mind calm, and the Qi can circulate smoothly and naturally. Rooted here means to return to the original breathing behavior of a newborn child.

“Si Wei Yi” (四威儀) means “four solemn living manners” which include walking, residing, sitting, and lying.⁶⁵ If you are able to regulate your breathing until it has reached the stage of without regulating in your daily life, then you have established a powerful habit in your life through correct breathing manner. Furthermore, if you are able to stabilize and empty your Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) and fill up the Qi in your Real Lower Dan Tian, then it will be the most marvellous cultivation for your life.

When the breathing is regulated, the Xin will be calm and stabilized. Only then will the Qi not be excited. Consequently, the Shen can be centered and kept at its residence, and you have established the most important spiritual cultivation for your enlightenment. When the Shen is centered, you will not be attracted by daily human affairs. This is the path to immortality.

“Wu Xing” (五行) means “Five Elements” namely “Jin” (金) (Metal), “Mu” (木) (Wood), “Shui” (水) (Water), “Huo” (火) (Fire), and “Tu” (土) (Earth). These Five Elements correspond with the five internal Yin organs: lungs, liver, kidneys, heart, and spleen. Therefore, Five Elements here means the unification and harmonization of the five organs’ Qi. “Liu Qi” (六氣) means “Six Qis” including the body’s Qi, blood, saliva, liquid, essence, and meridians. To some people, “Liu Qi” also means the six different climates including wind, heat, damp, fire, dry, and cold.⁶⁶

5. Three Importances of Conserving the Life

(Yuan Huang, Ming Dynasty)^{2,3}

《攝生三要》
(明·袁黃)

At the beginning, seal a mouth full of air (i.e. stop breathing after inhalation), use the navel to breathe, count till eighty-one or one hundred and twenty, then let the air out through the mouth. This breath should be extremely slender and reach a stage that (if) there is a feather placed right in front of the mouth and nose, it will not be moved. Practice gradually and also gradually increase (the

number of counting). (If the counting can reach to a thousand, then the old can be converted into young each day....However, if (you) just know how to seal the air, and without knowing Embryonic Breathing, then it is useless.

初閉氣一口，以臍呼吸，數之至八十一，或一百二十，乃以口吐氣出之，當令極細，以鴻毛著予口鼻之上，吐氣而鴻毛不動為度。漸習漸增，數之久可至千，則老者更少，日還一日矣。· · · ·但知閉氣，不知胎息，無益也。

The key method of Embryonic Breathing is to keep the mind steady at the Real Lower Dan Tian, and the physical body calm to their extreme states. Then the oxygen consumption can diminish significantly. Through the correct navel breathing method (Embryonic Breathing), the Spiritual Embryo can be formalized.

Theoretically, after your inhalation, if you hold your breath for just a few seconds, you are condensing the Qi inward toward the center of your body. The longer you are able to hold without tightening your physical body and disturbing your mind, the more efficiently the Qi can be stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian. However, it is not easy to hold the breath for a long time. It will take a lot of practice with the correct method. We will discuss the breathing methods more specifically later in this book.

When this document mentions using the navel to breathe, it means “abdominal breathing.” The document, *Three Importances of Conserving the Life* (攝生三要), says that: “(You) must think (i.e. imagine) that the Qi exits and enters from the navel. (You) must regulate it until the breathing is extremely slender. Then, (it seems you) do not use the mouth and nose, but you use the navel for (your) breathing as if (you) are the fetus in the womb.”⁶⁷ Many people misunderstand that we can exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide through the navel after birth. They are wrong and try to comprehend the document literally, instead of achieving understanding through practice. In fact, this document emphasizes the importance of abdominal breathing (navel breathing) until the breathing is so soft and slender. Then it seems there is no air exiting or entering from the nose or mouth. It does not mean you should actually stop your breathing completely, as you would die due to the lack of oxygen.

6. Observing Vessels²

《脈望》

What is “Sealing the Breath”? (Bi Qi) does not mean to hold the breath. It means that the Shen is steady and the Qi is harmonious, stop thinking and forget about worry, allow the nose breathing to be natural, smooth, and slender, as if it is there and as if it is not there.

閉氣者，非閉噎其氣也，乃神定氣和，絕思忘慮，便鼻息悠悠，若有若無。

This short document has clearly pointed out that “sealing the breathing” does not mean stopping the respiration. It means when your Shen has been stabilized and kept at its residence (Upper Dan Tian), then the Qi circulation will be harmonious, and the mind will be clear without worry. It is said in the document, *The Righteous Rules of Heavenly Immortality* (天仙正理), that: “Though it is named as ‘sealing the breathing,’ (actually) it means there is a complete emptiness (of the mind) internally just like the nothingness of the Tai Xu.”⁶⁸ “Tai Xu” (太虛) means “Grand Emptiness” and implies the great nature of the universe.

7. The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament (Wang, Fang-Ping's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)²

《性命圭旨全書》
(王方平胎息訣)

Those people who follow the Dao must pay attention to the four timings: Zi (11-1 A.M.), Wu (11-1 P.M.), Mao (5-7 A.M.), and Qiu (5-7 P.M.). These are the gates of Yin and Yang's exit and entrance. Stabilize the Xin and do not be moved (i.e. calm down the mind) is called “Chan” (i.e. meditation). The Shen is communicative and capable of reaching millions of variations, this is called “Ling” (i.e. Supernatural Spirituality). The intelligent mind is able to handle millions of events thoughtfully, this is called “Hui” (i.e. Wisdom). The origin of the Dao is harmonious and peaceful, this is called “Xiu” (i.e. Cultivation). The real Qi has returned to its origin, this is called “Lian” (i.e. Refine or Train). The dragon and tiger mutually interact with each other, this is called “Dan” (i.e. Elixir). When the three Original Qis have unified, it is called “Liao” (i.e. End or Completed). Those who have a strong will in pursuing the Dao know these origins and thus cultivate their human temperament by following the methods. Naturally, they are able to enter the Great Dao (Da Dao) of longevity.”

奉道之士，須審子午卯酉四時，乃是陰陽出入之門戶。定心不動，謂之曰禪。神通萬變，謂之曰靈。智周萬事，謂之曰慧。道元和氣，謂之曰修。真氣歸元，謂之曰煉。龍虎相交，謂之曰丹。三元同氣，謂之曰了。有志于道者，知此根源，依法修性，自可入于長生大道矣。

This document talks about the four proper times for meditation. They are: Zi (子) (11-1 A.M., midnight), Wu (午) (11-1 P.M., noon), Mao (卯) (5-7 A.M., dawn), and Qiu (酉) (5-7 P.M., dusk). These four times are when Yin and Yang change in nature. Therefore, the Qi circulation in your body will also vary accordingly. It is believed by many Qigong practitioners that if you meditate at these four times, you are able to effectively remove possible Qi stagnation from the body.

“Chan” (禪) is a Buddhist term for “meditation” and means to regulate the Xin until it is calm and steady. “Ling” (靈) means “Supernatural Inspiration,” which allows you to comprehend and understand the changes or variations of nature. “Hui”

(慧) means “Intelligence” or “Wisdom” through pondering, analyzing, and comprehension so you are able to handle millions of events without being confused. “Xiu” (修) (to cultivate) means to cultivate the mind and Shen so you are able to trace back to the origin of the Dao. Once you are able to do so, you will be able to harmonize with nature and find the origin of life. “Lian” (煉) means “to refine” or “to purify” the spirit and keep it at its residence. When this happens, the Qi will be able to stay there (Real Lower Dan Tian) through Embryonic Breathing. This will result in the conception of the Spiritual Embryo (Elixir). Later, this Spiritual Embryo is led upward through the Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) (spinal cord) to the brain for enlightenment. This process means “Liao” (了) and implies “the end” or “the completion” of the cultivation. Then the “three Qi’s” (Essence, Qi, and spirit) will all return to their origins (San Qi Gui Yuan, 三氣歸元).

8. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Tian Tai Daoist’s Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(天台道者胎息訣)

Whoever wishes to cultivate and train (the Dao) should maintain (his training) all the time (i.e. constantly). (He) must be able to endure the humiliation and reject the evil thoughts with a sole mind (i.e. firm mind). Keep (his) sincere mind perseverant and strong so as to transport the heart Qi (i.e. fire Qi) and kidneys Qi (i.e. water Qi) up and down, to and fro, thus interacting at the Central Palace (Zhong Gong). The whole Shen must not be dispersed and the Original Qi (Yuan Qi) must be nourished. In this case, the Dan Sa (i.e. Elixir) and the Huang Ya (i.e. Real Yang) will be sprouted naturally. The root will be deep and the stalk will be firm. Always keep the breathing soft and slender, so as to reach longevity. In this case, (you) have transcended the laymen society and gained the Dao.

凡人修煉，常行平等，忍辱一屏，邪心所起，真心志堅，
運心腎二氣，上下往來，交媾于中宮。諸神不散，溫養
元氣，丹砂黃芽自出，深根固蒂，永息綿綿，久而長生，
出世得道矣。

This article first points out that in order to reach the goal of spiritual cultivation, you must be patient, consistent, and not be disturbed by the dirty emotional mind. In order to produce the Internal Elixir (Nei Dan, 內丹), you must transport the heart Qi (i.e. Post-Heaven Qi or Fire Qi) downward from the Middle Dan Tian and the kidneys’ Qi (i.e. Pre-Heaven Qi or Water Qi) upward from the Real Lower Dan Tian so they can meet at Zhong Gong (中宮) (Huang Ting, 黃庭) (inner navel area) and interact with each other. If you are able to keep your Shen there, the elixir or Spiritual Embryo will be conceived there naturally. This up-and-down transportation of Qi is commonly called “Kan-Li” (坎離) and means “water-fire.”

In the document, *Observing Vessels* (脈望), it is said: “The kidneys’ Qi gets together with the heart’s Qi. (When) the Qi (is refined and) has reached its extremity, the liquid (i.e. refined mixed material) will be produced. There is a righteous Yang Qi which is matching with the real Yin Qi within, and this is called the intercourse of the dragon (Long, 龍) and tiger (Hu, 虎). After many days (of cultivation), there is a material conceived the size of a grain of rice. This is called ‘Golden Elixir Great Herb’ (Jin Dan Da Yao, 金丹大藥).”⁶⁹ The document, *Thesis of Zhong Lu’s Preaching in Dao* (鍾呂傳道論), said: “At the beginning, model the heaven’s rule and function, use the Yin and Yang’s ascent and descent theory, make the real fire (from heart) and real water (from kidneys) unified as one. Refine it into the Great Herb (Da Yao, 大藥) and keep at the Dan Tian forever.”⁷⁰ Document, *The Complete Book of Principal Contents of Human Life and Temperament* (性命圭旨全書), said: “(When) there is an intercourse of the heaven’s Yang and the earth’s Yin, then millions of lives are born. Our bodies use this Yin and Yang and makes them intercourse so the Great Herb (Da Yao, 大藥) can be produced. This is no different from the production of millions of objects by heaven and earth. All are just originated from Yin and Yang two Qis, one gives and one derives (i.e. mutual interaction).”⁷¹

9. Seventh Bamboo Slips of the Bamboo Bookcase, Internal Elixir (Lao Jun’s Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《云笈七籤·內丹》 (老君胎息法)

Lao Jun (i.e. Lao Zi) said: “(The key to) man’s immortality is in the Embryonic Breathing.” At midnight and before noon, stretch and extend the legs and arms, bend the feet and cough. After two or three times of respiration, then immediately sit (to meditate). Hold the hands firmly (Wo Gu) and restrain (your) Xin at the place under the navel. Use Yi to imagine there is a man’s shadow about two or three inches long and use the long inhalation to lead it into the mouth and immediately seal (the breathing). Seal the breath but do not swallow or let it leave the mouth. Then condense the Qi under the navel into a small spot about the size of a grain of rice. After the number has been counted, then inhale as before. At the beginning, (you) may count only thirty-two spots (i.e. times) and gradually increase to hundreds. If (you) are able to count to several thousands, then this is a ‘Small Embryonic Breathing’ which is the method of avoiding aging (i.e. longevity).

老君曰：“人之不死，在于胎息矣。”夜半時，日中前，自舒展腳手，拗腳咳嗽。長出氣三兩度，即坐握固，攝心臍下，意想影人長三、二寸，以息長吸，引來入口中，即閉，閉定勿咽之，亦勿令出口。即于臍下合氣作小點子，下之米大，如下數已盡，卻返吸如前。初可數得三十、二十點子，漸可數百。若能至數千點子，此小胎息，為長生卻老之術。

Lao Zi in *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 16, said: “Approaching the nihility (i.e. nothingness or emptiness) to its extremity and maintaining the calmness with sincerity.” This is the crucial key to Embryonic Breathing. From correct Embryonic Breathing, we will be able to return ourselves to the root (i.e. origin of life), and this means ‘calmness.’ When we are calm, then it means “repetition of a life.” According to Daoist society, this implies the birth of the Spiritual Embryo. When life repeats, it means “constant natural routine” and therefore the Dao. If it is the Dao, then it can be long, and the death of the body will not be near. Thus, longevity can be attained.

This document mentions that the time of practicing Embryonic Breathing should be at midnight and noon. First loosen up your body and clear your throat. Test yourself for a couple of breaths and see if everything is as smooth and as natural as you wish. You must be in a comfortable position both physically and mentally. Hold your hands right in front of the abdominal area and also bring your mind there. If you have difficulty keeping your mind there, then imagine there is a human shadow there, so you can pay attention to the activity of this shadow. In this case, your mind will not wander and be distracted by the surrounding environment.

First inhale deeply and lead the Qi down to the abdominal area (i.e. Real Lower Dan Tian) and then hold the breath. Count the number inside your mind. You may count only a few at the beginning. However, after you have practiced for a long time, you will be able to count more. That implies your body and mind are extremely relaxed and calm. Then you will find the root of life and re-establish a new life (i.e. Spiritual Embryo)

10. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Da Mo Chan Teacher's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(達磨禪師胎息訣)

What is the training of Embryonic Breathing? It is the training of Qi and the stabilization of Xin. If (you) can always accord the breathing with (your) Xin, then (Xin) will not affiliate with millions of objects. If the Qi is not stabilized, then the Chan (i.e. meditation) will also be empty. If the Qi can be stabilized, then the color body (i.e. physical body) will not be sick and the Chan and Dao are both peaceful. Those who wish to cultivate their human temperament, if the Xin is unrestrained, resulting in the loss or divergence of Original Qi (Yuan Qi), then how can the Dao be accomplished? Ancient people said: ‘When Qi is stabilized, the Xin will be steady. When Qi is condensed, the Xin is calm. This is the crucial key to reaching the Great Dao’ (Da Dao). This is also named as ‘Returning the Elixir’ (Fan Dan). Daoists do not have such everyday worries, so it can be named as ‘real stabilization in observing the Chan.’ Therefore, those virtuous and holy persons in the past three generations all used these secret keys to cultivate their human temperaments. It is called “Dual Cultivation of Chan and Ding.”

夫煉胎息者，煉氣定心是也。常息于心輪，則不著萬物，氣若不定，禪亦空也。氣若定，則色身無病，禪道雙安。修性之人，因不守心，元氣失了不收，道怎成矣？古人云：‘氣定心定，氣凝心靜，是大道之要。’又名：‘返丹。’道人無諸掛念，日日如斯，則名真定禪觀。故三世賢聖，修性皆在此訣，名為禪定雙修也。

“Chan” (禪) is a Buddhist term for meditation. Through this meditation, one is able to comprehend the meaning of life and also the relationship between the human and nature. The final goal is to reach Buddhahood so the Shen can survive independently without the physical body. This means eternal spiritual life.

To reach this goal, you must first stabilize your Xin (心) (Emotional Mind), and not be attracted by the external environment. This training is called “Ding” (定) and means the stabilization of the physical and mental bodies. The crucial key to reaching this goal is through correct Embryonic Breathing.

“Dan” (丹) means “elixir” and “Fan” (返) means “return.” Therefore, “Fan Dan” means to return the elixir to its origin, maintaining the Qi (elixir) at its residence so it will not be lost.

This document explains that in order to reach enlightenment or Buddhahood, you must train your Qi and stabilize your Xin. The way to do so is through breathing. When the breathing can be regulated correctly, the Xin will be restrained and the Shen will remain at its residence. Only then can you refine it and reach the goal of enlightenment.

11. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Liu Zhen Ren's Secret of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(劉真人胎息訣)

If (one) wishes to practice the Original Dao (i.e. True Dao) of Embryonic Breathing, Xin must not kill, must not have desire, must not rob, steal, or be evil, must not be absurd, act insane, or be crazy. Then the mind will naturally be bright and clear. (He) should always abstain from meat, wine, etc., slenderly regulate the Real Breathing (Zhen Xi, Embryonic Breathing), and observe and shine (i.e. cleanse) entire self (physical and mental) body. (When this happens) the body and mind are clear and quiet. This is the Daoist with longevity. If the metal sinks (to the bottom) (i.e. firmed and rooted) and the treasure objects (i.e. three treasures) are strong and hard (i.e. well protected), Six Doors (Liu Men) are not opened, then evil Qi cannot enter. Hence, the entire body will not be sick. (However) if the Six Doors are not closed and all treasures are stolen, then sickness will be initiated, and the Dao cannot be accomplished. It is praised as: 'The Real Qi within the Xin is the heavenly essence (i.e. essential key). This is the way to offer (you) a clear Shen and clean Qi which is shining like a mirror. If (one) follows

this Great Dao and uses it marvelously, the mind will be clean and calm and the Qi will give birth to divine Shen. One to and one fro, do not stop even momentarily, there is no place at the top and the bottom not being cultivated. Thus the creation and variation (i.e. refinement of spiritual and physical body) can be completed. The Shen is calm and the Qi is clear without contamination, and this will result in steady breathing and the cultivation (of the Dao) will naturally be effective.' Those who study (the Dao) in the future, if (they) do not study its origin, then absurd thoughts cannot be stopped, nor can those initiated and ceased be stopped. Consequently, (the mind) leaves, following surrounding objects, and how can (they) then achieve the goal of Embryonic Breathing?

若修胎息元道之法，心不殺、不欲、不盜、不偷、不邪、不妄、不顛、不狂，心自明朗。常守齋戒，真息常調，觀照遍身世界，身心清靜，乃是長生道人。若金沉寶貝堅實，六門不開，邪氣不入，一身無病患。若六門不開，盜盡金寶，人生疾也，道自不成矣。頌曰：‘心中真氣是天英，正是神清氣鏡明，大道若依玄妙用，心中清靜氣生靈。一去一來不暫停，上下無休造化，神靜氣澄無事染，這回息住自然靈。’后學之者，不習元道，妄念不停，生滅不息，隨他物去了，怎成胎息也。

To accomplish Embryonic Breathing, you must first regulate your mind. Do not be evil and contaminated by surrounding objects, or generate desires. You should keep away from eating meat (i.e. stop killing) which can generate violent and aggressive emotions. You should also close “Liu Men” (六門, Six Doors), isolating your mind from outside temptations. The six doors are the eyes, ears, mouth, and nose.

The key to cultivating the Real Qi by regulating the Xin inside the body is not a hard task. Simply keep the mind and Shen clean, then your breathing will naturally be deep and natural, and the spiritual divine will be generated.

12. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (He Xian Gu's Secret of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(何仙姑胎息訣)

To train means to cultivate; to breathe means (to regulate) the Qi, (to condense) the Shen, and (to preserve) the essence. The origin of the Qi converted from breathing is a clean and calm Real Qi. Use (the self internal) observation (i.e. self internal feeling) and lead it out and in to the Dan Tian slenderly. If (one) knows this, (he) will be able to tame the dragon and tiger automatically. If the Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) is not lured, the Shen does not contemplate, the Qi is not (disturbed by) desires, this is called 'Great Steadiness' (Da Ding). If (one's) Real Qi is able to reside in the shape and material (i.e. physical body), then (he) will be in the position of immortality with unlimited variations and can be called a 'Truthful Person' (Zhen Ren). What is Embryonic Breathing? (One) must retain the Shen (Cun

Shen) and stabilize the Yi (Ding Yi). What are the three importances which should be embraced and kept? (They) are essence, Qi, and Shen. Those who cultivate the human temperament must always keep these three importances at 6:00 A.M., then the treasures will be gathered automatically. The country (i.e. body) is rich and the people (i.e. Qi) are peaceful, the mind-king is free, the Shen is harmonious and pleasant; fewer sickness, fewer worries, the body is light and easy, and the ears and eyes are sharp and bright. This is the real path for those who cultivate the truth. If (you) practice these methods three to five years, the heaven will protect (you), the divine nature will guard (you), and general people will love and respect (you). After a long time, (you) will gain the Dao automatically.

夫煉者，修也；息者，氣也、神也、精也。息氣本源者，清靜真氣也。觀入丹田，細細出入，知此者龍虎自伏。若心無動，神無思，氣無欲，則名曰太定。真氣存于形質，真仙之位，變化無窮，號曰真人矣。夫胎息者，須存神定意。抱守三關者，精氣神也。凡修行之人，須每于六時，常抱守三法，則自然有寶聚也。國富民安，心王自在，乃神和暢，少病也、少惱也、身體輕便也、耳目聰明也，是修真之人，真道徑路。若三五年間，常行此法，天護祐，神加持，凡人愛敬，久而自然得道矣。

Commonly, dragon (Long, 龍) and tiger (Hu, 虎) are used to represent Yin and Yang's interaction in Chinese Qigong society. It is believed that in order to conceive a Spiritual Embryo, you must know how to lead the fire Qi downwards from the Middle Dan Tian, and the water Qi upwards from the Lower Dan Tian. Then Yin and Yang will interact at the Huang Ting (黃庭) (inner area behind the navel) and the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived.

In order to reach this goal, you must lead the Qi to the Huang Ting through correct Embryonic Breathing. Your mind must be in an extremely calm and meditative state, giving you deep internal feeling (Nei Guan, 內觀). "Nei Guan" means to observe your inner self through feeling. To train this deep feeling will take time and a lot of practice and it is thus called "Nei Shi Gongfu" (內視功夫) (Gongfu of internal vision). At this point, you should know clearly that feeling is a language between your mind and body. Without it your mind will not be able to recognize the place and lead the Qi there. To reach it, your mind must be calm and profound, and you must bring your mind and Shen back to your body through Embryonic Breathing.

"Cun Shen" (存神) means "to retain the Shen" at its residence. It is said in Daoist society: "Cun Shen means there is no new thinking initiated or thought remaining. It only means to condense the Shen at a point without allowing it to be dispersed and lost."⁷²

In Chinese Qigong society, the physical body is commonly analogized to a country, Qi to people, and the mind to the king. This analogy often gives a practitioner a better idea of how the mind is able to lead the Qi.

13. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Zhang Tian Shi's Secret of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(張天師胎息訣)

The Original Qi (Yuan Qi) does not have shape (i.e. cannot be seen), the Real Xin (i.e. Emotional Mind) does not have standard rules (i.e. changes all the time), and Great Dao (Da Dao) cannot be traced. Only the practice method of regulating breathing contains the Real Dao (Zhen Dao). It is said: 'The Xin is calm, the Qi is stable, and the Shen is retained.' Those who cultivate the Dao, if (they) are able to follow the method of practicing Great Elixir (Da Dan) to reach the Original Dao (Yuan Dao), then (the mind) will be clean and insubstantial, extremely calm, without worries and the Yi is forgotten, empty and quiet with nothingness, and millions of methods are not traceable. This is the real cultivation of Embryonic Breathing. In this case, there is no doubt (that one is able to) become an immortal.

夫元氣無形，真心無法，大道無跡。唯煉息一法，乃含真道。又云：‘心定氣定神定。’凡修道流，若合大丹元道，清虛寂靜，絕慮忘意，空靜無物，萬法無蹤，真修胎息也，成仙無疑也。

Original Qi cannot be seen but only felt through the mind. The emotional mind varies from individual to individual, place to place, and from time to time. Therefore, there are no standard rules to restrain it or control it. To cultivate the invisible Dao, you must calm down your Xin and comprehend it. Without a clear and controllable Xin, the mind will be confused and the Shen dispersed. Then the goal of reaching the Great Dao (Da Dao, 大道) will be impossible.

The best way is through regulating your breathing; then the mind can be calm, and without any worry from human affairs. Then the Yi (意) can lead the Qi upwards to nourish the Shen, and you have achieved the goal of Great Elixir (Da Dan, 大丹), the way of Original Dao (Yuan Dao, 元道). Then both Xin and Yi will disappear, and everything is empty in the mind. This is the achievement of Embryonic Breathing.

14. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Gui Gu Zi's Secret of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(鬼谷子胎息訣)

Those who cultivate the Dao must return to their origins (i.e. original natural being), go back to (their original) purity, and harmonize with the Real Qi (Zhen Qi) internally. Consequently, the Dao can be returned, and through (natural influences of) Four Phases (Si Xiang), Five Elements (Wu Xing), Six Qis (Liu

Qi), Seven Origins (Qi Yuan), and Eight Trigrams (Bagua), the Essence, the Qi, and the Shen can be formalized into shape and substance (i.e. human form). This is gaining the substantial from the insubstantial, make something from nothingness, where the Real Elixir (Zhen Dan) is secreted. Therefore, to train the Xin into Shen, to train essence into shape, and train Qi for life are the training of Qi in its ascent and descent of Yin and Yang. What is the origin of Qi? It is the root of life. Therefore, it is a Great Dao if (you) cultivate these three methods.

凡修道之人，返本還純，內合真氣。故道返則四象、五行、六氣、七元、八卦，而煉精、氣、神，成其形質，則是虛中取實，無中取有，而內秘真丹也。故煉心為神，煉精為形，煉氣為命，此是陰陽升降之氣也。氣源者，命之根也。故修三法，則大道也。

“Si Xiang” (四象) means “Four Phases,” which derived from Yin and Yang. “Wuxing” (五行) means “Five Elements” namely metal (Jin, 金), wood (Mu, 木), water (Shui, 水), fire (Huo, 火), and earth (Tu, 土). “Liu Qi” (六氣) means the Qi existing in air, blood, saliva, liquid, essence, and vessels. “Qi Yuan” (七元) means “Seven Origins” and implies the original function of the seven orifices of eyes, nose, mouth, and ears which are related to the five internal organs; liver, lungs, heart, spleen, and kidneys. Qi Yuan also means the original Qi level of the five internal organs. “Bagua” means “Eight Trigrams” and implies heaven, earth, lake, mountain, wind, water, fire, and thunder, all natural energy.

This document points out that in order to reach the Dao, you must return your self-being to its original purity. To reach it, you must coordinate and harmonize the natural energy, and also the energy circulating within the body. Then refine the mind so the Shen can be condensed, refine the essence so the physical body can be strong and healthy, and refine the Qi so the life force is powerful and abundant. These three things are the keys to reaching the Dao.

15. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Yellow Emperor's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(黃帝胎息訣)

Those who cultivate the Dao should always observe themselves internally, get rid of the Three Corpses (San Shi), and the Six Emotions (Liu Qing), return to internal so as to keep (i.e. protect) the three (treasures) (i.e. Jing, Qi, and Shen). The Xin and Shen are kept at their residences, the Qi is condensed without dispersion, and the Shen is cheerful. The techniques of cultivating the Qi, training the shape (i.e. physical body), and maintaining human temperament, should not be forgotten. This is the key to real Embryonic Breathing and the key training of the Great Herb (Da Yao).

凡修道者，常行內觀。遣去三尸，出于六情。返內存三，心神守宮。氣閉不散，諸神歡暢。養氣、煉形、存性，此三法不可棄。是真一胎息也，玄關大藥也。

“San Shi” (三尸) means “Three Corpses” and are the three desires which could lead to your death. Three desires are the temptations of money, taste (food), and sex. “Liu Qing” (六情) means “Six Emotions” and implies the six emotional desires derived from the pleasures of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

If you are able to keep your mind absorbed internally, and keep away from all emotional attractions and temptations, then the emotional mind can be calm, and Shen can stay at its residence. Then Qi can be led to its residence (Real Lower Dan Tian) and preserved. When the Shen and the Qi are harmonized with each other, then the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived.

There are three important cultivations to reach this goal: nourishing the Qi, training the physical body, and refining the human temperament. Nourishing the Qi means to build up the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level, so it can be used to rebuild the physical body and strengthen the immune system. However, the most important of all is to refine your Shen through the cultivation of human temperament.

16. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Cao Xian Gu's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(曹仙姑胎息訣)

Furthermore, Embryonic Breathing cannot be done through stratagem (i.e. trick). If it could be done (with trick), then it would be far away from the Dao. Human life must rely on the existence of Shen, and when Qi stays, the Dao (of life) can exist. Shen and Qi, these two must rely on each other so (life) can be achieved. Those whose temperament and physical life are weak, after comprehending this spiritual (practice) can then be bright and shining (i.e. enlightened), harmonious, circulating cyclically (i.e. continuously), softly, and fluently. Consequently, the Shen is peaceful and the Qi circulation unobstructed. When the Qi circulation is unobstructed, the blood circulation will be harmonious, and the bones will be strong. Then the bone marrow will be full, and (the Qi stored at) the abdomen will be abundant. Then the lower section of the body will be solid, and walking and stepping will be light and invigorated. The movements will not be tired, and the four limbs will be healthy and strong. This is just like a country that has strong boundaries to keep it safe and tranquil. When the Qi and blood are harmonious and circulate abundantly, it is like a country that has plentiful financial reserves. As if a family is rich, the Shen and aspiration are harmonious and delighted, the color of the face (i.e. facial appearance) is cheerful, walking like dancing, all of these imply the approaching of the immortal Dao. Therefore, it is said: “Today’s people are always longing for Buddhism and

Daoism. All they wish is to get rid of disasters and avoid calamities. If they were able to build up a strong will (for cultivation) and get rid of absurd ways, this would gradually allow them to reach the understanding of human life. If (they can) do it, then Embryonic Breathing can be achieved.”

且胎息者，非方術之所能為。為者，則失道遠矣。且人之生也，須以神存，氣留道生。神與氣兩者，相須乃成。性命虛者，通靈而光明，和者周流而柔潤。神安則氣暢，氣暢則血融，血融則骨強，骨強則髓滿，髓滿則腹盈，腹盈則下實，下實則行步輕健，行步輕健則動作不疲，四肢康強。猶國之封域平泰。氣血和盛，猷國之府庫充實。譬人家富，神志和悅，顏色自怡，行步歌舞，仙道近矣。故曰：‘今人念佛念道，只要除災救禍，不如志念除妄，還好麼達人觀。斯而行之，自成胎息者矣。’

Attaining Embryonic Breathing is not a trick but a method. If it were a trick, it would be easy. However, it is a method, and will take time and effort to practice and make it work. If it could be done as a trick, then the Dao would have been lost.

This document specifies the key points of practice and also its benefits. 1. Retain the Shen peacefully at its residence, 2. Maintain the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, and 3. Shen and Qi harmonize with each other. Actually, these are the same crucial points all other documents have emphasized.

17. The Secrets of Spiritual Applications of All Veracious Holy Embryo (Yuan, Tian-Gang's Secrets of Embryonic Breathing)^{2,3,4}

《諸真聖胎神用訣》
(袁天綱胎息訣)

What is Yin and Yang, it is actually the Real Qi (Zhen Qi) of the heaven and the earth (i.e. nature). One Yin and one Yang, (thus) millions of objects (lives) are born. Human Qi is the Qi (i.e. air) of breathing. Heaven (Great Nature) Qi (i.e. natural energy) is that which derives the winter and summer (i.e. four seasons). It is also said: “These two things (Yin and Yang) are able to change the Qi of the four seasons and are the Wu-Ji (Ten Celestial Stems) which conceal the Real Qi (of nature).” “The Spring arrives at Xun which is able to bear and bloom millions of objects; the Summer arrives at Kun which is able to grow and raise millions of objects; the Fall arrives at Qian which is able to ripen millions of objects; and the Winter arrives at Gen which is able to conceal millions of objects.” All of these result from the Yin and Yang's deified applications of appearance and disappearance (i.e. existence), and rising and falling. Consequently, water is generated from Yang Qi and bears wood, while fire is initiated from Yin Qi and bears metal. Yang is initiated at Zi (11 P.M.-1 A.M.) and emerges at Mao (5-7 A.M.), Yin begins at Wu (11 A.M.-1 P.M.) and enters (i.e. grows stronger) at Qiu (5-7 P.M.). These four crucial timings are the key doors of heaven and earth (i.e. nature). Those who wish to reach the Great Dao must know how to absorb the righteous Qi of these four timings. During cultivation, active breath-

ing belongs to Yin, while stabilized breathing belongs to Yang. During the practice, (you) must have a steady Xin and a strong will, stabilized Shen and calm breathing. Then the dragon and the tiger will meet to conceive the Holy Embryo. This is called the Embryonic Breathing of the Real Person (Zhen Ren) (i.e. one who has reached the Dao).

夫陰陽者，天地之真氣，一陰一陽，生育萬物，在人為呼吸之氣，在天為寒暑之氣。又云：‘此兩者能改移四時之氣，此乃戊己包藏真氣。’云春至在巽，能發生萬物；夏至在坤，能長養萬物；秋至在乾，能成熟萬物；冬至在艮，能含藏萬物。’此皆陰陽出沒升降神用，故陽氣出水盛木，陰氣出火盛金。陽生于子出乎卯，陰生于午入乎酉。此四仲之辰，皆是天地之門戶也。凡大道者，必取四時之正氣。凡修行動息為陰，定息為陽。凡作時須得心定力定，神定息定，龍親虎會，結就聖胎，名曰真人胎息也。

“Wu-Ji” (戊己) are two of The Ten Celestial Stems (Shi Tian Gan, 十天干) Chinese use The Ten Celestial Stems together with Twelve Terrestrial Branches (Shi Er Di Zhi, 十二地支) to form a cycle of sixty. From this, they distinguish the different natural cycles of the year. Wu-Ji implies the natural timings.

“Xun” (巽), “Kun” (坤), “Qian” (乾), and “Gen” (艮) are the four terms of The Eight Trigrams (Bagua, 八卦) used to represent different seasons. “Zi” (子), “Mao” (卯), “Wu” (午), and “Qiu” (酉) are the four periods of the Twelve Terrestrial Branches used to represent different times of day. During cultivation, the active breathing belongs to Yin, since the body will be more tense and thus consume more Qi. This will result in the weakening of the stored Qi. However, if you have a regulated stabilized breathing, the Qi at the Real Dan Tian can be stored to an abundant level, and this belongs to Yang.

In order to achieve spiritual cultivation effectively, you must coordinate with the times of the year and the day, to be in harmony with nature and gain great benefit from it.

3.8 OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS 其他有關文獻

1. The Secret of Cultivating Original Qi Internally by Mr. Huan Zhen:

《幻真先生內服元氣訣》

If there is a sudden uncomfortable feeling in cultivation or an occasional sickness, then immediately go to a secret room. Follow the method of breathing to cultivate the Qi. After the Qi becomes abundant, then stop and regulate it (smoothly) and swallow it (i.e. lead it down to the Lower Dan Tian with saliva). Think of the place where there is pain, seal (your) breath and place (your) whole mind there, use the Yi to attack (the sick place). When inhalation has reached its limit, then

expel it. After complete (exhalation), again swallow. Continue and follow the same method to attack. When the breathing becomes urgent, then stop. After breathing has been regulated, again attack. It may take twenty to fifty times, attack the painful place until sweat, and turn into red color, then stop. If there is no improvement, then practice it every midnight or early morning. Practice day and night and use the Yi to attack. It does not matter if the sickness is at the head, face, hand, or feet, just attack wherever there is a problem.

忽有修養乖宜，偶生疾患，宜速于密室，依服氣法，布足訖則調氣咽之，念所苦之處，閉氣想注，以意攻之。氣極則吐之，訖，復咽。相繼依前攻之，氣急則止，氣調復攻，或二十至五十，攻覺所苦處，汗出通潤即止。如未損，即每日夜半，或五更晝日頻作，以意攻及。若病在頭面、手足，但有疾之處則攻之。

The sicknesses here refer to common uncomfortable feelings or injury. For example, the beginning of catching cold, joint pain, internal pain caused from Qi and blood stagnation, or some minor injuries. Normally, these problems can be removed or corrected through meditation.

The first step in self-healing through meditation is to build up the Qi storage to an abundant level in the Lower Dan Tian through abdominal breathing, or in the Real Lower Dan Tian by Embryonic Breathing. Then inhale smoothly and slenderly and swallow (Yan, 咽) the saliva, while using your Yi to lead the Qi to the painful place. Hold the breath until it reaches its limit and then exhale slowly and use the mind to lead the Qi away from the painful place. Repeat this process continuously. If you feel breathing has become urgent, then return to normal breathing until it is comfortable. After recovery from the urgent breathing, repeat the entire process again. You may have to do it for twenty to fifty times. It does not matter, keep doing it until the painful place starts to sweat or the skin color turns pink, then you should stop. If it does not help to ease the pain, then repeat every day and night until the pain has been removed.

2. The Important Secret Song of Embryonic Breathing²

《胎息秘要歌訣》

If the body gets sick suddenly or there is abnormal irregularity (i.e. uncomfortable feeling) or injury, condense (your) Yi and return (yourself) to a leisure room (i.e. separate and secret room). Strip the body and lie down on the bed. Face up as sleeping and hold firm (i.e. place both your hands at the abdominal area). Bite (your) teeth and burn incense. After swallowing thirty-six times, the Qi in the (Lower) Dan Tian has passed the normal stage (of storing). Follow the Xin to lead (the Qi) continuously. It is best to lead it to the injured place. It is adequate when it sweats. This will spare the effort in searching for medical prescriptions.

忽然身染疾，非理有損傷。斂意歸閒室，脫身臥本床。
仰眠兼握固，扣齒與焚香。三十六咽足，丹田氣越常。
隨心連引導，損處最為良。汗出以為度，省求廣利方。

To place the hands at the Lower Dan Tian area is called “Hold to Firm” (Wo Gu, 握固). The mind will be firmed at the Lower Dan Tian area and the Qi can be stored efficiently. Biting the teeth (Kou Chi, 扣齒) is used to wake up the brain and raise up the Shen. Burning incense (Fen Xiang, 焚香) is to help you calm down the mind. All other descriptions of the training methods are the same as in the previous document.

The above two documents describing self-healing using meditation are translated for your reference. The most important way to reach successful healing is through practice and accumulating experience. From constant practice and continuous pondering, you will soon grasp the secret key to healing.

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17. 《道德經·六章》：“谷神不死，是謂玄牝；玄牝之門，是謂天地根。綿綿若存，用之不盡。”
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36. 《黃庭外景經·石和陽註》：「命門之上，有玄關二竅，左玄右牝，中虛一處，名曰黃庭。」
37. 《道鄉集》：「何謂文火？若守若存，勿亡勿助。」「吐唯細細，納唯綿綿」
38. 《道德經·十六章》：「致虛極，守靜篤。」
39. 《慧苑音義·上》：「禪那，此云靜心思慮也。舊翻為思維修者，略也。」
40. 眼觀鼻，鼻觀心。
41. 大定：「佛心澄明，謂之大定。」指腦神安靜，形體放鬆，神形相對協調與穩定。

42. 《道德經·一章》：“常無，欲以觀其妙。常有，欲以觀其微。”
43. 《同指要鈔》：“一代教門，皆以觀心為要。”
44. 《道德經·十六章》：“致虛極，守靜篤；萬物并作，吾以觀其復。夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。歸根曰靜，靜曰復命。”
45. [三觀]：一·空觀：觀諸法之空諦。二·假觀：觀諸法之假。三·中觀：一觀諸法亦非空，亦非假，即中也。二觀諸法亦空亦假，即是中，謂為雙照之觀。
46. 即覺或智之意。如覺悟、覺察、覺知諸法之事理，而了了分明。如睡夢之寤，謂之覺悟。覺察煩惱，使不為害，如世人之覺之為賊者，故云覺察。
47. 佛在靈山莫遠求，靈山只在汝心頭。人人有個靈山塔，好向靈山塔下修。
48. 《性命主旨全書·涵養本源，救護命寶》：“學道先須學自心，自心深處最難尋。若還尋到無尋處，方悟凡心即佛心。”指覺悟之心。
49. 《性命主旨全書·王子喬胎息訣》：“子、午、卯、酉四時，乃是陰陽出入之門戶。”
50. 活子時：“習煉氣功中，形神安靜，凝神入氣穴，覺丹田氣動，陰陽生發之時。”
51. 《脈望》：“下手立丹基，休向子午推，靜中才一動，便是發生時，謂之活子時。”
52. “指造化生育萬物之根本，亦即天地萬物之母，即道之別稱也。”
53. 《武當修真圖》：“明堂下，兩眉連線中點上方。有神光出，而曰天目。”
54. 《云笈七籤》：“兩眉間為泥丸之玉門。”
55. 《本草綱目》：“腦為元神之府。”
56. “人人身中有一神，一神中有一靈光，靈光獨耀超千谷，道化無窮徹萬方。”
57. 《道德經·六章》：“谷神不死，是謂玄牝。玄牝之門，是謂天地根，綿綿若存，用之不動。”

58. 《六祖壇經》：“菩提本無樹，明鏡亦非台，本來無一物，何處惹塵埃。”
59. 《養生論》：“呼吸吐納，服食養身，使形神相親，表裡既濟也。”
60. 《道德經·五十五》：“骨弱筋柔而握固。”
61. 指行佛家氣功時，手的姿勢。其作用有二：一精神思維活動專注于手印，持之以恆，獲得禪定。二調節手形成印後，精神思維活動專注于呼吸，達到最高境界，“即身成佛。”
62. 《諸病源候論·風身體手足不隨候》：“握固者，以兩手各自以四指把手姆指。”
63. 《道門通教必用集》：“握固以大指掐中指指節，四指齊收于心。”
64. 調息要調無息息。
65. 《菩薩善戒經》：“威儀苦者，名身四威儀。一者行，二者住，三者坐，四者臥。菩薩苦行苦坐，晝夜常調惡業之心。忍行坐苦，非時不臥，非時不住。所住內外，若床若地，若草若葉。于此四處，常念供養佛法僧寶。”
66. 六氣：人體氣，血，津，液，精，脈等六種物質。或風，熱（暑），濕，火，燥，寒六種氣候。
67. 《攝生三要》：“須想其氣，出從臍出，入從臍滅。調得極細，然後不用口鼻，但以臍呼吸，如在胞胎之中。”指應用腹肌鼓凹作為氣體變換的動力。呼吸的樞機在臍，口鼻僅是呼吸之氣出入的通道。
68. 《天仙正理·伏氣直論》：“托名閉息者，而內則空空如太虛之無物。”
69. 《脈望》：“腎氣投心氣，氣極生液，液中有正陽之氣，配合真一之水，名曰龍虎交媾，日得黍米之大，名曰金丹大藥。”
70. 《鍾呂傳道論·論日月》：“始也效法天機，用陰陽升降之理，使真水真火合而為一，煉成大藥，永鎮丹田。”
71. 《性命圭旨全書·天人合發，采藥歸壺》：“天地以此陰陽交媾而生萬物，吾身以此陰陽交媾而生大藥，與天地萬物不異，總是陰陽二氣一施一化。”
72. 若夫存神，則無所想。不過將神凝聚于一點，不使散漏之謂也。

Summaries from Ancient Documents

古代文獻之總結

4.1 INTRODUCTION 介紹

I would like to summarize a few general points from the documents translated and commented in the last chapter.

1. Many documents discuss the same things and emphasize the same practices, though the years of writing were different.
2. These ancient documents can only offer you some references and experiences. It is up to you to make a wise and clear judgment. Each document is just like a road sign of a map to the garden of Embryonic Breathing. Some of them are considered very important and crucial, some less so, and some others may lead you to the wrong path.
3. I have covered almost all of the available documents related to Embryonic Breathing in the previous chapter. Due to my limited knowledge and experience, there are some places which may be beyond my understanding. I hope those who have a deeper Qigong experience will fill up these voids.
4. Again, I would like to point out that it is not easy to translate these ancient documents. I have tried to translate them as close to the meaning as possible. Often, if you translate it word by word, the actual meaning will be distorted or lost.

In the next section, from my personal understanding, I would like to draw conclusions from the important concepts in the ancient documents. I hope this chapter will offer you a clear idea, both for understanding and practice. This will provide you with a good foundation for your practice, which we will discuss in Part III of this book.

4.2 SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT POINTS 要點總結

In this section, first I would like to review the body's energy structure briefly, which was already discussed in Chapter 2. If you still have questions concerning this brief summary, you should refer back to Chapter 2. Without this theoretical foundation, many of the summaries concluded from ancient documents will not make sense. After we have concluded those important theoretical and training points, we will list the benefits of Embryonic Breathing.

Two Qi Polarities in a Human Body (Ren Shen Liang Yi, 人身兩儀). As discussed in Chapter 2, we have three Dan Tians. The top (Upper Dan Tian) and the bottom (Real Lower Dan Tian) ones establish a two-pole system which thus constitutes a human central energy line. These Two Polarities, one Yin and one Yang, synchronize and harmonize with each other. They are just like the polarities of a magnet which cannot be separated. The Real Lower Dan Tian (Human Gut or second brain) is the North pole that stores Qi and supplies it for the functioning of the entire body. The Upper Dan Tian (brain) is the South pole that directs and governs the quality of Qi manifestation.

When we compare these Two Polarities with the Taiji Yin-Yang symbol, we can easily see that the spirit (Shen, 神) residing in the Upper Dan Tian is classified as Yang, since it manifests the Qi into action. That is why the spirit is called “Yang Shen” (陽神) in Chinese Qigong society. However, the area located in the Real Lower Dan Tian is called “Sea Bottom” (Hai Di, 海底) where it is able to store Qi to an abundant level. The Qi stored in the Real Lower Dan Tian is thus called “Yin Shui” (陰水), which means “Yin Water” (Figure 4-1). It was believed that this Yin water originates from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) stored in the internal kidneys (Nei Shen, 內腎) and external kidneys (Wai Shen, 外腎). External kidneys are testicles or ovaries. In fact, it is understood that the Original Essence is actually the hormones which are produced from the adrenals of the internal kidneys and also from the gonads of the testicles and ovaries. Due to this reason, the water (Qi) produced in these glands is often called “kidneys' water” (Shen Shui, 腎水).

However, from another point of view, we can see that since the Real Lower Dan Tian supplies the quantity of Qi, it can be considered to be Yang, while the spirit which governs the quality of Qi manifestation, can thus be considered to be Yin. From this, you can see how Yin and Yang are defined according to different points of view. If we take a closer look, we can see this viewpoint clearly.

Again, if you observe the Taiji Yin-Yang symbol closely, you can see that there is a hidden Yang fountain (Yang Quan, 陽泉) in the center of the Yin water while there is a concealed Yin spirit (Yin Shen, 陰神) in the center of the Yang spirit. In fact, in Qigong Embryonic Breathing training, you train these two polarity centers of hidden Yang and concealed Yin. For example, if you are able to keep your mind at the center of the hidden Yang in the Yin water, the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian will

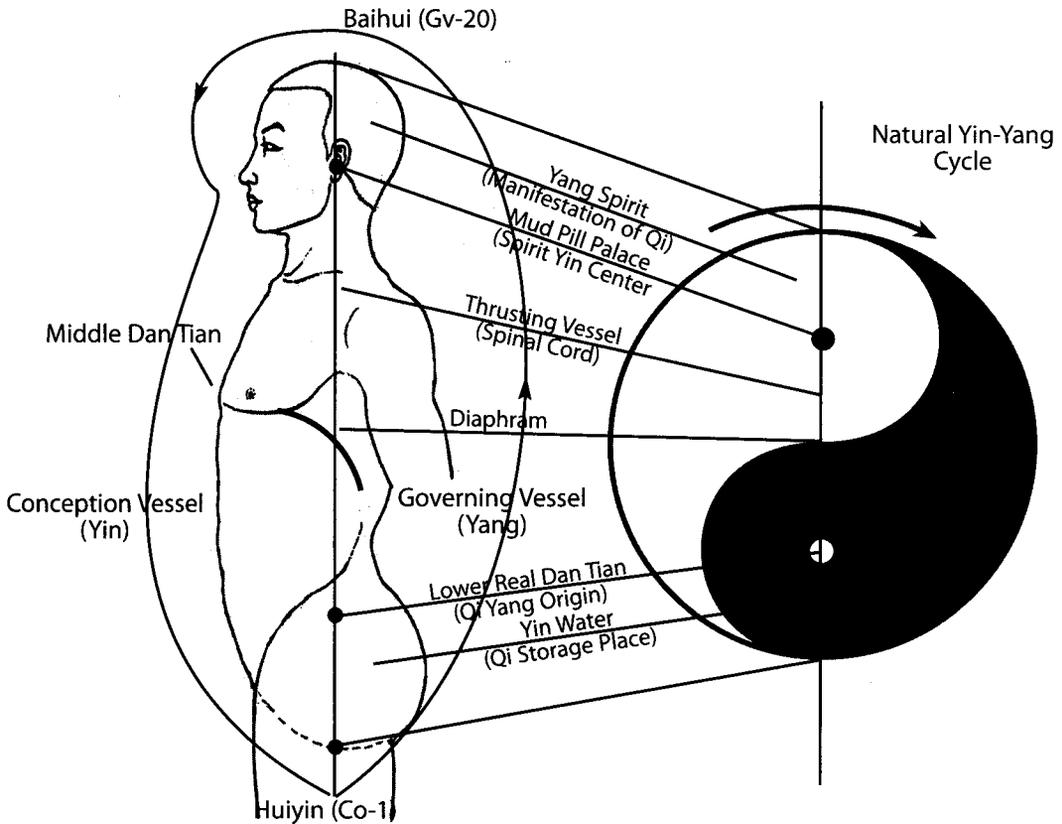


Figure 4-1. The Body's Yin and Yang, and the Two Polarity Centers

continue to be stored and preserved. It is just like a spring of a fountain which is able to produce water continuously. Not only that, if you also know how to keep the spirit condensed at its center (concealed Yin), then the quality of Qi manifestation will reach a higher level of efficiency.

These are two concealed polarities, one at the center of the head (Mud Pill Palace) and the other at the center of the gut. Though they are two, they function as one. If you are able to keep your mind at these two poles, the spirit and the Qi will stay in their residences. This process is called “Embracing Singularity” (Bao Yi, 抱一)

The Spirit is the Master of the Body (Shen Wei Zhu Zai, 神為主宰). The Spirit is related to your mind. This mind is what is called “Taiji” (太極) (Grand Ultimate) in Small Human Heaven and Earth (Small Universe or Nature). When this mind acts properly, the spirit can be raised up to a high level and when this mind acts strangely, then the spirit will be disordered and the quality of Qi manifestation will be poor. Therefore, in order to have a condensed and focused spirit, you must first regulate your mind. To achieve this, you must not be attracted by human affairs, emotions and desires. You must see through to the reality that the material world is only tem-

porary. In order to reach the goal of immortality or enlightenment, you must train to cultivate your spirit to a strong level so it can survive independently even when the physical body is dead. This is the concept of immortality (spiritual eternity).

In the Embryonic Breathing training, regulating your mind and spirit in the Upper Dan Tian is more crucial than regulating your Qi. After all, it is your mind and spirit which govern your life and control the efficiency of Qi manifestation. When mind and spirit are strong and focused, the Qi can be stored to an abundant level. However, when the mind and spirit are scattered and confused, the spirit will become Yang and naturally the Qi will also be manifested and wastefully consumed. In this case, the level of spiritual cultivation will be shallow.

However, regulating the mind and spirit is a very difficult and long process. Using your mind to deal with your mind is like trying to force yourself to fall asleep. The more you do so, the worse it will be. That is why nearly half of the available documents discuss the regulating of the mind and spirit. The key means of regulating the mind and spirit is through regulating the breathing.

Keep the Yi at the Dan Tians (Yi Shou Dan Tian, 意守丹田) The first major key of Embryonic Breathing is to keep your Yi at the concealed Yin located at the “Mud Pill Palace” (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮) in the Upper Dan Tian and also at the hidden Yang in the center of the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田). This training is called “the Yi is kept at the Dan Tians” (Yi Shou Dan Tian, 意守丹田). When this happens, the spirit can stay at its residence (Shen Shi, 神室) (Spiritual Residence or Upper Dan Tian) and the Qi can be collected and stored at its center (Qi She, 氣舍) (Qi’s Dwelling or Real Lower Dan Tian).

In order to have a condensed and focused spirit staying at the “Mud Pill Palace” (Yin Shen), you must first regulate your mind. That means you must first calm down your mind and withdraw it from the attractions of surrounding affairs and emotional disturbances. This means regulating your emotional monkey mind, by first regulating your breathing. Breathing is just like a banana which is able to lead the monkey Xin into the cage. When your breathing is calm, the physical body can be relaxed and the mental mind can be peaceful. Therefore, if you are able to breathe softly, gently, slenderly and deeply, the mind can be calmed down. Then the spirit can be focused and condensed at its residence. Once you have reached a profound stage, the spirit and the breathing will mutually depend on and harmonize with each other. This is the initial state of Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi, 抱一).

Mutual Dependence of Shen and Breathing (Shen Xi Xiang Yi, 神息相依) (Mu Zi Xiang Yi, 母子相依). Once you have reached this stage, you have established a close connection between your Shen and Qi through breathing. This kind of breathing is also called “Cavity Breathing” (Xue Wei Hu Xi, 穴位呼吸) or “Dan Tian Breathing” (Dan Tian Hu Xi, 丹田呼吸), which means breathing with the Shen and Qi staying at their cavities (residences).

Then, you will bring the Shen down from the Upper Dan Tian to the Real Lower Dan Tian to unite the Shen and Qi together. This is the state of “Mutual Dependence of Spirit and Breathing” (Shen Xi Xiang Yi, 神息相依) or “Mutual Dependence of Son and Mother.” “Son” represents “Shen” while “Mother” represents “Qi.” When this happens, you have traced back to the origin of your life—the Wuji state. Therefore, I have named it “Wuji Breathing” (Wuji Hu Xi, 無極呼吸) (breathing with no polarities) or “second brain breathing.” In Wuji Breathing there is no discrimination of Yin and Yang either in Shen or Qi.

Hold the Breathing to Conceal the Shen and Qi (Bi Qi Cang Shen Yun Qi, 閉息藏神蘊氣) The key to bringing the Shen down to unite with the Qi is correct breathing. There are two schools of thought on how to do it correctly. One group believes that in order to contain the Shen and Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you must inhale deeply and then hold the breath as long as possible while keeping your mind (spirit) there. When you inhale to your maximum and then hold the breath, you are allowing the Shen and Qi to combine to their maximum. It is just like when you push a car. First you inhale deeply to absorb abundant oxygen for the biochemical reaction, then you exhale while pushing. After you exhale to the maximum, you hold the breath so the Qi can manifest in its most extreme and efficient way. Embryonic Breathing is just reversing the process. First, you exhale and relax your body and mind, then you inhale deeply, softly, and slenderly. When the inhalation has reached its maximum, then you hold your breathing while keeping your mind at the Real Lower Dan Tians. When this happens, the Shen will be condensed and the Qi will be gathered at the Real Lower Dan Tian.

Another group of documents argue that “hold the breathing” does not mean the process which actually “stops the breathing.” They explain that since the breathing is so slender, gentle, and soft, the breathing is as if it exists without existing. If you really hold your breathing, your mental and physical bodies will be tensed. When this happens, the mind can be disturbed and the spirit and the Qi cannot be contained at the Real Lower Dan Tian efficiently.

However, from my personal understanding, both sides have their good reasons and theories. The best way of breathing is inhaling slowly, slenderly, softly, and quietly as if the breathing does not exist. However, when you reach the final stage of inhalation, then you hold the breath. Begin with a few seconds only. Only after you have practiced for a long time and feel comfortable and natural holding it, can you then increase the length of time.

Unification of Shen and Qi (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合) There are two meanings to “Unification of Shen and Qi” (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合). One is that the mind stays at the Real Lower Dan Tian so you are able to return yourself to the origin of life, as explained in the previous sub-section. That means the location where unification takes place is at the Real Lower Dan Tian. This is the way of longevity.

The other meaning is to conceive a Spiritual Embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎) at the Huang Ting (黃庭). Then this Spiritual Embryo is led upward to re-open “The Third Eye.” Naturally, the second is the first step towards reaching enlightenment.

In order to conceive a Spiritual Embryo, you must first learn how to lead the “Fire Qi” (Huo Qi, 火氣) or “Post-Heaven Qi” (Hou Tian Qi, 後天氣) from the Middle Dan Tian downward, and the “Water Qi” (Shui Qi, 水氣) or “Pre-Heaven Qi” (Xian Tian Qi, 先天氣) upward, to meet each other at the Huang Ting cavity. This is the process of Kan-Li (坎離) (water-fire). This process, also called “the intercourse of dragon and tiger” (Long Hu Jiao Gou, 龍虎交媾), will produce the “Water Mother” (Shui Mu, 水母), which provides life for the Shen to reside and grow.

Therefore, you must also bring your Shen down to the Huang Ting. This Shen is considered the Son. Again this process is called “Mutual Dependence of Mother and Son” (Mu Zi Xiang Yi, 母子相依). When this happens, the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived. When this Spiritual Embryo has matured, then it is led upward to the Upper Dan Tian for its birth (re-opening The Third Eye). This is a necessary step for spiritual enlightenment.

To summarize this section, the important key theories and practicing methods are:

- 1. To calm down the mind and physical body.** The first step of Embryonic Breathing is to keep the mind in a state of extreme calmness. In order to reach this goal, you withdraw from all of the surrounding emotional attractions, disturbances, and desires. When this happens, you are able to condense your spirit at the Mud Pill Palace at the center of the Upper Dan Tian. Then the actions and excitement of the brain will gradually cease and the mind can be calmed. Then your physical body can be peaceful and relaxed, and you have found the way of Embracing Singularity (Bao Yi, 抱一).

To further calm the mind and physical body, you should bring your mind down to the Real Lower Dan Tian, to lead the body’s Qi down to the lower section of the body. The brain cells will not be excited, and the mind can reach a calmer and more peaceful state. *Dao De Jing* (道德經), Chapter 16, said: “Reach the extreme emptiness, and keep the profound calmness.”¹ This implies the extreme calmness of the mind and the body. This is the first step in leading the Qi to the Real Lower Dan Tian and storing it there.

- 2. To condition the Real Lower Dan Tian (bio-battery) and improve the capacity for Qi storage.** In order to increase the storage capacity of Qi to a level higher than that of normal people, the Real Lower Dan Tian must be conditioned. How to condition the Real Lower Dan Tian will be explained briefly in the last section of this chapter. Even though this method is not

explained in ancient Embryonic Breathing documents, the method of conditioning the Real Lower Dan Tian has specifically been discussed in *Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Classic*. For a more thorough discussion, please refer to the book: *Qigong—The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

3. **To build up or store the Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian to an abundant level.** This is the process of charging the bio-battery. When Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian is charged to an abundant level, the practices of Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing are possible. The key to storing the Qi to an abundant level is practicing the correct ways of breathing.
4. **To stimulate hormone (Original Essence) production in the Adrenals and Testicles (or Ovaries).** Hormones act as catalysts in the body's biochemical reaction. When the hormone level is properly regulated, the body's biochemical reaction will be smooth and healthy. Naturally, the Qi production will be smooth and abundant. It is well known today that maintaining healthy hormone levels is the key to longevity.
5. **To strengthen the physical body and health (Muscle/Tendon Changing).** When the Qi is abundantly stored in the Real Lower Dan Tian, the Qi in the Eight Vessels (Ba Mai, 八脈) will be highly charged as well. Then the Qi circulation in the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Shi Er Jing, 十二經) can be regulated efficiently. This is the crucial key to maintaining and conditioning our physical bodies.
6. **For longevity and enlightenment (Marrow/Brain Washing).** When abundant Qi is led inward to the bone marrow, the production of blood cells from the marrow will be smooth and healthy. Plenty of healthy blood cells in the body is the key to slowing down the aging process. This is because blood cells are the main carriers of oxygen and nutrition for the body's metabolism. In addition, when the abundant Qi is led upward through the spinal cord (Chong Mai, 衝脈) to nourish the brain, the Spirit of Vitality can be raised and The Third Eye (Tian Yan, 天眼) can be re-opened. This is the goal of Buddhahood or enlightenment in Buddhist and Daoist society.

References

1. 《道德經·十六章》：“致虛極，守靜篤。”

PART III

**Practice of Embryonic
Breathing
(Tai Xi Zhi Lian Xi)**
胎息之練習

Practice of Embryonic Breathing

胎息之練習

5.1 INTRODUCTION 介紹

From the previous chapters, we have recognized the importance of Embryonic Breathing in Nei Dan (內丹) (Internal Elixir) Qigong practice. It does not matter what the goal of your practice is, whether health, longevity, or spiritual enlightenment, without Embryonic Breathing, your achievement will be shallow, if not impossible.

In this chapter, I would like, based on my past 15 years of practice in Embryonic Breathing and continuous reading and pondering of hundreds of ancient documents, to introduce a practical and achievable Embryonic Breathing method for interested Qigong practitioners in today's society. You should understand that almost all of the available documents existing today were revealed to the public only during the last two decades. When you practice, you must use your logical mind and wise judgment to make decisions. Often the same practice can generate different effects and results for different people. Some of the practices may be appropriate for some and not for others. Therefore, you must study the theory behind the practice and adjust the methods recommended.

Before we enter the practice, I must emphasize one more thing. That is the entire Embryonic Breathing practice occurs through self-inner-observation (Nei Shi, 內視). That means "self-inner-feeling." This feeling is the way that your mind communicates with your physical body, Qi and Shen. This feeling can be shallow or profound, depending on how much you are able to calm down your mind and feel it. The level of feeling is unlimited, and normally follows the depth of your mind and awareness. Naturally, wrong feeling or mental perception can also lead you into fascination, illusion, and imagination (Ru Mo, 入魔). These false and unrealistic feelings can lead you to a state of emotional disturbance, and further away from the correct practice of Qi cultivation (Zou Huo, 走火).

Therefore, when you practice, it is very important that you should not have an ego or even set up a plan for your progress. This will only generate a serious disturbance in your mind. It can also cause Qi stagnation. If you are not sure of the cor-

rect method, it is better to learn from an experienced teacher. Often, a couple of sentences of guidance will lead you to the correct path. However, honestly speaking, there are very few such experienced practitioners existing today.

When you read this chapter, be logical, patient, and understanding. Always go back to the ancient documents, study and ponder them. Often, you will find a nice new valuable clue that can unravel your confusion.

In the next section, I will summarize the important preparations, both physical and psychological. The actual practice will be discussed in Section 3.

5.2 PREPARATION FOR EMBRYONIC BREATHING 胎息練習之準備

The preparation for Embryonic Breathing can be divided into two parts, the physical and psychological. Usually, we can see that it is easy to understand the theory of the practice. However it is not easy to carry out the practical side. Understanding can be quick, but the practice will take a great deal of patience and self-conquering. If you expect to see rapid results, it is more likely that you will quit after just a few weeks or months. Therefore, the psychological preparation is more important than the physical.

Physical Preparation

1. Sitting Upright. When you practice Embryonic Breathing, the best physical position is sitting upright (Figure 5-1). When you sit upright, it is easier for you to find your central energy line. Your mind will also be able to recognize the top and the bottom so that the locations of Upper Dan Tian and Real Lower Dan Tian can be registered by the mind easily. Naturally, there is no danger when you practice Embryonic Breathing as long as you are not holding your breath. When you practice holding the breath, your conscious mind must be there to direct the practice, and be aware of what is happening; otherwise your physical body can tense up very easily.

If you find that you cannot sit upright easily and the lower back has tightens, then it may be a good idea if you can find a support for your lower back (Figure 5-2). Often an easy arm-rest couch can provide you with a very relaxed position for your practice (Figure 5-3).

2. Crossing Legs. To prevent the Qi flowing downward to the legs, the best position for your legs is bending the hip joints with crossed legs. However, if you are a beginner, this can cause numbness of your legs and thus disturb your calm and concentrated mind for practice. Therefore, if you sit on a cushion, be sure it is of the proper height, depending on your personal needs. Try sitting on it for ten minutes, and see whether you are still comfortable with it. You should be able to sit for thirty minutes without experiencing any discomfort.

In addition, numbness of the legs can be caused by the floor you are sitting on. If the floor is hard, such as wood or concrete, then the pressure

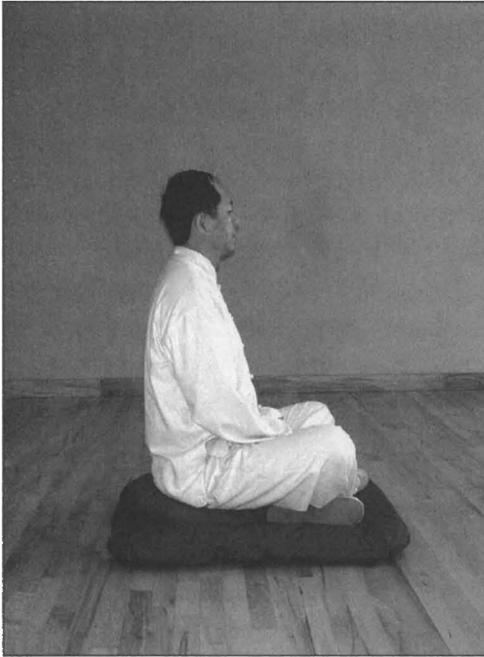


Figure 5-1. Sitting Meditation Posture

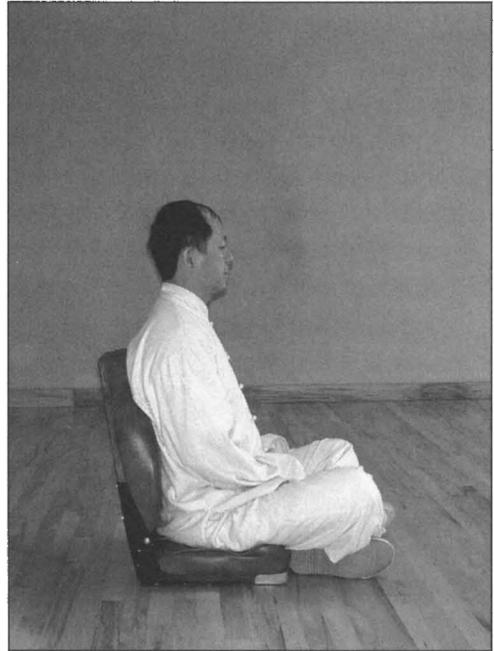


Figure 5-2. Sitting Meditation on a Fishing Chair

on your lower legs will be increased causing numbness of the lower legs. Instead, sit on a piece of soft material (Figure 5-4). However, you should not use artificial material such as polyester, which tends to accumulate a lot of static charge in winter time. Natural materials such as cotton or silk are always the best, because our bodies have already grown used to them since the beginning of human history. Furthermore, you should keep your legs a short distance apart in the shin area. In this case, the downward pressure from the upper leg on the lower one can be avoided. This will make your sitting much more comfortable.

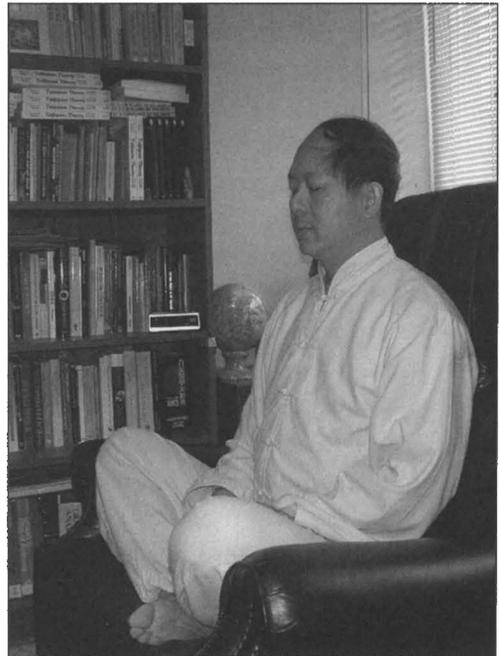


Figure 5-3. Sitting Meditation on a Couch

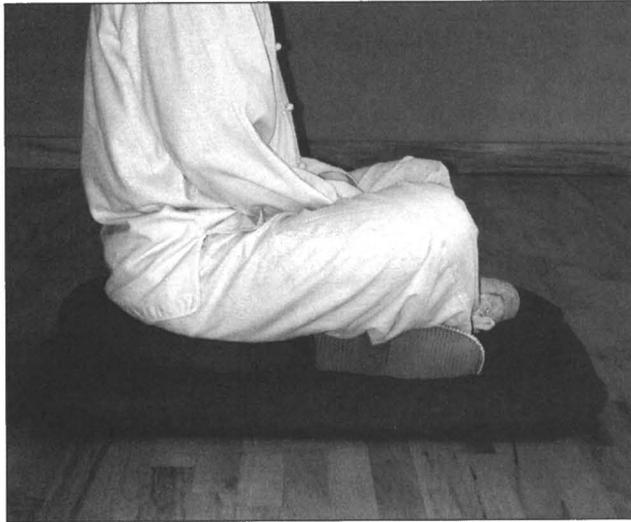


Figure 5-4. Mat on a Meditation Cushion

3. **Lying Down Position.** You may practice Embryonic Breathing lying down, without danger. When you practice Embryonic Breathing, your mind is at the Upper and Real Lower Dan Tian. You are not using your mind to lead the Qi to circulate in your body. In this case, you are not driving your Qi. You simply charge your battery with the car in the stationary position. However, when you practice, you should not lie on your side. The reclining position with the face facing upward is the best. If you lie on your side, you will lose your feeling of balance. Not only that, lying down sideways can cause uneven tension on both sides of the body. You should recognize an important point when you practice Embryonic Breathing in a lying down position. That is, you will lose the clear feeling of the position of Upper Dan Tian and Real Lower Dan Tian, unless you have already become proficient in your practice. Not only that, it is easier for you to fall asleep if you practice Embryonic Breathing in this position. There is no danger, but if you fall asleep, your progress will also be shallow, and naturally you will lose the purpose of practice. Nevertheless, it will be a good way of falling asleep if that is what you wish to do. Using Embryonic Breathing to lead the Qi to the central energy line will make your sleeping more efficient and effective, because right before you fall asleep, your mind has already become calm and the Qi has already been led to its center.
4. **Practicing Environments.** When you practice, you should keep yourself in a quiet and comfortable room. Place a sign on the door, unplug your telephone, keep the place dark, so your mind will not be disturbed. The air circulation with proper room temperature and humidity are also

important. Stagnant air and improper temperature can cause discomfort which can distract your mind.

5. **Diet.** When your stomach is full or empty, do not practice. A couple of cookies or a glass of milk will make your stomach comfortable and cooperate with your mind. Concerning the diet for Embryonic Breathing, normally too much red meat will make your mind disturbed easily. Absorbing protein from fish, chicken, and soy beans is the best. If you practice Embryonic Breathing in the wintertime, you may eat more meat than in the summertime, when it is better if you eat more fruit and vegetables. This is because the Qi in your body is already Yang in summertime. If you eat more red meat, your body will become too Yang and the mind will be disturbed more easily. In wintertime, you may eat more fish and chicken so you have more protein for your immune system.
6. **Clothes.** The best way of practicing Embryonic Breathing is naked. In this case, there is no restrictive feeling of your physical body. Naturally, it is not easy to be naked when you meditate in the wintertime. In this case, you should wear loose clothes. When practicing Embryonic Breathing in the wintertime, since the mind is calm at the Dan Tian and the body is relaxed, the Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) will be weaker, and you may catch cold easily.

Psychological Preparation. It is necessary to cultivate a mind that is peaceful and calm, able to recognize the fact and the truth of practice. Otherwise your mind will be disturbed, confused and scattered, and your accomplishment will be shallow. Therefore, before beginning the practice, you must have a clear understanding psychologically. Following are the common hindrances to success.

1. **Lack of Confidence.** Usually, for a beginner, the biggest drawback is lack of confidence. You are not sure you are able to accomplish your goal. You don't trust yourself that you can conquer your lazy mind and keep up the practice till the end. You don't know whether the theory and the practice methods are correct.
The way of handling these problems is first answering such questions as: Why do you want to practice Embryonic Breathing? How much do you really want to practice? Do you know the theory and practice methods clearly? What do you expect to accomplish in the long run? If you don't have answers for these questions, then you need to reconsider your motives.
2. **Confused About Training.** Often, confusion arises, especially when you encounter some experiences which you don't understand or which are not explained in the book. In this case, you must know the theory clearly. You

should know there are differences in each individual's Qi status, emotional mind, and life-style. Therefore, it is not easy to follow the book exactly. You need to adjust the methods and learn to adopt them in your life and personality. Confusion can also be caused by lack of confidence or disturbances of your emotional mind.

- 3. Disturbing Emotional Monkey Mind.** Emotional disturbances are one of the major hindrances to your practice. That is why there are so many documents discussing how to regulate your mind and spirit. If you cannot overcome serious emotional disturbances which always try to lead your mind away from concentration, then you will achieve nothingness. The emotional mind includes the seven passions and six desires (Qi Qing Liu Yu, 七情六慾). The seven passions are happiness (Xi, 喜), anger (Nu, 怒), sorrow (Ai, 哀), joy (Le, 樂), love (Ai, 愛), hate (Hen, 恨), and lust (Yu, 慾). The desires are generated from the six roots which are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind (Xin, 心). In addition, you must train yourself until you have a neutral mind that can be separated from the four emptinesses of earth, water, fire, and wind (Si Da Jie Kong, 四大皆空) (i.e. the material world)

The first and unavoidable step in practicing Embryonic Breathing is to regulate your emotional mind. Naturally, this is not an easy task, especially in laymen society. If your emotional mind cannot be regulated, then your Shen cannot be steady and stay at its residence at peace. In this case, the Qi will also be led away from its residence, the Real Lower Dan Tian, and the accomplishments of the practice will be empty.

When you practice, you should not force yourself. This will trigger the action of your emotional mind. At the beginning, you may get excited. However, once the honeymoon period is over, then it becomes more difficult. Only if you can enjoy sitting for a long time, can your mind be calm. Therefore, psychologically, you must prepare yourself to enjoy the sitting. You should not set goals, as they include desire and this will trigger your emotional mind. Once you set goals, then you will have expectations and ego, and your emotional mind will be disturbed. Simply do it and enjoy it, focus on the present, and don't permit the possibility of failure to defeat you into giving up your efforts. Continue pondering and correct yourself onto the right path of practice. Follow the recommended practice procedures and stay with them. According to my personal teaching experience in Embryonic Breathing over more than ten years, I am confident that these procedures work, and will lead you gradually into the profound level of practice.

5.3. PRACTICE OF EMBRYONIC BREATHING 胎息之練習

In this section, we will discuss the method of practicing Embryonic Breathing. First, your mind must be able to locate the Upper Dan Tian and the Real Lower Dan Tian. Next, you learn to condense the spirit to a higher level of focus, and to produce more abundant Qi. Then, we discuss how to lead the spirit and the Qi to their residences and keep them there. Finally, you unite the spirit and the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian and store the Qi there to an abundant level.

We will briefly discuss the method of the Qi's Kan-Li, and how to unite it with the Shen at the Huang Ting (黃庭) so the Spiritual Embryo can be conceived. The method of leading the Qi upward to nourish the brain and Shen will be discussed in the future book: *Grand Circulation and Enlightenment Meditation*.

Timing of Practice. The best times for practicing, according to the documents, are dawn, noon, dusk, and midnight. However, this is not easy in today's life-style. I recommend the times of dawn and also right before you go to sleep. If your time schedule allows it and you normally take a nap, then you should use this time to practice Embryonic Breathing. The reason for this is that the Qi status in your body is the most Yang during the early afternoon. If you practice Embryonic Breathing, you will be able to lead the surplus Qi inward for storage.

When your mind and body have reached a very calm, peaceful and relaxed state, you may simply allow yourself to fall asleep. Remember that practicing Embryonic Breathing is not the same as other Nei Dan meditation practices in which you are using your mind to lead the Qi. In Nei Dan practice, you should not fall asleep since it will cause the Qi to enter the wrong path. However, when you practice Embryonic Breathing, you are not using your mind to lead the Qi, so falling sleep will not cause you any problem.

However, you should not be restricted to the timings suggested. According to some documents, once you have mastered the keys to Embryonic Breathing, you can practice anytime and anywhere.

Orientation of Practice. When you practice Embryonic Breathing, you should take advantage of the natural Qi, the most significant of which is the Qi of the sun, moon and earth. (i.e. the earth's magnetic field). Therefore, if possible, choose your meditation orientation accordingly (Table 4-1). If you wish to know more about this subject, please refer to the book: *The Root of Chinese Qigong*, published by YMAA.

Timing	Purpose	Orientation	Natural Qi Source
Dawn	Nourishing	Face East	Sun
	Retreating*	Face West	Sun
Noon	To Calm Down	Any Direction	—
Dusk	Prevent Retreating	Face East	Sun
	Retreating	Face West	Sun
Night†	Nourishing	Face South	Earth's Magnetic Field
	Retreating	Face North	Earth's Magnetic Field

*Retreating means to remove some Qi away from your body so the body can be regulated into being more Yin.

†If you wish to absorb the Qi from the moon, you should meditate two to three days before full moon by facing the moon. After full moon, this is not recommended, since the moon can then drain your Qi away.

Table 4-1. Meditation Orientations and Timings

Recognizing the Yin Center of the Upper Dan Tian and the Yang Center of the Real Lower Dan Tian(Shang Xia Dan Yin He Yu Xian Dan Tian Yang He Zhi Ren Shi, 上丹田陰核心與下丹田陽核心之認識) (Xue Wei Ren Tong, 穴位認同). The first step of Embryonic Breathing is to recognize the Yin center of the Upper Dan Tian (Yin Shen, 陰神) and the Yang center of the Real Lower Dan Tian (Yang Quan, 陽泉). As explained before, the upper Yin center is able to stabilize and control the status of Yang Shen's manifestation (Yang Shen, 陽神) while the lower Yang center is the origin of the Yin water's production (Yin Shui, 陰水) (Please refer to Figure 2-20). The recognition of these two centers must be accomplished through the self-inner-feeling, which is the only way to lead your Shen and Qi to these centers and keep them there.

The exact location of the Yin center in the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田) is at the central bottom of the Spiritual Valley (Shen Gu, 神谷) (Please refer to Figure 3-2) where the pineal gland and pituitary gland are located. This is the center of the Mud Pill Palace (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮) and is the center of the spiritual residence (Shen Shi, 神室) (Upper Dan Tian). It is located at the central point of the line connecting the top part of the two ears and also the central point of the line connecting with the Yintang (M-HN-3) (印堂) and Qiangjian (Gv-18) (強間). To recognize this point through feeling, you must first rid yourself of all emotional disturbances and also the external attractions of your mind. In this case, your mind will be clear and easily search for the location. If you search for it sincerely, it will take only a few days for you to recognize the point.

The exact location of the Yang center in the Real Lower Dan Tian (Zhen Xia Dan Tian, 真下丹田) is where the center of the large and small intestines is located, namely a couple of inches above the physical center of gravity. In fact, the entire

digestive system constitutes the “Real Lower Dan Tian.” If you are able to find the center of this system, then you are able to keep the Qi there and store it to an abundant level. The Yang center is located behind the Yinjiao (Co-7) (陰交) and in front of the cavity Shiqizhuixia (M-BW-25) (十七椎下) (Below the 17th Vertebrae). In fact, it is at the center of these two cavities. Again, if you search for this point when you meditate, you will be able to find it in just a few days or weeks.

Condensing the Shen and Condensing the Qi to their Centers (Regulating the Mind and Spirit, Regulating the Qi) (Tiao Xin, 調心) (Tiao Shen, 調神) (Tiao Qi, 調氣). After you have located the exact site of the Yin center in the Upper Dan Tian, then you will learn how to raise up the spirit and keep it there. Then calm down your emotional mind (Xin, 心) and cease outside distractions, and material attractions of desire, ambition, etc. This will enable you to concentrate your mind in raising up your spirit, and to condense it at the Yin spiritual center. If you have difficulties in reaching this goal, simply pay attention to your respiration. Paying attention to the inhalation, keep it soft, slender, and long. When you exhale, simply be natural and allow the carbon dioxide to be released by itself. In this case, your mind will be stabilized and then calm. Once you have achieved this, then use your mind to focus your spirit at the Yin spiritual center. When this happens, the Yang spirit (陽神) (manifestation of Qi by the spirit) can be controlled. Remember, on one hand you aim to raise up your spirit to a high level, but on the other, you want to govern it so it can come under the control of the Yin spirit.

To condense the Shen at this Yin spiritual center, simply imagine your head as a ball, with the Mud Pill Palace (Ni Wan Gong, 泥丸宮) as the center of this ball. Inhale deeply, using Reversed Abdominal Breathing (Ni Hu Xi, 逆呼吸) while holding up the Huiyin (Co-1) or anus gently. The breathing must be soft and slender. While you are doing so, you imagine that the ball is shrinking and condensing inward to the Mud Pill Palace. When you exhale, simply relax and allow the abdomen and Huiyin area to return to their normal state. That means you should pay more attention to the inhalation. In this case, the Yi (Wisdom Mind) of inhalation is strong which can therefore lead the Shen and Qi inward to condense at their centers.

Conditioning the Bio-battery (Real Lower Dan Tian) (Zhen Xia Dan Tian Zhi Gai Liang, 真下丹田之改良). In order to store a large quantity of Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian, the first step is to condition it, so as to improve capability, storage potential (efficiency), and capacity. If you have a bio-battery which is only the same as other normal people, then how can you expect your Qi storage to be higher than others?

From the ancient classic, *Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Qigong* (*Yi Jin Jing; Xi Sui Jing*, 易筋經·洗髓經), it is recognized that the most efficient way of conditioning this bio-battery (False and Real Lower Dan Tians) is

through massage and stimulation. Massage gets rid of the fat hidden within so the circulation can be smoother, and stimulation will condition the sensitivity of the nerves in the area so they are able to handle a larger quantity of Qi stored there. The entire conditioning process is long and needs a great deal of training and patience. You must understand the theory behind the conditioning clearly. It is impossible to explain the entire conditioning process here. If you wish to know more about this training, please refer to my book: *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*, published by YMAA.

Increase the Quantity of Qi (Qi Liang Zhi Jia Qiang, 氣量之加強) There are various ways of producing the extra Qi at the Lower Dan Tian. For example, you may use herbs to increase the quantity of Qi in the body. You may also use massage methods to convert the fat at the Lower Dan Tian area into Qi. You may also use the abdomen's up-and-down movements with the coordination of breathing.

When using herbs, you must find the herbal stores that have all the ingredients required. However, it is not easy to find these herbs other than in Asia such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. Even then, some special ingredients may not be available due to their seldom being used. The cost of the herbs can be very high.

If you use massage methods, you will need a massage partner. In addition, both of you must know the correct massage techniques, and also how to regulate the power used at each step to do the job. If you use breathing techniques, you must also know the how and why, so your practice can be effective, without causing problems. If you wish to know more about using the herbal prescriptions and massage methods to increase the quantity of Qi, again please refer to my book: *Qigong-The Secret of Youth*.

Here, I would like to introduce the known methods of breathing that are able to increase the quantity of Qi in your body. There are two methods which have commonly been used by Buddhist and Daoist monks in the past. As long you practice patiently and know the theory, with these two methods you will be able to convert the fat stored at the abdominal area into the extra Qi in your body. The theory of these two breathing methods has been introduced in previous chapters. They are: Normal Abdominal Breathing (Zheng Fu Hu Xi, 正腹呼吸) (Buddhist Breathing) or Reversed Abdominal Breathing (Fan, Ni Fu Hu Xi, 反·逆腹呼吸) (Daoist Breathing).

- A. Normal Abdominal Breathing (Buddhist Breathing)** (Zheng Fu Hu Xi, 正腹呼吸) (Fo Jia Hu Xi, 佛家呼吸). In Normal Abdominal Breathing, when you inhale, the abdomen is gently pushed out, and when you exhale, the abdomen is withdrawn (Figures 5-5 and 5-6). In order to fill up the Qi to an abundant level in the lower abdominal area (Elixir Furnace or Elixir Field), when you inhale you should also gently push out your Huiyin (Co-1) cavity (or anus), and when you exhale you hold it up

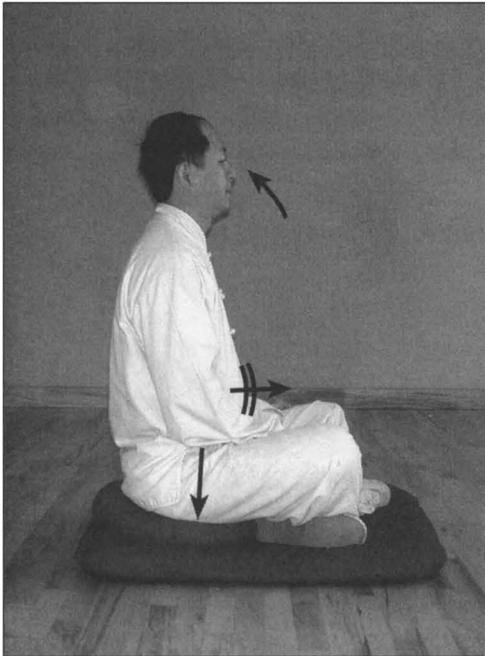


Figure 5-5. Normal Abdominal Breathing
(Inhalation)

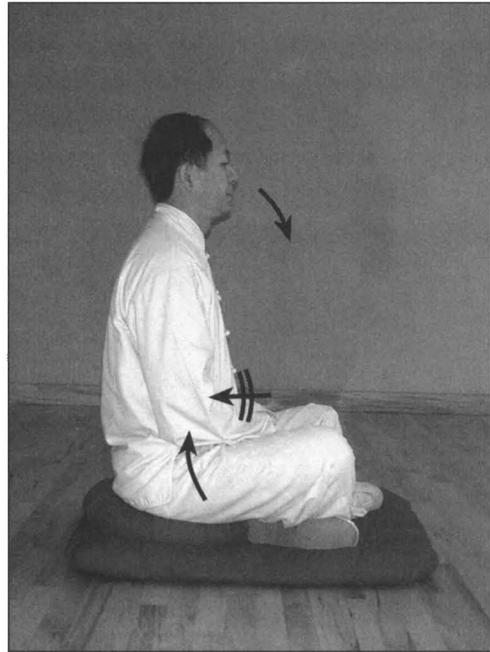


Figure 5-6. Normal Abdominal Breathing
(Exhalation)

gently. Remember, you should not tense this area either during inhalation or exhalation, unless you are doing some special training such as Hard Qigong. When you do so, you are converting the food essence (fat) into Qi through the abdominal movements. Not only that, through the movements of the abdomen and the Huiyin cavity, the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) (Hormone) in the pancreas (islets of Langerhans) and gonads (sex glands) will also be produced.

After you have practiced for a few weeks, you will start to experience some warm feeling and even some trembling at the abdominal area. This signals the increase of the Qi in this area.

As a beginner, you should practice Normal Abdominal Breathing for at least six months until your mind is able to control the muscles around the abdominal area efficiently. Remember this kind of breathing is more relaxing and natural, and so will not cause any troublesome tension at the stomach area.

B. Reverse Abdominal Breathing (Daoist Breathing) (Fan Fu Hu Xi, 反腹呼吸) (Ni Fu Hu Xi, 逆腹呼吸) (Dao Jia Hu Xi, 道家呼吸). After you have practiced Normal Abdominal Breathing for at least six months, then you may proceed to Reverse Abdominal Breathing. In Reverse Abdominal

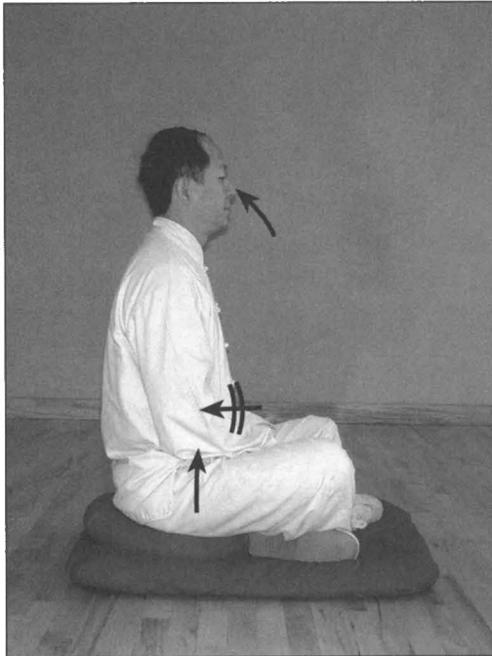


Figure 5-7. Reverse Abdominal Breathing (Inhalation)

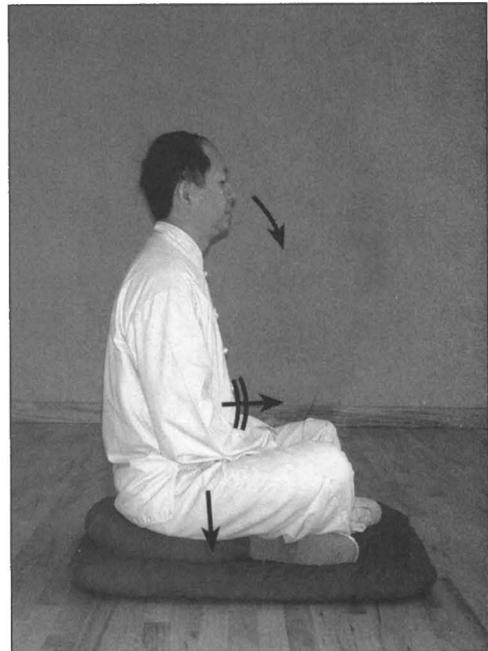


Figure 5-8. Reverse Abdominal Breathing (Exhalation)

Breathing, when you inhale, the abdomen is gently pulled inward, and when you exhale, the abdomen is gently pushed outward (Figures 5-7 and 5-8). Again, the coordination of the Huiyin (Co-1) cavity (or anus) is very important. The Huiyin cavity is a major gate that regulates the four Yin vessels, and therefore controls the Qi status of the body. Again, you should not tense this area during either inhalation or exhalation unless you are doing some special training such as Hard Qigong. Traditionally, a master would not reveal this secret of Huiyin control to any student until he was completely trusted by the master.

Often, a Qigong or martial arts beginner encounters the problem of tightness in the abdominal area. The reason for this is that in Reverse Abdominal Breathing, when you inhale the diaphragm is pulling downward while the abdominal area is withdrawing. This can generate tension in the stomach area. To reduce this problem, you must already have mastered the skill of Normal Abdominal Breathing and be able to control the abdominal muscles efficiently. In addition, you may start on a small scale with Reverse Abdominal Breathing, and only once you can control the abdominal muscles efficiently, can you then increase to a larger scale of abdominal movement. Naturally, this will take time.

Embryonic Breathing (Cavity Breathing) (Wuji Breathing) (Tai Xi, 胎息) (Xue Wei Xi, 穴位息) (Wuji Xi, 無極息) The above two breathing techniques enable you to produce more Qi in your body. However, if you do not know how to store the extra Qi in the Real Lower Dan Tian (bio-battery), this extra Qi will be led to the physical body and manifested (consumed). To store the Qi to an abundant level, you need the method of Embryonic Breathing.

In order to store the Qi in the human bio-battery, you must first recognize the center of the Real Lower Dan Tian through feeling correctly and learning to keep your mind there. When your mind is in the Real Lower Dan Tian, the Qi will not be led away from its residence. To conserve Qi, by keeping the mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian (Yi Shou Dan Tian, 意守丹田) is the crucial key of success.

The way to keep the mind at the Real Lower Dan Tian so the Qi can be led there is through the movement of the front abdominal area and also the lower back area at the same time. The front abdominal area (Navel or Yinjiao cavity) is called “Sheng Men” (生門) and means “the door of life,” while the rear lower back area is called “Bi Hu” (閉戶) and means “the closed door,” which implies the Mingmen (Gv-4) (命門) cavity between L2 and L3 (Figure 5-9). Through this balanced front and back movement, you are able to locate the center (Yang water) easily. Naturally, your mind will be at these two front and back places at the beginning. However, after you have practiced for a period of time and have reached the stage of “regulating without regulating,” the mind will be at the center easily.

That means when you practice Embryonic Breathing, the first step is to find the above two doors and move them up and down at the same time. Naturally, extra Qi will be produced at both the front and the rear. While you are doing so, you must also coordinate with the up-down movements of the Huiyin (Co-1) (會陰) or anus. Soon you will feel the Qi in the entire Girdle Vessel expanding and withdrawing at the same time (Figure 5-10).

The most amazing part of the practice is that, through these movements, the pro-

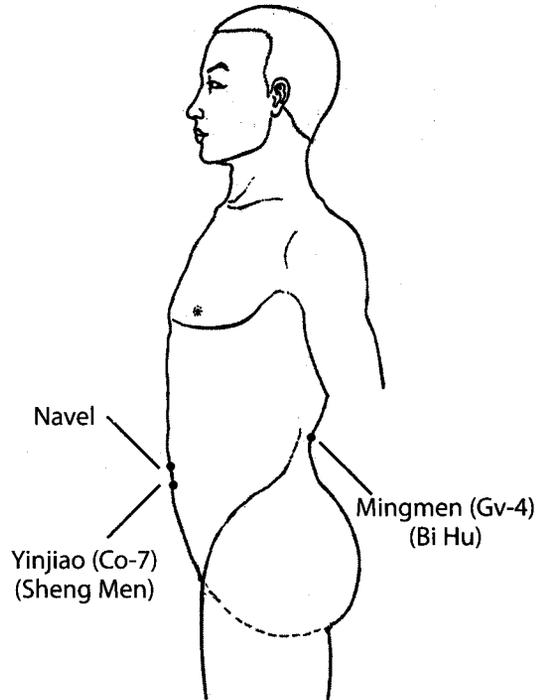


Figure 5-9. Sheng Men (the Door of Life) and Bi Hu (the Closed Door)

duction of insulin hormone from the Islets of Langerhans in the pancreas, DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) in the adrenal glands, and testosterone (male) and estrogen and progesterone (female) in the sex glands can be regulated and possibly increased. This is due to the stimulation of the glands through the exercises.

In addition, when you practice Embryonic Breathing, other than placing your mind at the Yang center of the Real Lower Dan Tian, you must also place your mind at the Yin center of the Upper Dan Tian. You should remember that the Upper Dan Tian and the Real Lower Dan Tian are the Two Polarities of the central energy line. They correspond and synchronize with each other simultaneously. Though they are two places, they are the two faces of the same thing and cannot be separated.

Remember, the Shen and the Qi are just like son and mother which cannot and should not be separated when you practice Embryonic Breathing.

When this happens, due to the mind concentrating at the Yin center of the Upper Dan Tian, the production of melatonin (pineal gland) and growth hormone (pituitary gland) will also be regulated and increased. With these hormones, all of the biochemical reactions will become smooth and the metabolism of the body can be regulated and improved.

The final stage of Embryonic Breathing is to bring the Shen downward to the Real Lower Dan Tian, so the Shen and Qi can be united at the Real Lower Dan Tian. When this happens, the Qi can stay at its residence, and be stored to a very high level. This is called “mutual harmonization or unification of Shen and Qi” (Shen Qi Xiang He, 神氣相合). In this case, the two polarities have unified and become a singularity. That means the Wuji state, the beginning of life. That is why I call this stage of Embryonic Breathing “Wuji Breathing” (Wuji Xi, 無極息). Naturally, the way of leading the Shen down to the Real Lower Dan Tian is through the concentrated mind with the coordination of breathing.

Two Ways of Leading the Qi and Shen to the Real Lower Dan Tian. There are two possible ways of breathing that allow you to lead the Qi and Shen to the Real

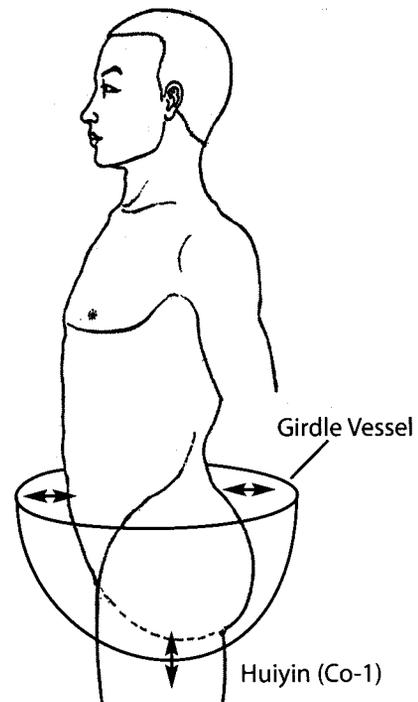


Figure 5-10. Embryonic Breathing

Lower Dan Tian for effective unification. When the Qi is raised up to the brain, the Shen will be excited and the mind become scattered and excited. Consequently, the blood pressure and the heartbeat will rise. This is because when the Shen is raised up, the manifestation of the Qi will be enhanced. However, if the Qi is led downward to the Real Lower Dan Tian, then the Qi will stay at its residence and be conserved. When this happens, the mind can be calmed and relaxed. This will result in the cooling down of the physical body and lowering of the blood pressure. When the Qi is led down, then the Shen can also be led down by the calm mind.

Buddhist Way: Inhale deeply while using the mind to lead the Qi downward through the Thrusting Vessel (central energy line) to the Real Lower Dan Tian, and then exhale while keeping the mind there. Naturally, when you inhale, the abdomen is expanding while the Huiyin cavity (or anus), is pushing downward gently. When you exhale, simply relax the abdominal area and Huiyin (or anus) and allow them to return to the normal level naturally (Figure 5-11). When this happens, the Qi can be led down significantly and stay at its residence. The more you practice, the faster you are able to make it happen. This kind of breathing technique can be used to lower the blood pressure, ease the excited mind (mental body), and also slow down the heart beat. This Buddhist way of breathing can be very effective to relax you both mentally and physically.

Daoist Way: First, you inhale to condense the Qi inward to the center. Naturally, while you are doing so, you must also withdraw your abdominal area and hold up your Huiyin cavity. In this case, you are shrinking the Guardian Qi (Wei Qi, 衛氣) and enhancing the Marrow Qi (Sui Qi, 髓氣). Once the Qi is led to the central energy line (Thrusting Vessel or spinal cord), then exhale deeply while leading the Qi downward through the central energy line (Figure 5-12). While exhaling, push your abdomen and Huiyin out gently. In this way, Qi can also be stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian. This Daoist way can be used to effectively cool down the excitement of the physical body.

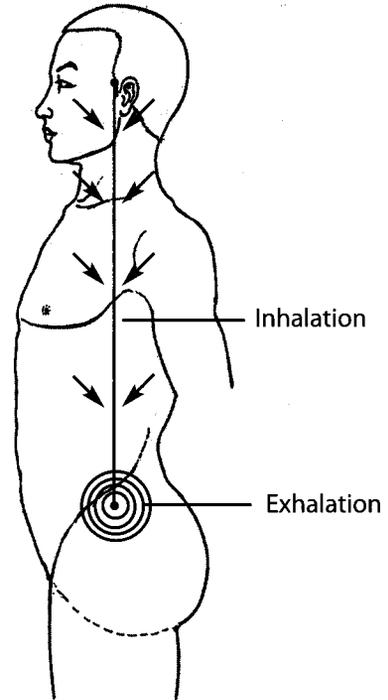


Figure 5-11. The Buddhist Way of Leading the Qi Down to the Real Lower Dan Tian

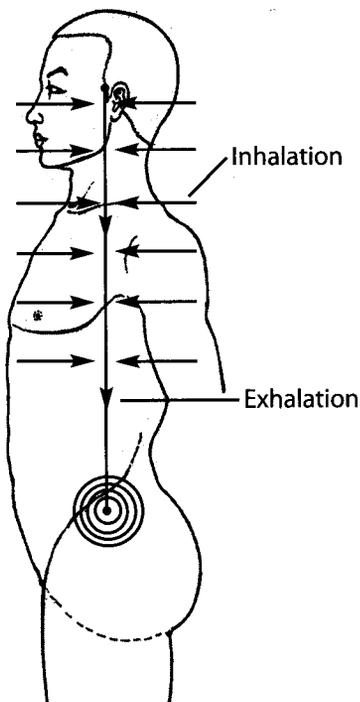


Figure 5-12. The Daoist Way of Leading the Qi Down to the Real Lower Dan Tian

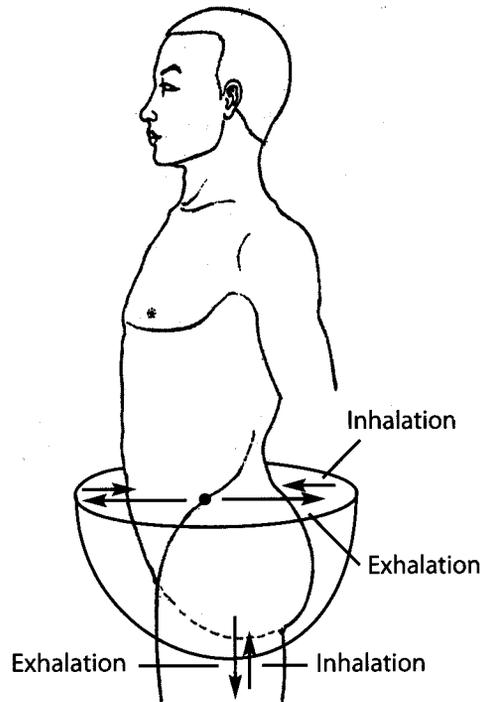


Figure 5-13. Girdle Vessel Breathing

Two Suggested Approaches:

1. Buddhist way first and then Daoist: This helps you to calm down the mind and Shen first and then use the calmed mind to lead the Qi inward.
2. Daoist way first and then Buddhist: This helps you to lead the Qi inward first to calm down the physical body and then calm down the mind.

Either one of the above has its advantages and disadvantages. It also depends on each individual's preferences.

Once you can lead the Qi down and inward to store it at the Real Lower Dan Tian, you must also be able to maintain your mind there. In this case, you are doing the Embryonic Breathing. However, this Embryonic Breathing can be divided again into two practices. One is classified as Yang and is called "Girdle Vessel Breathing" (Dai Mai Xi, 帶脈息) and the other one is classified as Yin and is called "Marrow Breathing" (Sui Xi, 髓息). Since the Qi is led laterally, when you practice these two breathing techniques, it is most effective if you use the Reverse Abdominal Breathing technique (Daoist breathing) instead of the Normal Abdominal Breathing Technique (Buddhist breathing).

Girdle Vessel Breathing (Dai Mai Xi, 帶脈息). In this form of breathing, you must concentrate your mind strongly on the exhalation. That means when you exhale, the breathing is long, slender, and firmly leading the Qi outwards around the Girdle Vessel. Naturally, you are also gently pushing your abdomen out and Huiyin (or anus) downward at the same time (Figure 5-13). The mind should continue to lead the Qi out to a few feet or even a few yards horizontally. When this happens, the body is turning more Yang and the entire body's Guardian Qi is also expanding. If you wish to enhance the expansion of Qi, once you have reached your maximum in your exhalation, simply hold your breathing for a few seconds and allow the Qi to reach the place which the mind wishes for. If you wish to strengthen this expansive Qi even more, while you are exhaling, make the sound "Ha", and when your exhalation has reached to its maximum, then hold your breathing for a few seconds.

When you inhale, simply relax and allow the abdomen and Huiyin areas to return to their normal state.

The Qi manifestation in the Girdle Vessel is classified as Yang, since it can make your body and mind Yang. The Qi manifestation in the Thrusting Vessel is classified as Yin since it is able to calm down your physical body and mind. Therefore, if you use Girdle Vessel Breathing, you can change the manifestation of your body's Qi from Yin to Yang. That means you can use this technique to strengthen your Guardian Qi and rid yourself of the feeling of cold or chill. This kind of practice is suitable for the winter time or when you are depressed mentally. Naturally, you are consuming your Qi as well.

Marrow Breathing (Sui Xi, 髓息). In this breathing, you must concentrate your mind strongly on the inhalation. That means when you inhale, the breathing is long, slender, and firmly leading the Qi inward around the Girdle Vessel. Naturally, you are also drawing your abdomen in and Huiyin (or anus) upward at the same time (Figure 5-14). The mind should continue to lead the Qi in until it has reached the

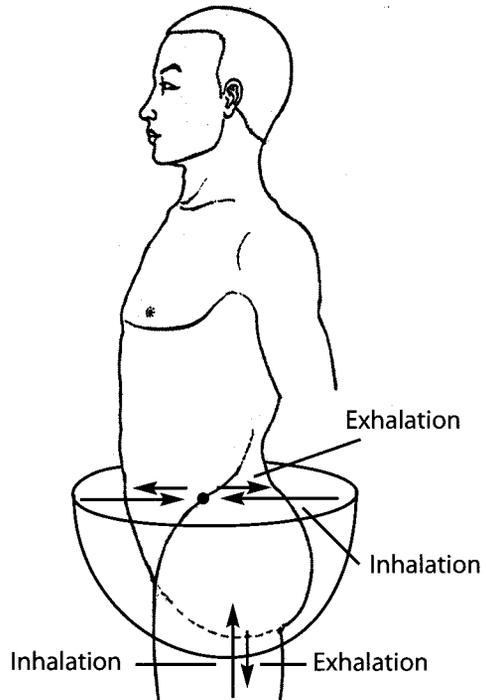


Figure 5-14. Marrow Breathing

Yin center of the Real Lower Dan Tian. Naturally, when this happens, the body is turning more Yin and the entire body's Guardian Qi is shrinking. If you wish to lead the Qi in more effectively and keep it at the Real Lower Dan Tian for storage, once you have reached your maximum in your inhalation, simply hold your breathing for a few seconds and allow the Qi to reach to the Yang center within the Yin. When you exhale, simply relax and allow the abdomen and Huiyin areas to return to their normal state.

When you do this, you are storing the Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian and also leading the Qi to the bone marrow for washing. Naturally, this will also make your body's Guardian Qi shrink, thus weakening your immune system against the cold. Therefore, you should not practice this in winter time. Instead, you may start it in spring and enhance the practice in the summer. When the fall comes, you must change the breathing into Girdle Vessel Breathing so you are able to strengthen your Guardian Qi for the immune system.

Conceiving of Spiritual Embryo (i.e. Initiation of Enlightenment) (Shen Tai Zhi Yun Yu, 神胎之孕育). If you wish to conceive a Spiritual Embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎) and lead it up to the Upper Dan Tian for its birth (i.e. enlightenment), then you must know the method, which I will describe here briefly. If you are interested in pursuing this goal, please read the future book: *Spiritual Enlightenment Meditation*.

The first step to conceiving the Spiritual Embryo is to lead the Fire Qi (Huo Qi, 火氣) (Post-Heaven Qi) downward from the Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian, 中丹田) and the Water Qi (Shui Qi, 水氣) (Pre-Heaven Qi) upward from the Real Lower Dan Tian, and have them meet at the Huang Ting (黃庭), the inner space between the diaphragm and the Real Lower Dan Tian (center of gravity). This process is commonly called "Kan-Li" (坎離) in Qigong practice. When this happens, the Yin and Yang Qis will interact with each other. In the presence of the Shen, life (the Spiritual Embryo) can be conceived. Therefore, you must also lead the Shen down to meet the Qi at the Huang Ting.

Further Spiritual Qigong Developments (Shen Zhi Jin Xiu, 神之進修). As mentioned before, according to Daoist society, there are four stages of spiritual cultivation, namely: 1. Refine the Essence and Convert it into Qi (Lian Jing Hua Qi, 練精化氣); 2. Refine the Qi and Convert it into Spirit (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 練氣化神); 3. Refine the Spirit and Return It to Nihility (Lian Shen Fan Xu, 練神返虛); 4. Crushing the Nihility (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空). Through Embryonic Breathing, you will be able to achieve the first stage of cultivation. This will provide you with an opportunity to conceive the Spiritual Embryo at the Real Lower Dan Tian. Only then can you have a solid foundation for further spiritual cultivations. These include:

Breathing's Yin and Yang 呼吸陰陽圖

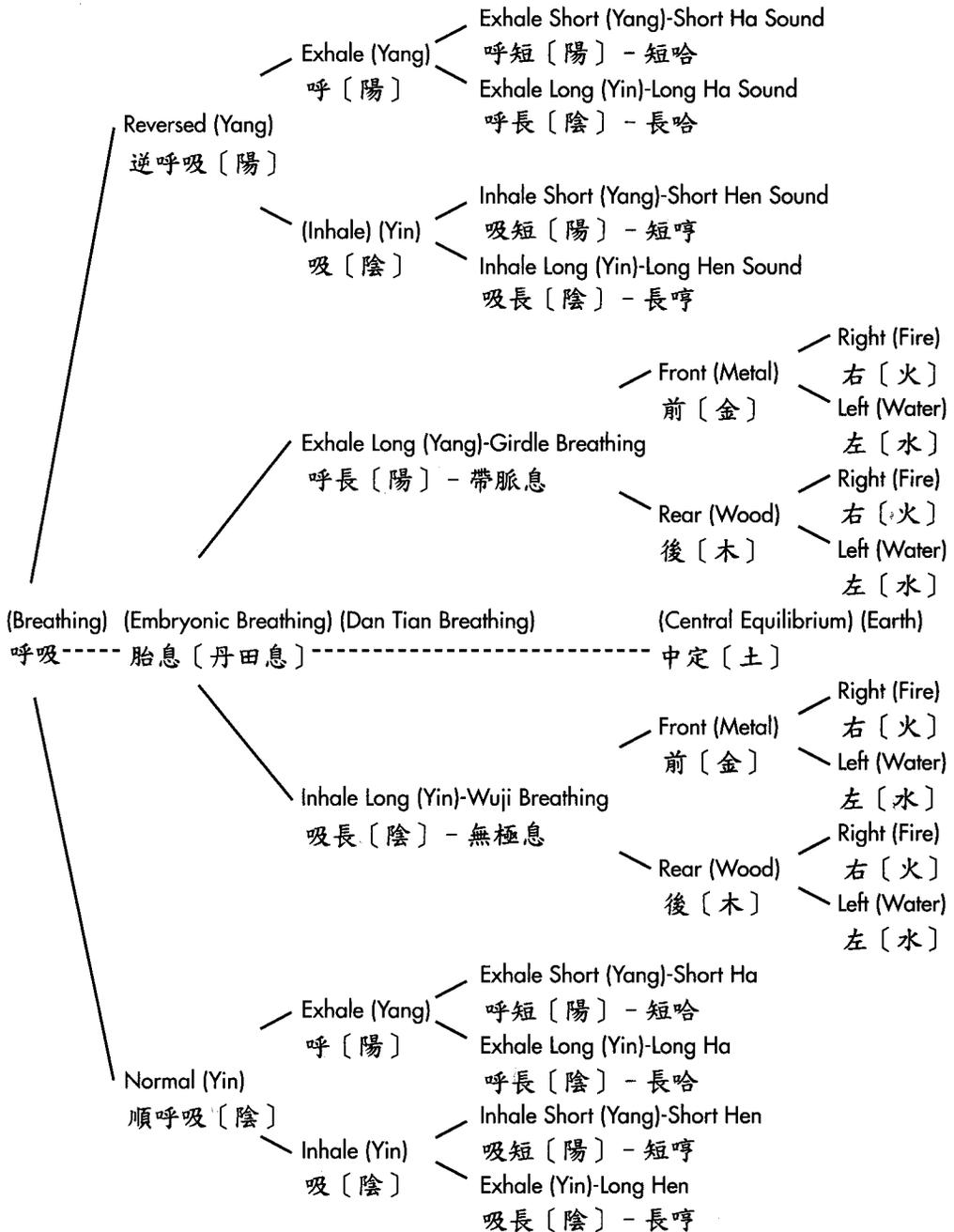


Figure 5-15. Breathing's Yin and Yang

- 1. Small Circulation** (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天). Once you have learned Embryonic Breathing and are able to store the Qi to an abundant level, the next step is learning how to use the accumulated Qi to recondition your physical body and make it strong, healthy, and live long. This process is called “Small Cyclic Heaven” (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天) or simply “Small Circulation” Qigong meditation. That means you will learn how to lead the Qi to the Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren and Du Mai, 任·督脈) to increase the Qi’s circulation to a more abundant level. These two vessels regulate and govern the Qi circulation in the twelve primary Qi channels, which can condition the physical body, in the process of “Muscle/Tendon Changing” (Yi Jin, 易筋) Qigong. Remember, only if you have a healthy and long-lived physical life, can you have enough time for your spiritual cultivation. We will discuss the training of “Small Circulation” meditation in a separate book which will be available in the near future.
- 2. Grand Circulation** (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天). “Grand Cyclic Heaven” or simply “Grand Circulation” (Da Zhou Tian, 大周天) meditation includes: self-inner body grand circulation, dual Qi exchange grand circulation with a partner, and also Qi exchange grand circulation with nature. Self-inner body grand circulation includes how to lead the Qi to circulate in the twelve channels or to any part of the body. It also includes how to lead the Qi upward through the Thrusting Vessel for “brain washing” (Xi Sui, 洗髓) for spiritual enlightenment. The last process is the process of “refining the Qi and converting it into spirit” (Lian Qi Hua Shen, 練氣化神). In order to achieve this goal, you must first lead the Qi upward through the Thrusting Vessel. This process is called “refining the Qi to sublimate it” (Lian Qi Sheng Hua, 練氣昇華). We will discuss “Grand Circulation” meditation in a separate book.
- 3. Spiritual Enlightenment** (Shen Tong, 神通). In Buddhist and Daoist societies, the final goal of spiritual cultivation is the “unification of heaven and human” (Tian Ren He Yi, 天人合一). At this stage there is no differentiation between the natural spirit and human spirit. In this case, the human spirit will have its eternal life and will not have to re-enter the natural cycle of reincarnation (Bu Zai Lun Hui, 不再輪迴).
In order to reach this goal, you must first conceive a holy Spiritual Embryo in the Huang Ting (黃庭). When this embryo is matured, then you lead it up to the Upper Dan Tian to give birth to this Spiritual Embryo. In order

to do so, the “heaven eye” (Tian Yan, 天眼) (The Third Eye) must be re-opened, which allows the spiritual baby to be born. When this happens, since your spiritual energy will be re-attached to the natural spirit, you will suddenly understand all natural events, resume the capability of telepathy, and also see the possibilities of the future. This is the process of “spiritual enlightenment.” In order to reach this goal, you must first “refine the spirit and return it to the nihility” (Lian Shen Fan Xu, 練神返虛). This means you must get rid of human thinking, emotional bondage, and desires. You must be as truthful as nature. Only then can you expect the re-opening of The Third Eye.

However, in order to have an independent external spiritual life, you must train the spiritual baby and make it stronger. This includes the processes of “three years of nursing” (San Nian Bu Ru, 三年哺乳) and “nine years of facing the wall” (Jiu Nian Mian Bi, 九年面壁). These two processes also mean the process of “crushing the nihility” (Fen Sui Xu Kong, 粉碎虛空). Once the new spiritual life is strong and can be independent, then the physical will not mean anything any more. This is the final process of “unification of heaven and human.”

5.4 RECOVERY FROM THE MEDITATIVE STATE 靜坐後之恢復

When you meditate, once your conscious mind decides to wake up and return to normal activity, you must know how to handle it properly. If you do not know how to recover from your meditative state properly, you may experience headache (mental imbalance) or some physical tightness, especially in the spine. Correct recovery methods can prevent or remove any Qi stagnation that occurs during meditation. Therefore, how to recover from the meditative state remains one of the most important parts of meditation.

The methods of recovering from the meditative state are both mental and physical. The trick of recovery is to reverse the normal regulating procedures for meditation. This means first regulating your mind, next your breathing, and finally your body. Next, the general methods of recovery that have been passed down and gained through my personal experience will be introduced.

Regulate the Mind, Qi, and Breathing. The first step of recovery from your meditation is to continue keeping your mind calm. Slowly awaken from your semi-sleeping or semi-hypnotic state. It seems that you have just woken up from a deep sleep, yet your conscious mind is still in control.

Second, if you know skin-marrow breathing very well, you may practice a few minutes of skin-marrow breathing. Try to exhale longer than you inhale. This will lead the Qi to the skin surface and arouse the physical body from the sleeping state.

Third, move your mind to the Upper Dan Tian (or the third eye) and relocate

your spiritual center. Sit there for a couple of minutes. When you do this mentally, you will have woken yourself up completely and comfortably.

Remember, when you recover from your meditative state mentally, you should not resist and speed up. You should take it easy, be natural and comfortable. From this, you will obtain a great level of mental satisfaction in peace and harmony.

Regulate the Body. After you have brought your mind to the real world, you should next regulate your body and recover it from the semi-sleeping state. In addition, through correct movement, you should also learn how to disperse the stagnant Qi that may be caused from a long sitting position or an improper sitting posture. Next, some effective recovering movements and stretching will be introduced.

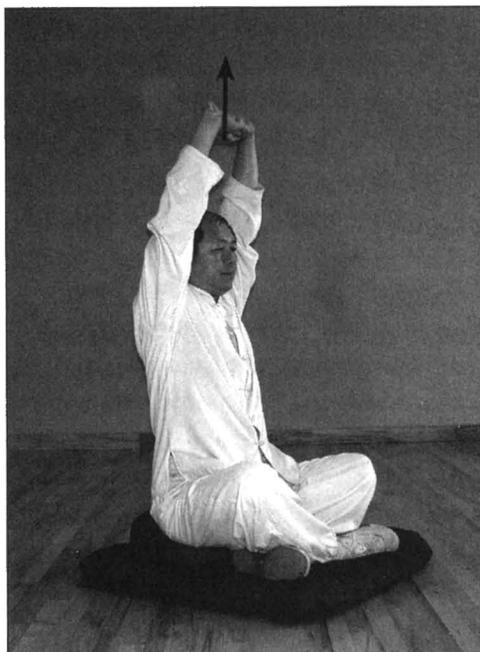


Figure 5-16. Upward Torso Stretching

- 1. Upward Torso Stretching.** The first step of the recovery of your body is stretching your torso. Simply interlock your hands and then push upward (Figure 5-16). This action is very similar to waking up and lifting your arms to stretch yourself. From this upward pushing, you are able to untie any possible locking of the torso or spine caused by a long time sitting. After your hands have reached the highest position, stay there, inhale deeply and then exhale. Finally, inhale again and lower your arms. Repeat twice more.



Figure 5-17. Sideways Torso Twisting

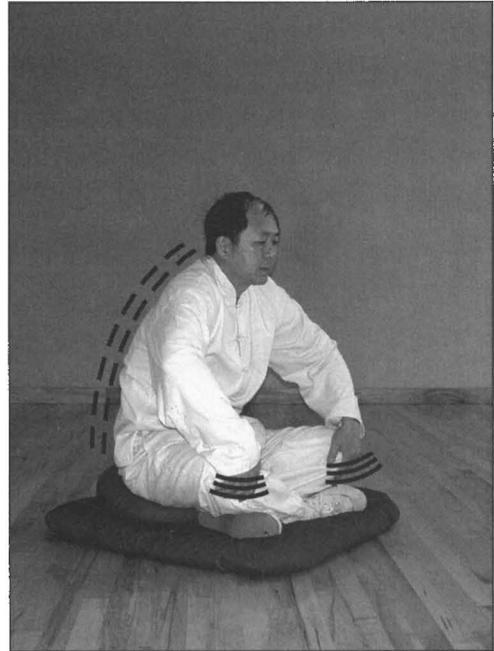


Figure 5-18. Spine Waving

2. **Sideways Torso Twisting.** After you have completed the upward stretching, you should next twist your torso to stretch it sideways. When you do this, simply turn your body to your left first and use your right hand to pull your left thigh while pushing your left shoulder backward (Figure 5-17). Stay in this position, inhale and then exhale. Next, twist to the other side.

3. **Spine Waving.** After you have completed the upward and sideways stretching of the torso, loosen your vertebrae, section by section, from the sacrum upward to the neck. To do this, place both your hands on the knees and use the pulling of the hands to generate the waving spine motion (Figure 5-18). When you begin to pull, the lower torso is thrusting forward, and you should inhale deeply at this time. When the waving motion has reached the upper spine, you should exhale. You should move the spine comfortably and naturally. This waving spine movement is the spine action of a sigh. That means when you are depressed and feel a great emotion is stuck in your body, you generally inhale deeply and generate a waving motion from the lower back. When the motion reaches the upper torso, you exhale and make the “Hen” sound. This is the most natural torso movement that allows you to relax the torso and release any possible emotional energy. Therefore, it is used for the torso relaxation movement.

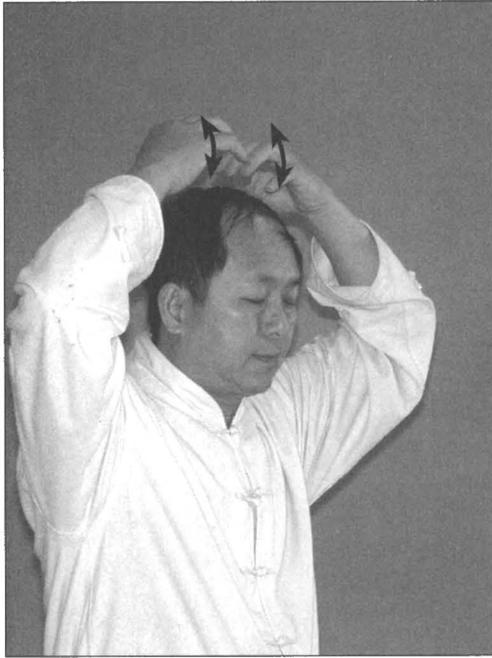


Figure 5-19. Tap the Head

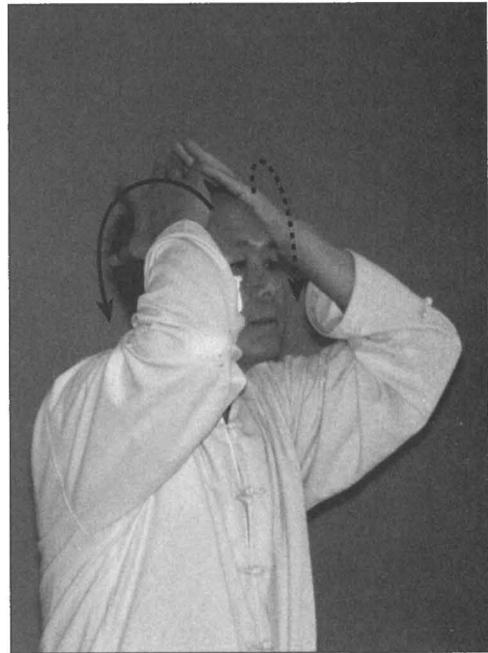


Figure 5-20. Brush the Hair

- 4. Tap the Head.** Next, use the fingertips to tap your head from the front backward and from the center to the sides for a few minutes (Figure 5-19). This tapping action will lead the accumulated Qi inside the head to the skin surface. After tapping, then use both your hands to brush your head lightly from the front backward (Figure 5-20).
- 5. If Necessary, Walk for a Couple of Minutes.** After you have finished the above recovery massaging and exercises, if you wish, you may walk or simply lie down to rest for a few minutes.

Conclusion 結論

Before finishing this book, I would like to summarize a few important points:

1. The earliest record of Embryonic Breathing is from *Dao De Jing* (*Classic on the Virtue of the Dao*) (道德經) written by Lao Zi (老子) (604-531 B.C.). As a matter of fact, this is the origin of the entire Embryonic Breathing. This origin offers the clear concept of the training and the essence of Dao in scholar Daoism (Dao Xue, 道學). This concept was studied and practiced and became one of the most important and essential practices of Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) (Internal Elixir) practice.
2. From the number of documents about Embryonic Breathing existing today, we can see how important and essential this practice is to the Internal Elixir Qigong. Most of the documents were hidden in Buddhist and Daoist monasteries in the past. It was not until the last few decades that almost all of the documents were revealed to the public.
3. Though the theory behind these documents is not hard to understand, it is extremely hard to practice, especially the part concerning cultivation of human temperament. That means the cultivation of human nature which allows us to find the root and the meaning of human origin. This is especially difficult in today's societies.
4. This book has provided you with a scientific viewpoint both in theory and practice. Many people believe that it is impossible to learn from a book, which is sometimes true, depending upon the individual. In order for you to get to the right path of practice, it is extremely important to study and understand the theory. When you understand the theory, it is just like having a map, and being able to read it. In this case, you will not need a teacher to direct you step by step. The teacher will only show you the direction and offer you his personal experience.
5. You must read the documents translated and commented in Chapter 3 repeatedly. Remember, each document is just a road sign to direct you to the right path of training. Nevertheless, you must always place a question mark in each one of them. Always question whether it makes logical sense. How much can you trust this article? You should know that each document

or book you read, each statement or a saying of a person, is only that person's personal opinion. They are for your reference, not to believe blindly. Which, naturally, includes this book. Therefore, you must learn to be wise and make a logical judgement. Then ponder and practice it cautiously. In no time, you will see the practice clearly.

After you practice Embryonic Breathing for a period of time, you will discover that it seems there is another world (spiritual world) which other regular people cannot reach. This world has not yet been understood by today's science. If you are able to get involved in this practice, you will become a pioneer of the study and practice of spiritual science. Compared to material science which has been developed today, spiritual science still lags far behind. This is why we have encountered the most serious crises and challenges today. On one hand we have developed the material science which is able to destroy the entire world, while on the other, we still don't know how to control human desires and temperament.

Western spiritual science and understanding, in my personal opinion, lags far beyond the development of the East. This is simply because of the involvement of Western religion in politics. Glory, dignity, and wealth have become the major concerns in Western religious society. For this reason, those people who had natural inborn spiritual feelings and capabilities were accused of being witches and burned to death.

In China, the situation was very different. Spiritual people would usually hide themselves in the mountains for spiritual cultivation. Many of them would write down their experiences, and these writings have been passed down to us. Commonly, when those spiritually talented people were found, Chinese said they had the affinity of the Buddha (Fo Yuan, 佛緣) or Dao (Dao Yuan, 道緣). These people were usually sent to the monasteries for further training.

I sincerely believe that in order to promote human spiritual science further, the first priority is to translate the existing ancient documents written by experienced spiritual practitioners. However, there are very many documents now available to society. I have realized that even though I have spent the last forty years to collect them, study them, and interpret them, all my effort has only contributed possibly 0.1% to the entire study. To expedite the spiritual study, we will need a huge non-profit organization with funds to translate these documents, which can thus allow the general public to study and practice them.

Translation and Glossary of Chinese Terms

中文術語之翻譯與解釋

Ai 哀 Sorrow.

Ai 愛 Love, kindness.

An Lu 安爐 “To install a furnace,” implying the establishment of abundant Qi at the Real Lower Dan Tian in this book. In order to do so, you must know the method of Embryonic Breathing.

An Mo 按摩 Literally: press rub. Together they mean massage.

An Tian Le Ming 安天樂命 “Peace with heaven and delight in your destiny.”

Ba Duan Jin 八段錦 Eight Pieces of Brocade. A Wai Dan Qigong (外丹氣功) practice which is said to have been created by Marshal Yue, Fei (岳飛) during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1280 A.D.) (南宋)

Ba Fang 八方 “Eight directions,” implying the space or air around us.

Ba Mai 八脈 Referred to as the Eight Extraordinary Vessels. These eight vessels are considered to be Qi reservoirs, which regulate the Qi status in the primary Qi channels.

Bai He 白鶴 White Crane. A well-known southern Chinese martial style which originated in the Shaolin Temple (少林寺).

Bagua (Ba Gua or Ba Kua) 八卦 Literally, “Eight Divinations.” Also called the Eight Trigrams. In Chinese philosophy, the eight basic variations; shown in the *Yi Jing* (易經) (*Book of Change*) as groups of single and broken lines.

Baguazhang (Ba Kua Zhang) 八卦掌 Eight Trigrams Palm. One of the internal martial styles, believed to have been created by Dong, Hai-Chuan (董海川) between 1866 and 1880 A.D.

Bai Ri Zhu Ji 百日築基 One Hundred Days to Build the Foundation. In *Yi Jin Jing* (易筋經) and *Xi Sui Jing* (洗髓經), the training of the first hundred days is the most important because you lay the foundation for further progress.

- Baihui (Gv-20)** 百會 Literally, “hundred meeting.” An important acupuncture cavity located on the top of the head. The Baihui cavity belongs to the Governing Vessel (Du Mai, 督脈).
- Bao** 抱 Can be translated as embrace, hold together, stick together, enfold, harbor, or cherish.
- Bao Yi** 抱一 Embracing (i.e. maintaining) a state of singularity (singleness). It means to keep the spirit (or mind) and Qi at the central energy line and later unify the spirit and Qi together at the Real Lower Dan Tian.
- Bao-Xi (2852-2737 B.C.)** 包羲 An ancient ruler of China.
- Bi Hu** 閉戶 Also called “Mi Hu” (密戶) and means “the closed door,” implying the Mingmen (Gv-4) (命門) cavity between L2 and L3.
- Bian Que** 扁鵲 A well-known physician who wrote the book, *Nan Jing* (難經) (*Classic on Disorders*) during the Chinese Qin and Han Dynasties (255 B.C.-220 A.D., 秦·漢).
- Bo Yang** 伯陽 A nickname of Lao Zi (老子). Lao Zi was also called Li Er (李耳) or Lao Dan (老聃).
- Bu Tiao Er Tiao** 不調而調 “Regulating without regulating.” This implies that when regulating is no longer necessary, all of the regulating processes will naturally cease. This is the stage of Wuwei (無為), or “doing nothing.”
- Bu Zai Lun Hui** 不再輪迴 “Will not re-enter the natural cycle of reincarnation.” According to Buddhist philosophy, once you have reached a stage of spiritual enlightenment, your spirit will not have to reincarnate. This spirit will have eternal life.
- Cai Yao** 採藥 “Picked up the herb.” A term used in Daoist Qigong practice that means to receive the generated Qi.
- Cha Nu** 姤女 The shy lady (i.e. mother), implying Qi.
- Chan** 禪 Practices which are related or associated with Buddhism, including the cultivation, the refinement, and pursuing the study of Buddhahood. “Chan” is also a Buddhist term for “meditation” and means to regulate the Xin until it is calm and steady. “Chan” is called “Zen” (忍) in Japan and also means a Chinese school of Mahayana Buddhism that asserts enlightenment can be attained through meditation, self-contemplation, and intuition.
- Chang** 常 “The natural constant routines or patterns.”
- Chang Chuan (Changquan)** 長拳 “Long range fist” or “long sequence.” Chang Chuan includes all northern Chinese long range martial styles. Taijiquan is also called Chang Chuan simply because its sequence is long.

- Chen 塵** “Dust,” which implies the dirty mind generated from the seven emotions and six desires.
- Chen Shi 塵世** The laymen society is called “Chen Shi,” meaning a “dust world” which is filled with emotional disturbances.
- Chen Tu 塵土** Dust. According to Buddhism, the laymen society which is filled with emotions and desires is considered as “emotional mud” or “dust.”
- Cheng Fo 成佛** Achieving Buddhahood is called “Cheng Fo.”
- Cheng, Gin-Gsao (1911-1976) 曾金灶** Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming’s White Crane master.
- Chi (Qi) 氣** The general definition of Qi is: universal energy, including heat, light, electromagnetic energy, and any other type of energy. A narrower definition of Qi refers to the energy (i.e., bioelectricity) circulating in human or animal bodies.
- Chi Kung (Qigong) 氣功** The Gongfu (功夫) of Qi, which means the study of Qi.
- Chi Lao Huan Ji Yun Dong 遲老返機運動** Slowing of aging and returning the function exercises. It means those Qigong practices which are able to slow down the aging process and return the practitioner to a healthy state.
- Chin (Qin) 擒** ”To catch” or “to seize.”
- Chin Na (Qin Na) 擒拿** Literally, “seize control.” A type of Chinese Gongfu which emphasizes grabbing techniques to control the opponent’s joints in conjunction with attacking certain acupuncture cavities. One of the main fighting categories in Chinese martial arts. These four categories are: kicking (Ti, 踢), striking (Da, 打), wrestling (Shuai, 摔), and controlling (Qin Na, 擒拿).
- Chong Mai 衝脈** Thrusting Vessel. One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.
- Chu Gou 芻狗** Chu Gou were sacrificial dogs which were made from straw and used for ceremonies of worship in ancient China.
- Chun Qiu 春秋** Spring and Autumn Period. One of the Chinese warring periods (722-484 B.C.).
- Confucius (551-479 B.C.) 孔子** A Chinese scholar, during the Spring and Autumn Period (722-484 B.C.), whose philosophy has significantly influenced Chinese culture.
- Cun 寸** Chinese measurement of length. One cun of Chinese length approximately equals one-third of a decimeter.
- Cun Shen 存神** “To retain the Shen” at its residence.
- Da Dan 大丹** Great Elixir. Means the Qi is led upward to the brain for enlightenment training in meditation.

Da Dao 大道 Great Dao. Means “great nature.”

Da Ding 大定 Great steadiness. Implies a very high level of steadiness both in mind and physical body.

Da Ding Lu 大鼎爐 Large tripod and furnace. The final stage of conceiving a Spiritual Embryo at the Huang Ting (黃庭) cavity is to unite the Shen in the head with the Qi at the Huang Ting. Head is a tripod while Huang Ting is a furnace.

Da Fan 大返 Great returning, meaning to “return the human temperament to the natural state.”

Da Mo 達磨 The Indian Buddhist monk who is credited with creating the *Yi Jin Jing* (易筋經) and *Xi Sui Jing* (洗髓經) while at the Shaolin monastery (少林寺) during the Liang Dynasty (梁朝) (502-557 A.D.). His last name was Chadili (剎地利), and he was also known as Bodhidharma. He was once the prince of a small tribe in southern India.

Da Qiao 搭橋 To build a bridge. Refers to the Qigong practice of touching the roof of the mouth with the tip of the tongue to form a bridge or link between the Governing and Conception Vessels (Ren-Du Mai, 任·督脈)

Da Sheng 大乘 Great conveyance. A high level of Buddhist study.

Da Zhou Tian 大周天 Literally, “Grand Cyclic Heaven.” Usually translated “Grand Circulation” and called “Macrocosmic Meditation” in Indian Yoga. After a Nei Dan Qigong practitioner completes Small Circulation (Xiao Zhou Tian, 小周天), he will circulate his Qi through the entire body or exchange Qi with nature.

Da Zuo 打坐 Meditation is called “Da Zuo” in Daoism which means “engaging sitting.”

Dai Mai 帶脈 Girdle (or Belt) Vessel. One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.

Dai Mai Xi 帶脈息 Girdle Vessel Breathing. Also known as Skin Breathing (Fu Xi, 膚息) or Body Breathing (Ti Xi, 體息)

Dan 丹 “Elixir.”

Dan Ding Dao Gong 丹鼎道功 The Elixir Cauldron Way of Qigong. Daoist Qigong training.

Dan Lu 丹爐 Elixir Furnace. Abdominal area (False Lower Dan Tian) which is able to produce elixir.

Dan Tian 丹田 Literally: Elixir Field. Locations in the body which are able to store and generate Qi (elixir) in the body. The Upper, Middle, and Lower Dan Tians are located respectively between the eyebrows (brain), at the lower section of the sternum (Jiuwei, Co-15, 鳩尾), and a few inches below the navel.

Dan Tian Hu Xi 丹田呼吸 Dan Tian Breathing.

Dao 道 The “way,” by implication the “natural way.”

Dao De Jing 道德經 *Classic on the Virtue of the Dao*. Written by Lao Zi (老子) during the Zhou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) (周朝)

Dao Jia (Dao Jiao) 道家 [道教] The Dao family. Daoism. Created by Lao Zi (老子) during the Zhou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) (周朝). In the Han Dynasty (c. 58 A.D.) (漢朝), it was mixed with Buddhism to become the Daoist religion (Dao Jiao) (道教)

Dao Jia Hu Xi 道家呼吸 Daoist Breathing.

Dao Jiao 道教 Dao religion created by Zhang, Dao-Ling (張道陵) who combined the traditional Daoist principles with Buddhism during the Chinese Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.) (東漢)

Dao Wai Cai Yao 道外採藥 To pick up the herb outside of the Dao (道). A Daoist Qigong training.

Dao Xue 道學 Scholar Daoism. Its philosophical foundation is “Dao De Jing” written by Lao Zi. Dao Xue is different from Dao Jiao (道教) (i.e. Dao religion) which was created by Zhang, Dao-Ling (張道陵) who combined the traditional Daoist principles with Buddhism during the Chinese Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.) (東漢)

Dao Yin 導引 Direct-lead. Another name of “Qigong.”

Dao Yuan 道緣 “The affinity of the Dao,” implying that a person has a pre-birth relationship associated with the Dao.

De 德 The manifestation of the Dao or the activities (actions) of nature.

Di 地 The Earth. Earth (Di, 地), Heaven (Tian, 天) and Man (Ren, 人) are the “Three Natural Powers” (San Cai, 三才)

Di 蒂 The stalk of a fruit or flower, connecting to the root of life.

Di Li Shi 地理師 Di Li (地理) means “geomancy” and Shi (師) means “teacher.” Therefore Di Li Shi is a teacher or master who analyzes geographic locations according to the formulas in the *Yi Jing* (易經) (*Book of Change*) and the energy distributions in the Earth. Also called Feng Shui Shi (風水師)

Di Wu Xin Hu Xi 第五心呼吸 “Fifth Gate Breathing” is also called “Baihui Breathing” (百會呼吸) or “Upper Dan Tian Breathing” (Shang Dan Tian Hu Xi, 上丹田呼吸)

Dian Mai 點脈 Mai means “the blood vessel” (Xue Mai, 血脈) or “the Qi channel” (Qi Mai, 氣脈). Dian Mai means “to press the blood vessel or Qi channel.”

Dian Qi 電氣 Dian means “electricity” and so Dian Qi means “electrical energy” (electricity). In China, a word is often placed before “Qi” to identify the different kinds of energy.

Dian Xue 點穴 Dian means “to point and exert pressure” and Xue means “cavities.” Qin Na (Chin Na) (擒拿) techniques that specialize in attacking acupuncture cavities to immobilize or kill an opponent.

Dian Xue Massages 點穴按摩 One of Chinese massage techniques in which the acupuncture cavities are stimulated through pressing. Dian Xue massage is also called acupresure and is the root of Japanese Shiatsu.

Ding 定 “To stabilize” or “to firm.” The goal is to reach the steadiness, the firmness of the body, the mind, and the spirit.

Ding Shen 定神 To stabilize the spirit. To keep the spirit at one place (usually the Shang Dan Tian located at The Third Eye). One of the exercises for regulating the Shen (神) (spirit) in Qigong.

Dong Fang 洞房 The space between the two eyebrows, two inches inward is called “Dong Fang.”

Dong Han 東漢 A Chinese dynasty during the period from 25-220 A.D.

Dong Mian Xi 冬眠息 Hibernation breathing.

Dou Niu 斗牛 “Big Dipper,” which implies the process of condensing the Shen at the Upper Dan Tian.

Du Mai 督脈 Usually translated “Governing Vessel.” One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.

Emei 峨嵋 Name of a mountain in Sichuan Province (四川), China.

Fan 返 Return. Means to return your breathing to its natural way.

Fan Fu Hu Xi 反腹呼吸 Reverse abdominal breathing. One of the Qigong breathing methods. Also called “Fan Hu Xi” (反呼吸) (reverse breathing) or “Daoist breathing.”

Fan Hu Xi 反呼吸 Reverse breathing. Also commonly called “Daoist Breathing.”

Fan Hu Xi (Ni Hu Xi) 反呼吸·逆呼吸 Reverse Breathing. Also commonly called Daoist Breathing.

Fan Jing Bu Nao 返精補腦 A special Daoist Qigong terminology which means “to return the Jing to nourish the brain.”

Fan Tong 返童 Back to childhood. A training in Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) through which the practitioner tries to regain control of the muscles of the lower abdomen.

Fan Tong Hu Xi 返童呼吸 Back to childhood breathing. A breathing training in Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) through which the practitioner tries to regain control of the muscles in the lower abdomen. Also called “abdominal breathing.”

- Fei Sheng** 飛升 Spiritual ascending. Means the separation of the spiritual body and the physical body.
- Fen** 分 Chinese measurement of length. One Fen approximately equals one-third of a centimeter.
- Fen Sui Xu Kong** 粉碎虛空 To crush the nothingness. One of the Daoist training processes for enlightenment wherein the illusion which connects the physical world and the spiritual plane is destroyed.
- Fen Xiang** 焚香 Burning incense.
- Feng** 風 Wind.
- Feng Shui** 風水 Literally, “wind-water.”
- Feng Shui Shi** 風水師 Literally, “wind water teacher.” Teacher or master of geomancy. Geomancy is the art or science of analyzing the natural energy relationships in a location, especially the interrelationships between “wind” and “water,” hence the name. Also called Di Li Shi (地理師)
- Fo Jia (Fo Jiao)** 佛家 (佛教) Literally, Buddhism family. Jiao means religion. Therefore, the Buddhist Religion.
- Fo Jia Hu Xi** 佛家呼吸 Buddhist breathing. Implies “normal abdominal breathing.”
- Fo Yuan** 佛緣 Affinity for Buddhahood.
- Fu Sheng** 浮生 Literally, “floating life.” The life is just like a floating duckweed without a root.
- Fu Shi Hu Xi** 腹式呼吸 Literally, “abdominal way of breathing.” As you breathe, you use the muscles in the lower abdominal area to control the diaphragm. It is also called “back to (the) childhood breathing.”
- Fu Sui Xi** 膚髓息 Skin and marrow breathing.
- Fu Xi** 腹息 Abdominal breathing.
- Fu Xi** 膚息 Skin breathing. One of the Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) breathing practices.
- Gao, Tao** 高濤 Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming’s first Taijiquan master.
- Gao Wan Yun Dong** 睪丸運動 Testicle exercises. Qigong exercises.
- Gen Ji** 根基 Foundations.
- Gong (Kung)** 功 Energy or hard work.
- Gong** 汞 Mercury. Mercury and lead are terms commonly used in Daoist society. Lead and mercury were used in Daoist alchemy to adjust the Yin and Yang of the elixir.

Gongfu (Kung Fu) 功夫 Literally: energy-time. Any study, learning, or practice which requires a lot of patience, energy, and time to complete. Since practicing Chinese martial arts requires a great deal of time and energy, Chinese martial arts are commonly called Gongfu.

Gu 固 “To solidify and to firm.”

Gu Jing 固精 To solidify the Essence. A Qigong exercise for keeping and firming the Essence.

Gu Qi Feng 古奇峰 Name of a mountain located in Xinzhu, Taiwan (臺灣·新竹).

Gu Shen 谷神 Valley Spirit.

Gu Shen 固神 Gu means to firm and solidify. An exercise for regulating the Shen (神) in which you firm and strengthen the spirit at its residence.

Guan 觀 “To look,” “to observe,” or “to pay attention.” “Look” here means to feel and to sense.

Guan Xin 觀心 Observing the Xin. Implies to pay attention to the activities of the emotional mind.

Guan Yuan 關元 Key Origin. Different name of the Lower Dan Tian, where the Pre-Birth Qi (Original Qi) is converted from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精)

Guan Zhi 觀止 Means the observation is stopped and is no longer necessary. Once you have regulated your emotional mind, then no more regulating is necessary. Therefore, the observation of the Xin will naturally stop.

Gui 癸 Implies “kidneys” and means the production of the Original Essence (i.e. hormone).

Gui 鬼 Ghost. When you die, if your spirit is strong, your soul’s energy will not decompose and return to nature. This soul energy is a ghost.

Gui Qi 鬼氣 The Qi residue of a dead person. It is believed by the Chinese Buddhists and Daoists that this Qi residue is a so-called ghost.

Gui Xi 龜息 Turtle breathing. In Chinese Qigong society, it is believed that a turtle is able to live for a long time because it knows how to breathe slow and deep. Through this breathing, the Qi can be led to the surface of the skin and to the marrow efficiently.

Guoshu (Kuoshu) 國術 Literally: national techniques. It is an abbreviation of “Zhongguo Wushu” (中國武術) which means “Chinese Martial Techniques.” Another name for Chinese martial arts. First used by President Chiang, Kai-Shek (蔣介石) in 1928 at the rounding of the Nanjing Central Guoshu Institute (南京中央國術館).

Haidi 海底 Means “Sea Bottom.” This is a name given by martial artists to the Huiyin cavity (Co-1) (會陰) in Chinese medicine. Perineum.

Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) 漢 A dynasty in Chinese history.

Han, Ching-Tang 韓慶堂 A well-known Chinese martial artist, especially in Taiwan in the last forty years. Master Han is also Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming's Long Fist grandmaster.

He 和 Harmony or peace.

Hen 恨 Hate.

Hen 哼 A Yin Qigong sound that is the opposite of the Yang Ha (哈) sound. This sound is commonly used to lead the Qi inward and to store it in the bone marrow. This sound can also be used for an attack when the manifestation of only partial power is desired. Hen is one of the two sounds commonly used in Taijiquan.

Hou Tian Qi 後天氣 “Post-Birth Qi” or “Post-Heaven Qi.” This Qi is converted from the Essence of food and air and is classified as “fire Qi” since it can make your body too Yang.

Hu 虎 Tiger.

Hua Tuo 華佗 A well-known physician during the Chinese Jin Dynasty (晉) in the 3rd century A.D.

Huan Jing Bu Nao 還精補腦 Literally, to return the Essence to nourish the brain. A Daoist Qigong training process wherein Qi which has been converted from Essence is lead to the brain to nourish it.

Huang Po 黃婆 “Old yellow lady.” Means the “match-maker” who brings the Yin (female) and Yang (male) together.

Huang Tang 黃堂 Different name of The Middle Dan Tian.

Huang Ting 黃庭 Literally, “yellow yard.” It implies the area called “Jade Ring” (Yu Huan, 玉環) in Daoist society. The area is located at the solar plexus. In Daoist Qigong, Huang Ting is the place where Fire Qi and Water Qi are mixed to generate a spiritual embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎). Huang Ting has also implied The Middle Dan Tian.

Hui 慧 “Intelligence” or “wisdom” through pondering, analyzing, and comprehension so you are able to handle millions of events without being confused.

Huiyin (Co-1) 會陰 Literally, “meet yin.” An acupuncture cavity belonging to the Conception Vessel located at the perineum area.

Hun 魂 The soul. Commonly used with the word Ling (靈), which means spirit. Daoists believe that a human being's Hun (魂) and Po (魄) originate with his Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣), and separate from the physical body at death.

Huo Qi 火氣 Fire Qi (Post-Heaven Qi). Qi from the Middle Dan Tian, which tends to make the body positive or Yang.

Huo Qi 活氣 Living Qi or vital Qi. When something is alive it has “vital Qi.”

Huo Zi Shi 活子時 Alive Zi timing. Special timings adequate for meditation.

Ji Xing 積行 Accumulate good deeds. Implies doing good things for others.

Jia Xia Dan Tian 假下丹田 False Lower Dan Tian. Daoists believe that the Lower Dan Tian located on the front side of the abdomen is not the real Dan Tian. The Real Lower Dan Tian corresponds to the physical center of gravity. The False Lower Dan Tian is called Qihai (Co-6) (氣海) (Qi ocean) in Chinese medicine.

Jiang Gong 絳宮 Crimson Palace. The space under the heart. A different name of the Middle Dan Tian. Often it is used as an alternative name of the “heart” (Xin, 心). The Middle Dan Tian provides you with Post-birth Qi converted from food and air.

Jie 界 “World, boundaries, circles, and societies.”

Jie Tai 結胎 Conceive the embryo.

Jie Tuo 解脫 Self-liberation from spiritual bondage.

Jin 金 Metal. One of the Five Elements (Wu Xing, 五行) and implies lungs.

Jin Dan 金丹 Golden Elixir. Implies precious Qi.

Jin Dan Da Dao 金丹大道 Golden Elixir Large Way. Major Daoist Qigong training in which the elixir is produced in the body through training, and later used to extend life.

Jin Dian 金殿 Also called “Jin Shi” (金室) and means “Golden Palace” and implies “lungs.” It also often implies “the brain.”

Jin Gong 金公 “Golden Male,” which implies “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精)

Jin Guan 金關 “Golden Gate,” which implies “Upper Dan Tian.”

Jin Niao 金鳥 “Golden Bird.” Implies “Original Spirit” (Yuan Shen, 元神)

Jin Pin 金品 “Golden Material.” Implies “Spiritual Embryo.”

Jin Que 金闕 Golden Palace. The space under the heart. A different name of the Middle Dan Tian.

Jin Shi 金室 “Golden Residence.” Also called Jin Dian (金殿) and implies “the brain” (Upper Dan Tian) or “the lungs.”

Jin Ye 金液 “Golden Liquid,” which implies the generation of precious saliva during Enlightenment Grand Cyclic Heaven meditation.

Jin Zhong Zhao 金鐘罩 Literally, “Golden Bell Cover.” A higher level of Iron Shirt training.

Jin, Shao-Feng 金紹峰 Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's White Crane grand-master.

Jing 經 Channels. Sometimes translated as “meridians.” Refers to the twelve organ-related “rivers” which circulate Qi throughout the body.

Jing 靜 Calm and silent.

Jing 精 Essence. The most refined part of anything. What is left after something has been refined and purified. In Chinese medicine, Jing can mean semen, but it generally refers to the basic substance of the body which the Qi and Spirit enliven.

Jing Lian 精煉 To refine or purify a liquid to a high quality.

Jing Liang 精良 “Excellent quality” (literally “pure and good”)

Jing Ming 精明 “Keen and clever.”

Jing Qi 精氣 Essence Qi or semen Qi. The Qi which has been converted from Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精).

Jing Shen 精神 Essence-Spirit. Often translated as the “Spirit of Vitality.” Raised spirit (raised by the Qi which is converted from Essence), which is restrained by the Yi (意).

Jing Shi 精室 “Semen residence.” Implies the testicles.

Jing Xi 精細 Delicate and painstaking (literally, “pure and fine”)

Jing Zi 精子 Literally, “essence son.” The most refined part of human essence. The sperm.

Jing Zuo 靜坐 Meditation is commonly called “Jing Zuo” which means “sit quietly.”

Jiu Nian Mian Bi 九年面壁 Nine years of facing the wall. The last stage of the Xi Sui Jing (洗髓經) training for enlightenment or Buddhahood.

Ju Jing Hui Shen 聚精會神 “Gathering your Jing to meet your Shen.” That means concentration.

Jue Hai 覺海 “Awaken Ocean.” The conscious mind.

Jun Qing 君倩 A Daoist and Chinese doctor during the Chinese Jin Dynasty (265-420 A.D.) (晉) Jun Qing is credited as the creator of the Five Animal Sports (Wu Qin Xi, 五禽戲) Qigong practice.

Kai Qiao 開竅 Opening the tricky gate. In Qigong, opening the gate of the Upper Dan Tian.

Kai Tian Yan 開天眼 Literally, “opening the heaven eye,” and implies re-opening The Third Eye.

Kan 坎 One of the Eight Trigrams, meaning “water.”

Kan-Li 坎離 Kan represents “water” and Li represents “fire.” Kan-Li means to use water and fire to adjust the body’s Yin and Yang.

Kan-Li Jing Zuo 坎離靜坐 Kan-Li Meditation. It implies the Wind Path of meditation circulation.

Kong Men 空門 Literally “empty door.” Means the door leading you to the “Four Emptinesses” (Si Da Jie Kong, 四大皆空)

Kong Qi 空氣 The air is called “Kong Qi” which means “the Qi in space.”

Kongdong 崆峒 Name of a mountain. There are three Kongdong mountains, located at Henan (河南), Jiangxi (江西), and Gansu (甘肅) provinces.

Kou Chi 扣齒 Biting the teeth.

Kun 坤 One of the Eight Trigrams (Bagua, 八卦) Corresponds to Earth.

Kun Tu 坤土 “Kun” (坤) represents the earth (Tu) in the Eight Trigrams, that is why it is called “Kun Tu” (坤土)

Kung (Gong) 功 Means energy or hard work.

Kung Fu (Gongfu) 功夫 Literally “energy-time.” Any study, learning, or practice which requires a lot of patience, energy, and time to complete. Since practicing Chinese martial arts requires a great deal of time and energy, Chinese martial arts are commonly called Gongfu.

Kunlun 崑崙山 One of the highest mountains in the west of China.

La Ma 喇嘛 Tibetan priests are called Lamas.

Lao Dan 老聃 Nickname of Lao Zi (老子) Lao Zi was also called Li Er (李耳) or Bo Yang (伯陽)

Lao Jun 老君 Means Lao Zi. Lao Jun is the name given by Daoist followers.

Lao Zi (604-531 B.C.) 老子 The creator of Daoism, also called Li Er (李耳) or Lao Dan (老聃), by his nickname, Bo Yang (伯陽)

Laogong (P-8) 勞宮 “Labor’s Palace.” Cavity name. On the Pericardium Primary Qi Channel in the center of the palm.

Le 樂 Joy or happiness.

Lei 雷 Thunder.

Li 離 One of the Eight Trigrams (Bagua, 八卦) Corresponds to Fire.

Li Er 李耳 Nickname of Lao Zi (老子), also called Lao Dan (老聃), or Bo Yang (伯陽)

- Li, Mao-Ching** 李茂清 Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's Long Fist master.
- Li, Shi-Zhen (1518-1593 A.D.)** 李時珍 A well-known Chinese physician and Qigong master who wrote a book about the eight Qi vessels, *Qi Jing Ba Mai Kao* (奇經八脈考) (*The Study of Strange Meridians and Eight Vessels*) in the 16th century.
- Lian 煉** “To refine” or “to purify” the Shen and Qi so the Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣) can be returned to its origin.
- Lian 練** To refine, to train, or to discipline.
- Lian Ji 煉己** “Train the self.” Means self-discipline.
- Lian Jing Hua Qi 練精化氣** To refine the Essence and convert it into Qi. One of the Qigong training processes through which you convert Essence into Qi.
- Lian Qi 練氣** Lian means “to train, to strengthen and to refine.” A Daoist training process through which your Qi grows stronger and more abundant.
- Lian Qi Hua Shen 練氣化神** To refine the Qi to nourish the spirit. Part of the Qigong training process in which you learn how to lead Qi to the head to nourish the brain and Shen (神) (spirit).
- Lian Qi Sheng Hua 練氣昇華** To train the Qi and sublimate. A Xi Sui Jing (洗髓經) training process by which the Qi is led to the Huang Ting (黃庭) or the brain.
- Lian Shen 練神** To train the spirit. To refine, strengthen, and focus the Shen.
- Lian Shen Fan Xu 練神返虛** To train the spirit to return to nothingness (i.e. freedom from emotional bondage). An advanced stage of enlightenment and Buddhahood training in which the practitioner learns how to lead his spirit to separate from his physical body.
- Lian Shen Liao Xing 練神了性** To refine the spirit and end human nature. The final stage of enlightenment training where you learn to keep your emotions neutral and try to be undisturbed by human nature.
- Liang (502-557 A.D.)** 梁 A dynasty in Chinese history.
- Liao 了** Implies “the end” or “the completion” of the cultivation.
- Liao Wu 了悟** “The end of comprehension.” Implies enlightenment.
- Ling 靈** 1. The spirit of being, which acts upon others. Ling only exists in highly spiritual animals such as humans and apes. It represents an emotional comprehension and understanding. When you are alive, it implies your intelligence and wisdom. When you die, it implies the spirit of the ghost. Ling also means divine or supernatural. Ling is often used together with Shen (Ling Shen, 靈神) to mean “supernatural spirit.” It is believed that Qi is the source which nourishes the Ling and is called “Ling Qi” (靈氣), meaning “supernatural energy, power, or force.” 2. Supernatural Shen is called “Ling.” “Ling”

describes someone who is sharp, clever, nimble, and able to quickly empathize with people and things. Ling can also be a supernatural psychic capability which allows you to communicate with nature or other spiritual beings. Often, Ling also means “Supernatural Inspiration” which allows you to comprehend and understand the changes or variations of nature.

Ling Feng 靈風 “Spiritual Wind.” Implies the flow of spiritual energy which passes through your body.

Ling Gu 靈谷 Divine Valley. Different name of the Lower Dan Tian.

Ling Guan 靈關 Spiritual Gate. Implies “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) between the two hemispheres of the brain, the residence of the spirit.

Ling Guang 靈光 Supernatural divine light.

Ling Gui 靈鬼 Means “spiritual ghost.”

Ling Hun 靈魂 Spiritual soul.

Ling Shan 靈山 “Spiritual Mountain.” A Buddhist term which is equivalent to the “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷) referred to in Daoist society.

Ling Shen 靈神 “Supernatural spirit” or “divine.”

Ling Tai 靈胎 Spiritual embryo.

Lingtai 靈臺 Means “Spiritual Platform or Station” and implies “Spiritual Valley” (Shen Gu, 神谷)

Ling Zhi 靈芝 *Canoderma lucidum*, a special herbal fungus. Ling Zhi (Fomes Japonica) is a hard, dark brownish fungus which is supposed to possess supernatural powers. In Qigong society, sometimes Ling Zhi means the elixir which enables you to have a long life.

Liu Gen 六根 Six Roots. Means the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and Yi (mind) which can generate emotions and desires.

Liu He Ba Fa 六合八法 Literally: six combinations eight methods. One of the Chinese internal martial arts; its techniques are combined from Taijiquan (太極拳), Xingyiquan (形意拳), and Baguazhang (八卦掌) This style of Chinese internal martial arts was reportedly created by Chen, Bo (陳搏) during the Song Dynasty (960-1280 A.D.) (宋朝).

Liu Men 六門 “Six Doors.” Implies the two eyes, the two ears, the nose, and mouth; the six sense organs.

Liu Qi 六氣 Means “Six Qis,” including the body’s Qi (air), blood, saliva, liquid, essence, and meridians (vessels). Sometimes “Liu Qi” implies the six different climates including wind, heat, damp, fire, dry, and cold.

Liu Qing 六情 A special Buddhist term which means “six compassions” derived or generated from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Liu Yu 六慾 Six Desires. The six desires (Liu Yu, 六慾) are the temptations generated from the six roots which are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind (Xin, 心).

Liu Zei 六賊 Six Thieves. Means: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and emotional mind which could disturb your feeling and increase your six desires (Liu Yu, 六慾).

Long 龍 Dragon.

Long Hu Jiao Gou 龍虎交媾 The intercourse of dragon and tiger. Implies the interaction of Yin and Yang.

Lower Dan Tian 下丹田 Lower Elixir Field.

Luo 絡 The small Qi channels which branch out from the primary Qi channels and are connected to the skin and to the bone marrow.

Ma 馬 Horse.

Mai 脈 Means “vessel” or “Qi channel.” The eight vessels involved with transporting, storing, and regulating Qi.

Mao 卯 One of the twelve Terrestrial Branches (Shi Er Di Zhi, 十二地支) (i.e. 5-7 A.M.).

Mencius (372-289 B.C.) 孟子 A well-known scholar who followed the philosophy of Confucius during the Chinese Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.) (Zhan Guo, 戰國).

Mi Hu 密戶 Also called “Bi Hu” (閉戶). Means “Concealed Door” which implies the Mingmen (Gv-4) (命門) cavity located between L2 and L3 vertebrae.

Mi Zong 密宗 (秘宗) Secret style. Tibetan Qigong is commonly called Mi Zong simply because it is not known by outside people.

Mian Bi 面壁 Face the wall.

Ming 命 The physical body is called “Ming,” which means “life.”

Ming 冥 Represents the Yin Space (Yin Jian, 陰間) (spiritual world) which is opposite to the Yang Space (Yang Jian, 陽間) of the material world.

Ming Di 命蒂 Life Stalk, the stalk connecting to the root of life.

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.) 明朝 A Chinese dynasty.

Ming Gen 命根 Life Root.

Ming Xin 冥心 Ming Xin means to keep the mind in the Yin world. “Yin world” (Yin Jian, 陰間) is the spiritual world where we go after death.

Ming Xin Jian Xing 明心見性 Understand your Xin so you can see your human temperament.

Mingmen (Gv-4) 命門 Means life door. An acupuncture cavity belonging to the Governing Vessel located on the lower back (between L2 and L3). Sometimes, it means the two kidneys in Qigong society. In Chinese martial arts, Mingmen means the area between the shoulder blades. Mingmen also implies the Lower Dan Tian.

Mingtang 明堂 The space between the two eyebrows, one inch inward is called “Mingtang.”

Mu 木 Wood. One of the five basic elements (Wu Xing, 五行) and implies liver.

Mu Mu 木母 Means “Wood Mother” and implies “liver” (Shen)

Mu Zi Xiang Yi 母子相依 “Mutual Dependence of Son and Mother.” “Son” represents “Shen” while “Mother” represents “Qi.”

Na 納 Means “to receive” and implies inhalation.

Nei 內 Internal.

Nei Dan 內丹 Internal Elixir. A form of Qigong in which Qi (the elixir) is built up in the body and spread out to the limbs.

Nei Dan Qigong 內丹氣功 Internal Elixir Qigong practice.

Nei Guan 內觀 “Internal Observation.” Implies pay attention to the inner body.

Nei Qi 內氣 Lower Level Qi, also called “Inner Qi” (Xia Ceng Qi, 下層氣)

Nei Shen 內腎 Literally, internal Kidneys. In Chinese medicine and Qigong, the real Kidneys; while Wai Shen (外腎) (external Kidneys) refers to the testicles or ovaries.

Nei Shi Gongfu 內視功夫 Nei Shi means “to look internally,” so Nei Shi Gongfu refers to the art of looking inside yourself to read the state of your health and the condition of your Qi.

Ni Fu Hu Xi 逆腹呼吸 Reverse Abdominal Breathing. Also called “Fan Fu Hu Xi” (反腹呼吸)

Ni Wan Gong 泥丸宮 Mud pill palace. The place where the Mud Pills reside. Qigong terminology for the brain. Mud pills imply pineal and pituitary glands.

Ning 凝 Means “to concentrate, to condense, to refine, to focus, and to strengthen.”

Ning Shen 凝神 To condense or focus on the spirit. In Qigong training, after you are able to keep your spirit in one place, you learn how to condense it into a tiny spot and make it stronger.

Nu 怒 Anger.

Peng, Zu 彭祖 A legendary Qigong practitioner during the period of emperor Yao (堯) (2356-2255 B.C.) who was said to have lived for 800 years.

Pin Chang Hu Xi 平常呼吸 Normal regular breathing.

Ping 平 Peace and harmony.

Po 魄 Vigorous life force. The Po is considered to be the inferior or animal soul. It is the animal or sentient life which is an innate part of the body which, at death, returns to the earth with the rest of the body. When someone is in high spirits and gets vigorously involved in some activity it is said he has Po Li (魄力), which means he has “vigorous strength or power.”

Po Li 魄力 When a person has strong, vital energy to accomplish something, it is called “Po Li,” and means “the strength of vigor.”

Qi (Chi) 氣 The general definition of Qi is: universal energy, including heat, light, and electromagnetic energy. A narrower definition of Qi refers to the energy circulating in human or animal bodies. A current popular model is that the Qi circulating in the human body is bioelectric in nature.

Qi An Mo 氣按摩 Qi massage. One of the high levels of massage techniques in which a massage doctor will use his or her Qi to remove the Qi stagnation in a patient’s body. Qi massage is also called “Wai Qi Liao Fa” (外氣療法) which means “healing with the external Qi.”

Qi Huo 起火 To start the fire. In Qigong practice, when you start to build up Qi at the Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田)

Qi Jing Ba Mai 奇經八脈 Literally, “strange (odd) channels eight vessels.” Usually referred to as the Eight Extraordinary Vessels or simply as the vessels. Called odd or strange because they are not well understood and some of them do not exist in pairs.

Qi Po 七魄 Means “Seven Vital Forces” which are related to the seven emotions (Qi Qing, 七情)

Qi Qing 七情 The seven emotions, which include happiness (Xi, 喜), anger (Nu, 怒), sorrow (Ai, 哀), joy (Le, 樂), love (Ai, 愛), hate (Hen, 恨), and lust (Yu, 慾)

Qi Qing Liu Yu 七情六慾 The seven passions and six desires. The seven passions are happiness (Xi, 喜), anger (Nu, 怒), sorrow (Ai, 哀), joy (Le, 樂), love (Ai, 愛), hate (Hen, 恨), and desire (Yu, 慾). The six desires are the six sensory pleasures derived from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Qi She 氣舍 “Qi’s Dwelling.” Implies the Real Lower Dan Tian.

Qi Shi 氣勢 Shi means the way something looks or feels. Therefore, the feeling of Qi as it expresses itself. For example, the spiritual state or morale of an army is called “energy state.”

Qi Yuan 七元 “Seven Origins.” Implies the original function of the seven orifices of eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, which are related to the five internal organs, liver, lungs, heart, spleen, and kidneys. Qi Yuan also means the original Qi level of the five internal organs.

Qi Xue 氣血 Literally, “Qi blood.” According to Chinese medicine, Qi and blood cannot be separated in our body and so the two words are commonly used together.

Qian 鉛 “Lead.” Lead and mercury are terms commonly used in Daoist society. Lead and mercury were used in Daoist alchemy to adjust the Yin and Yang of the elixir.

Qiangjian (Gv-18) 強間 An acupuncture cavity, belonging to the Governing Vessel.

Qiao 竅 Implies the changes or variations of nature.

Qigong (Chi Kung) 氣功 Gong (功) means Gongfu (功夫) (lit. energy-time). Therefore, Qigong means the study, research, and/or practices related to Qi.

Qihai (Co-6) 氣海 Means Qi ocean. An acupuncture cavity belonging to the Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) which is about one to two inches under the navel.

Qin and Han Dynasties (255 B.C.—220 A.D.) 秦、漢 Two dynasties in Chinese history.

Qin Na (Chin Na) 擒拿 Grasp and Control. An aspect of Chinese martial arts training, Qin Na specializes in controlling the enemy through “misplacing the joint” (Cuo Gu, 錯骨), “dividing the muscle” (Fen Jin, 分筋), “sealing the breath” (Bi Qi, 閉氣), and “cavity press” (Dian Xue, 點穴)

Qing Dynasty (1644-1912 A.D.) 清朝 A dynasty in Chinese history.

Qing Xiu Pai 清修派 Peaceful Cultivation Division. A branch of Daoist Qigong.

Qingcheng 青城 A mountain located in Sichuan Province (四川省)

Qiu 酉 One of the twelve Terrestrial Branches (i.e. 5-7 P.M.) (Shi Er Zhi, 十二支)

Qiu Yue 秋月 “The moon in the Fall.” Means the full moon, which implies the shining result of forming the Spiritual Embryo.

Qu Jiang 曲江 Means “Curved Rivers,” and implies “intestines” (Real Lower Dan Tian)

Re Qi 熱氣 “Re” means “warmth” or “heat.” Generally, Re Qi is used to represent heat Qi.

Ren 仁 Humanity, kindness or benevolence. When Dao and De are applied in human society, it is benevolence (Ren, 仁) and righteousness (Yi, 義)

Ren 人 Man or mankind. One of the Three Powers (San Cai, 三才) The Three Powers are Heaven (Tian, 天), Earth (Di, 地), and Man (Ren, 人)

Ren (Zen) 忍 Means “to endure.” The Japanese name of Chan.

Ren Mai 任脈 Conception Vessel. One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels in Chinese medicine and Qigong.

Ren Qi 人氣 Human Qi.

Ren Shi 人事 Literally, human relations. Human events, activities and relationships. **Ren Xian** 人仙 Means “human immortality.”

Ru Dao 入道 “Enter the Dao.” Means getting involved in Daoism study.

Ru Ding 入定 Entering the state of steadiness both mentally and physically.

Ru Jia 儒家 Literally, “Confucian family.” Scholars following Confucian thoughts; Confucianists.

Ru Mo 入魔 “Entering the devil.” Wrong feeling or mental perception can lead you into fascination, illusion, and imagination.

Ruan Quan 軟拳 Soft style. Taijiquan is a typical soft martial style.

Ruo Cun 若存 Means “as if it were existing.”

San 三 Three.

San Bao 三寶 Three treasures. Essence (Jing) (精), energy (Qi) (氣) and spirit (Shen) (神). Also called San Yuan (三元) (three origins)

San Ben 三本 The Three Foundations.

San Cai 三才 The “Three Powers”: Heaven (Tian, 天), Earth (Di, 地), and Man (Ren, 人)

San Chong 三蟲 Three Worms, also called “San Shi” (三尸) (Three Copses). These are: the worm of desire which likes treasure and precious things; the worm which likes the tastes, easily loses temper, despise those who are good and kind; and the worm that likes sex and makes one confused.

San Gong 散功 Literally, “energy dispersion.” A state of premature degeneration of the muscles where the Qi cannot effectively energize them. It can be caused by earlier overtraining.

San Guan 三關 Three Gates. Three obstacles in Small Circulation meditation practice. These three gates are: Weilu (尾閭) (i.e. tailbone), Jiaji (夾脊) (i.e. Squeeze Spine between shoulder blades), and Yuzhen (玉枕) (i.e. jade pillow).

San Guan 三觀 Three observations, including: 1. Observing Emptiness—to observe the emptiness of all natural laws and events; 2. Observing Falseness—to observe the falseness of all natural laws; 3. Observing Between.

- San Hua Ju Ding** 三花聚頂 Three flowers reach the top. One of the final goals of Qigong whereby the three treasures (Essence, Qi, and Shen) (精·氣·神) are led to the top of the body to nourish the brain and spirit center (Upper Dan Tian) (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田).
- San Jiao** 三教 Means three schools. The three schools are Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.
- San Jie** 三界 Three worlds and implies the laymen matrix. These three worlds are: 1. The world of desires (for sex and food); 2. The world of colors (material world); 3. The world of no color (generated from extreme calmness through the meditation).
- San Nian Bu Ru** 三年哺乳 Three years of nursing.
- San Qi Gui Yuan** 三氣歸元 The “three Qi’s” (essence, Qi, and spirit) all return to their origins.
- San Shi** 三尸 Three Corpses, also called “San Chong” (三蟲) (Three Worms). Three Corpses are the three desires which could lead you to your death. They are the temptations of money, taste (food) and sex.
- San Yuan** 三元 Three origins. Also called “San Bao” (三寶) (three treasures). Human Essence (Jing, 精), energy (Qi, 氣) and spirit (Shen, 神).
- Shang Ceng Qi** 上層氣 Means “Upper Level Qi.” Also called “Wai Qi” (外氣) (External Qi).
- Shang Dan Tian** 上丹田 Upper Dan Tian. Located at The Third Eye, it is the residence of the Shen (神) (spirit). Often, Shang Dan Tian means “brain.”
- Shang Dao** 上島 Different name of the Upper Dan Tian.
- Shang Tian Guan** 上天關 Different name of the Upper Dan Tian.
- Shang Tu Fu** 上土釜 Different name of the Upper Dan Tian.
- Shanzhong** 膻中 The central area between the nipples. Some Qigong practitioners consider Shanzhong is the location of the Middle Dan Tian.
- Shaolin** 少林 “Young woods.” Name of the Shaolin Temple, a Buddhist temple in Henan Province (河南省), famous for its martial arts.
- She Yun** 色蘊 Color concealment.
- Shen** 神 Spirit. The consciousness within which the mind and thought function. According to Chinese Qigong, the Shen resides at the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田) (The Third Eye).
- Shen Bu Shou She** 神不守舍 Means “the spirit is not kept at its residence.”

- Shen Gu** 神谷 Spirit valley. Formed by the two hemispheres of the brain, with the Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian, 上丹田) at the exit.
- Shen Gui** 神龜 Means “Spiritual Turtle.”
- Shen Hun** 神魂 Refers to the spirit of a dying person since his spirit is between “Shen” and “Hun.”
- Shen Lu** 神廬 Means “the spiritual residence,” namely the head.
- Shen Lu** 神爐 Spiritual Furnace. Different name of the Lower Dan Tian.
- Shen Ming** 神明 Spiritually divine or spiritually enlightened beings.
- Shen Ning** 神寧 Means the spirit is calm and peaceful.
- Shen Qi Xiang He** 神氣相合 “Mutual harmonization or unification of Shen and Qi.” The final stage of regulating the Shen.
- Shen Shi** 神室 Spirit residence. An alternative name of the “heart” (Xin, 心). Shen Shi also represents the Upper Dan Tian.
- Shen Shui** 腎水 Kidneys’ water.
- Shen Tai** 神胎 Spiritual embryo. It is also called “Ling Tai” (靈胎).
- Shen Tong** 神通 Spiritual Enlightenment.
- Shen Xi** 神息 Spirit breathing. The stage of Qigong training where the spirit is coordinated with the breathing.
- Shen Xi Xiang Yi** 神息相依 “Mutual Dependence of Spirit and Breathing.” A stage in Qigong practice.
- Shen Xian** 神仙 Since “Xian” originated with the Shen, the “Xian” is sometimes called “Shen Xian,” which means “immortal spirit.”
- Shen Xin Ping Heng** 身心平衡 Body and heart (mind) balanced. This means a balance between the physical body and the mental body.
- Shen Zhi** 神志 The mind generates the will, which keeps the Shen firm. The Chinese commonly use Shen (spirit) and Zhi (will) together as “Shen Zhi” because they are so related.
- Shen Zhi Bu Qing** 神志不清 Means “the spirit and the will (generated from Yi) are not clear.” That is, the mind is confused and not steady.
- Sheng** 乘 Means the Buddhist teaching, a conveyance to bring the truth to men and help them.
- Sheng Men** 生門 “Life Door.” Implies navel, since it provides the life before your birth.

Sheng Tai 聖胎 Holy embryo. Another name for the spiritual embryo (Shen Tai, 神胎).

Shi Chong 尸蟲 Means “corpse worms” and implies “three emotional worms” which are able to agitate your emotions and lead you to the path of death. These three worms are: 1. Desires at the Upper Dan Tian; 2. Seven emotional attachments at the Middle Dan Tian; and 3. Desires for alcohol and sex.

Shi Er Di Zhi 十二地支 The Twelve Terrestrial Branches or Horary Characters, which include: Zi (子) (11 P.M.-1 A.M.)-Rat, Chou (丑) (1-3 A.M.)-Ox, Yin (寅) (3-5 A.M.)-Tiger, Mao (卯) (5-7 A.M.)-Hare, Chen (辰) (7-9 A.M.)-Dragon, Yi (巳) (9-11AM)-Snake, Wu (午) (11 A.M.-1 P.M.)-Horse, Wei (未) (1-3 P.M.)-Sheep, Shen (申) (3-5 P.M.)-Monkey, Qiu (酉) (5-7 P.M.)-Cock, Shu (戌) (7-9 P.M.)-Dog, and Hai (亥) (9-11 P.M.)-Boar.

Shi Er Jing 十二經 The Twelve Primary Qi Channels in Chinese medicine.

Shi Er Jing Luo 十二經絡 The Twelve Primary Qi Channels and Their Branches.

Shi Er Shi 十二時 “Twelve Timings.” Means Shi Er Di Zhi (十二地支) (The Twelve Terrestrial Branches) which are the traditional Chinese divisions for a day.

Shi Tian Gan 十天干 The Ten Celestial Stems. Chinese use The Ten Celestial Stems together with Twelve Terrestrial Branches (Shi Er Di Zhi, 十二地支) to form a cycle of sixty. From this, they distinguish the different natural cycles of the year. The Ten Celestial Stems include: Jia (甲), Yi (乙), Bing (丙), Ding (丁), Wu (戊), Ji (己), Geng (庚), Xin (辛), Ren (壬), and Gui (癸).

Shi Yue Huai Tai 十月懷胎 Ten months of pregnancy. A stage in Daoist Qigong when the spiritual embryo is nourished.

Shi Yun 識蘊 Discriminating concealment.

Shi Zun 世尊 A respectful name for Buddha (佛) (Sakyamuni).

Shiqizhuixia (M-BW-25) 十七椎下 Name of an acupuncture cavity located below the 17th vertebrae.

Shou 守 Means “to keep and to protect.”

Shou Jue Yin Xin Bao Luo Jing 手厥陰心包絡經 Arm Absolute Yin Pericardium Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Shou Shao Yang San Jiao Jing 手少陽三焦經 Arm Lesser Yang Triple Burner Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Shou Shao Yin Xin Jing 手少陰心經 Arm Lesser Yin Heart Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Shou Shen 守神 To keep the mind at the spirit. A Qigong meditation training.

Shou Tai Yang Xiao Chang Jing 手太陽小腸經 Arm Greater Yang Small Intestine Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Shou Tai Yin Fei Jing 手太陰肺經 Arm Greater Yin Lung Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Shou Yang Ming Da Chang Jing 手陽明大腸經 Arm Yang Brightness Large Intestine Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Shou Yin 手印 “Hands’ stamp.” Stamp here means to press against.

Shou Yun 受蘊 Perception concealment.

Shuang Xiu 雙修 Double cultivation. A Qigong training method in which Qi is exchanged with a partner in order to balance the Qi in both people. It also means the dual cultivation of both the physical body and the human temperament.

Shui Mu 水母 “Water Mother,” which provides life for the Shen to reside and grow.

Shui Qi 水氣 Water Qi. Qi created from Original Essence, which is able to calm your body.

Si Da Jie Kong 四大皆空 “Four large are empty.” A stage of Buddhist training where all of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) are absent from the mind so that one is completely indifferent to worldly temptations.

Si Qi 死氣 Dead Qi. The Qi remaining in a dead body. Sometimes called “ghost Qi” (Gui Qi, 鬼氣)

Si Shi 四時 Means nature’s four seasons.

Si Wei Yi 四威儀 Means “four solemn living manners,” which include walking, residing, sitting, and lying.

Si Xiang 四象 Means “Four Phases” which are derived from Two Poles (Polarities) (Liang Yi, 兩儀)

Si Zheng 四正 Nature, or the universe, (i.e. heaven and earth) is called “Si Zheng,” which means four directions, east, west, south, and north.

Song and Yuan Dynasties (960-1367 A.D.) 宋、元 Two dynasties in Chinese history.

Suan Ming Shi 算命師 Literally, “calculate life teacher.” A fortune teller who is able to calculate your future and destiny.

Sui Qi 髓氣 Marrow Qi.

Sui Xi 髓息 Sui means the marrow or brain. Therefore, Sui Xi means the Qigong breathing technique which is able to lead the Qi to the bone marrow and brain.

Tai Chi Chuan (Taijiquan) 太極拳 Great ultimate fist. An internal Chinese martial art.

Tai He 太和 “Grand Harmonization.” Implies the stage of extreme harmonization and peace.

Tai Shang 太上 Means “Grand Uppermost” and is an abbreviation of “Tai Shang Lao Jun” (太上老君) which means “Grand Uppermost Old Gentleman.” Religious title of Lao Zi (老子)

Tai Shang Lao Jun 太上老君 Old Lord of the Ultimate. Religious title of Lao Zi (老子), used by religious Daoists.

Tai Su 太素 State of Grand Simplicity. Implies emptiness of mind.

Tai Xi 胎息 Embryo breathing. A Qigong breathing technique which can be used to store the Qi in the Real Dan Tian (Zhen Dan Tian, 真丹田)

Tai Xu 太虛 Means “Grand Emptiness,” which implies the great nature of the universe (Dao, 道)

Taiji 太極 Means “grand ultimate.” According to Chinese philosophy, Taiji is an invisible force which is able to make Wuji (無極) (i.e. no extremity) derive into Yin and Yang poles and also vice versa.

Taijiquan (Tai Chi Chuan) 太極拳 A Chinese internal martial style which is based on the theory of Taiji (太極) (grand ultimate).

Taipei 台北 The capital city of Taiwan located in the north of Taiwan.

Taipei Xian 台北縣 The county on the north of Taiwan.

Taiwan 台灣 An island to the southeast of mainland China. Also known as “Formosa.”

Taiwan University 台灣大學 A well-known university located in Taipei, Taiwan.

Taizuquan 太祖拳 A southern style of Chinese external martial arts.

Tamkang 淡江 Name of a University in Taiwan.

Ti Xi 體息 “Body Breathing.” Also called “Fu Xi” (膚息), which means “skin breathing.” This is a Qigong breathing technique which allows you to use your mind to lead the Qi to the skin surface, to strengthen the guardian Qi.

Tian 天 “Heaven” or “sky.” One of the Three Powers (San Cai, 三才) In ancient China, people believed that Heaven was the most powerful natural energy in this universe.

Tian 田 Means “Field.”

Tian Chi Shui 天池水 “Heavenly water.” Means “saliva.”

Tian Gen 天根 “Heaven’s root.” Different name of the Lower Dan Tian.

Tian Gu 天谷 “Heaven Valley.” The space between the two hemispheres of the brain is called “Heaven Valley.”

Tian Ling Gai 天靈蓋 Literally, “heaven spiritual cover.” Implies the crown. It is called Baihui (Gv-20) (百會) in acupuncture.

Tian Men 天門 “Heaven Gate,” and means “The Third Eye.” Also called “Yin Tang” (印堂).

Tian Mu 天目 “Heaven Eye.” Means The Third Eye referred to by some Western religious societies. There are several variations of this belief. The Chinese believe that prior to our evolution into humans, our race possessed an additional sense organ in our forehead. This “third eye” also provided a means of spiritual communication between one another and the natural world. As we evolved and developed means to protect ourselves from the environment, and as societies became more complex and human vices were developed, this third eye slowly closed and disappeared.

Tian Qi 天氣 Heaven Qi. It is now commonly used to mean the weather, since weather is governed by Heaven Qi.

Tian Ren He Yi 天人合一 Literally, “Heaven and man unified as one.” A high level of Qigong practice in which a Qigong practitioner, through meditation, is able to communicate his Qi with the heaven’s Qi.

Tian Shi 天時 Heavenly timing. The repeated natural cycles generated by the heavens such as: seasons, months, days and hours.

Tian Xian 天仙 “Heaven Immortality,” which means the eternal nature of spirit.

Tian Xian Fo 天仙佛 Heavenly immortal Buddhahood.

Tian Yan 天眼 Literally, “the heaven eye.” It is equivalent to The Third Eye or Yintang (MNH-3) (印堂) cavity in acupuncture.

Tianshan 天山 Literally, “Sky Mountain.” The name of a mountain located in Xinjiang Province (新疆), China.

Tiao 調 A gradual regulating process resulting in that which is regulated achieving harmony with others.

Tiao Qi 調氣 To regulate the Qi.

Tiao Shen 調神 To regulate the spirit.

Tiao Shen 調身 To regulate the body.

Tiao Xi 調息 To regulate the breathing.

Tiao Xin 調心 To regulate the emotional mind.

Tie Bu Shan 鐵布衫 Iron shirt. Gongfu training which toughens the body externally and internally.

Tie Sha Zhang 鐵砂掌 Literally, “iron sand palm.” A special martial arts conditioning for the palms.

Tu 吐 Means “to utter,” and implies exhalation.

Tu 土 Earth. One of the Five Elements (Wu Xing, 五行)

Tu Fu 土府 Different name of The Middle Dan Tian.

Tu-Na 吐納 Qigong was also commonly called “Tu-Na.” Tu-Na means to “utter and admit” which implies uttering and admitting the air through the nose (i.e. respiration)

Tui Na 推拿 Means “to push and grab.” A category of Chinese massages for healing and injury treatment.

Tuo Tai Huang Gu 脫胎換骨 To disembody and become a human immortal.

Tuo Yue 橐龠 Bellows. A tube which is used to blow up the fire in a furnace.

Wai 外 External or outside.

Wai Dan 外丹 External elixir. External Qigong exercises in which a practitioner will build up the Qi in his limbs and then lead it into the center of the body for nourishment.

Wai Dan Chi Kung (Wai Dan Qigong) 外丹氣功 External Elixir Qigong. In Wai Dan Qigong, a practitioner will generate Qi in the limbs and then allow the Qi to flow inward to nourish the internal organs.

Wai Jia 外家 External family. Those martial schools which practice the external styles of Chinese martial arts.

Wai Qi 外氣 External Qi, also called “Upper Level Qi” (Shang Ceng Qi, 上層氣)

Wai Qi Liao Fa 外氣療法 Literally, “external Qi healing.” One of the high levels of Qi massage in which a doctor will use his or her Qi to remove Qi stagnation in the patient.

Wai Shen 外腎 Chinese define the kidneys as internal kidneys and also external kidneys. Internal kidneys (Nei Shen, 內腎) are the same kidneys defined by Western medicine. However, the external kidneys means testicles or ovaries.

Wei Qi 衛氣 Protective Qi or Guardian Qi. The Qi at the surface of the body which generates a shield to protect the body from negative external influences such as colds.

Wen Huo 文火 Scholar fire. One of the soft types of breathing used in Chinese Qigong practice.

Wilson Chen 陳威伸 Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's martial arts friend.

Wo Gu 握固 Means "to hold and firm."

Wu 悟 Comprehending the meaning of life and the truth of nature is called "Wu." (enlightenment)

Wu 午 Noon. One of the twelve Terrestrial Branches (Shi Er Di Zhi, 十二地支) (i.e. 11 A.M.-1 P.M.)

Wu Huo 武火 Martial fire. One of the hard and fast types of breathing used in Chinese Qigong practice. Martial breathing is commonly used in external martial arts.

Wu Qin Shi 五禽戲 Five Animal Sports. A set of medical Qigong practice created by Jun Qing (君倩) during the Chinese Jin Dynasty (265-420 A.D.) (晉) Name of medical Qigong set which imitates the movements of the tiger, deer, bear, ape, and bird. There is another saying that this Qigong set was created by Dr. Hua Tuo (華佗)

Wu Tiao 五調 Five regulating methods in Qigong practice which include: regulating the body, regulating the breathing, regulating the mind, regulating the Qi, and regulating the spirit.

Wu Xin 無心 The mind is not paying attention to something. Means "no intention."

Wu Xin Hu Xi 五心呼吸 One of the Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) practices in which a practitioner uses his mind in coordination with breathing to lead the Qi to the center of the palms, feet and head.

Wu Xing 五行 Five Phases or Five Elements, including: metal (Jin, 金), wood (Mu, 木), water (Shui, 水), fire (Huo, 火), and earth (Tu, 土)

Wu Ya 五牙 Means the "living Qi of the Five Elements" (Wu Xing, 五行): metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.

Wu Yun 五蘊 "Five concealments," which implies "five internal organs: heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, and spleen." There is another interpretation of Wu Yun. Wu Yun includes: 1. Color concealment (She Yun, 色蘊); 2. Perception concealment (Shou Yun, 受蘊); 3. Thinking concealment (Xiang Yun, 想蘊); 4. Acting concealment (Xing Yun, 行蘊); 5. Discriminating concealment (Shi Yun, 識蘊). All of these concealments are able to generate desires and emotional unbalance.

Wu Yun 五運 Means "the transportation of Five Elements" (Wuxing, 五行)

Wu Zei 五賊 Five thieves. The "five emotions" which are related to the five internal organs: anger-wood (liver), happiness-fire (heart), pensiveness-earth (spleen), sadness-metal (lungs), and fear-water (kidneys).

Wu Zhen 悟真 To comprehend the truth. Implies reaching spiritual enlightenment.

Wu-Ji 戊己 Two of The Ten Celestial Stems (Shi Tian Gan, 十天干). Wu-Ji implies the natural timings.

Wudang Mountain 武當山 Located in Hubei Province (湖北省) in China.

Wuji 無極 No Extremity. This is the state of undifferentiated emptiness before a beginning.

Wuji Hu Xi 無極呼吸 Wuji Breathing, also called Cavity Breathing (Xue Wei Xi, 穴位息).

Wuji Xi 無極息 Wuji Breathing, also called Cavity Breathing (Xue Wei Xi, 穴位息).

Wushu 武術 Literally, “martial techniques.” A common name for the Chinese martial arts. Many other terms are used, including: Wuyi (武藝) (martial arts), Wugong (武功) (martial Gongfu), Guoshu (國術) (national techniques), and Gongfu (功夫) (energy-time). Because Wushu has been modified in mainland China over the past forty years into gymnastic martial performance, many traditional Chinese martial artist have given up this name in order to avoid confusing modern Wushu with traditional Wushu. Recently, mainland China has attempted to bring modern Wushu back toward its traditional training and practice.

Wuwei 無為 Means “doing nothing,” and implies “regulating without regulating.”

Wuxing 五行 Five Elements: Metal (Jin, 金) (Lungs, Fall); Wood (Mu, 木) (Liver, Spring); Water (Shui, 水) (Kidneys, Winter); Fire (Huo, 火) (Heart, Summer); and Earth (Tu, 土) (Spleen, Four Seasons).

Xi 息 Implies embryonic respiration.

Xi 喜 Joy, delight and happiness.

Xi Huo 熄火 Cease the fire.

Xi Sui Gong 洗髓功 Gongfu of marrow and brain washing Qigong practice.

Xi Sui Jing 洗髓經 “Washing Marrow/Brain Classic,” usually translated as “Marrow/Brain Washing Classic.” A Qigong training which specializes in leading Qi to the marrow to cleanse it or to the brain to nourish the spirit for enlightenment. It is believed that Xi Sui Jing training is the key to longevity and achieving spiritual enlightenment.

Xia Ceng Qi 下層氣 The bioelectricity stored at the Real Lower Dan Tian is called “Xia Ceng Qi” which means “Lower Level Qi” or “Nei Qi” (內氣) (Inner Qi).

Xian 仙 An immortal. A person who has attained enlightenment or Buddhahood, whose spirit can separate from and return to his physical body at will.

Xian Dao Jing Zuo 仙道靜坐 Enlightenment Meditation. Meditation to reach the Buddhahood or enlightenment.

- Xian Dao Wu Zhen Jing Zuo** 仙道悟真靜坐 Divine Enlightenment Meditation.
- Xian Ren** 仙人 Means those persons who have reached spiritual immortality (i.e. enlightenment).
- Xian Tai** 仙胎 Immortal Embryo.
- Xian Tian Qi** 先天氣 Pre-Birth Qi or Pre-Heaven Qi. Also called Dan Tian Qi (丹田氣). The Qi which is converted from Original Essence and is stored in the Lower Dan Tian. Considered to be “water Qi,” it is able to calm the body.
- Xian Tian Zhi Zhen** 先天之真 Pre-Heaven truth. The truthful mind before birth.
- Xiang Yun** 想蘊 Thinking concealment.
- Xiao** 孝 Filial Piety.
- Xiao Ding Lu** 小鼎爐 Small Tripod and Furnace. Huang Ting (黃庭) is a tripod while the Real Lower Dan Tian is a furnace.
- Xiao Tong** 小通 Means “little smoothness” and means the smooth circulation of the Qi.
- Xiao Zhou Tian** 小周天 “Small Cyclic Heaven” or “Small Circulation Meditation.” This is also commonly known as “Microcosmic Meditation” in Yoga or “Turning the Wheel of Natural Law” (Zhuan Fa Lun, 轉法輪) by Buddhist society. A Nei Dan Qigong (內丹氣功) training in which Qi is generated at the Dan Tian (丹田), and then moved in a circle through the Conception and Governing Vessels (Ren, Du Mai, 任·督脈).
- Xiao Zhou Tian Jing Zuo** 小周天靜坐 “Small Cyclic Heaven Meditation” or “Small Circulation Meditation.”
- Xin** 心 Means “heart.” Xin means the mind generated from emotional disturbance.
- Xin** 信 Trust.
- Xin Shen Bu Ning** 心神不寧 Means “the (emotional) mind and spirit are not peaceful.” That means the mind is scattered.
- Xin Xi Xiang Yi** 心息相依 Heart (mind) and breathing (are) mutually dependent.
- Xin Yuan Yi Ma** 心猿意馬 Literally, “heart monkey Yi horse.” Xin (heart) is used to represent the emotional mind which is acting as a monkey, unsteady and disturbing. Yi is the mind which is generated from calm and clear thinking and judgment (i.e. wisdom mind) The Yi is like a horse, calm and powerful.
- Xin Zhai** 心齋 Means “purified Xin” and implies a simply calm and sincere mind.
- Xing** 性 Human nature or temperament.
- Xing** 形 “Shape,” and means physical body.

Xing Gong 行功 “To carry out the Gong,” and implies to train.

Xing Ming Shuang Xiu 性命雙修 “Human nature life double cultivation.” Originally Buddhist, though now predominantly Daoist approach to Qigong, emphasizing the cultivation of both spirituality (human nature) and the physical body.

Xing Yun 行蘊 Acting concealment.

Xingyiquan (Xingyi) 形意拳 Literally: Shape-mind Fist. An internal style of Gongfu in which the mind or thinking determines the shape or movement of the body. Creation of the style attributed to Marshal Yue, Fei (岳飛) during the Chinese Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1280 A.D.) (南宋)

Xinzhū Xian 新竹縣 Birthplace of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming in Taiwan.

Xiong Bu Hu Xi 胸部呼吸 Chest breathing.

Xiu 修 Means “to regulate, to cultivate, to repair,” or “to maintain in good condition.”

Xiu Qi 修氣 Cultivate the Qi. Cultivate implies to protect, maintain and refine. A Buddhist Qigong training.

Xu 虛 Means “emptiness” (nihility).

Xu Mi 須彌 Xu Mi is the Daoist term for the human spiritual being in the fullness of human virtue.

Xu Wu 虛無 Means “nothing.”

Xuan 玄 Means “marvellous” or “incredible” and when this word is used in Daoist documents, it means “mysterious.”

Xuan De 玄德 Profound natural virtue.

Xuan Guan 玄關 Tricky gates. The many key places in Qigong training.

Xuan Pin 玄牝 Means “the marvellous and mysterious Dao, the mother of creation of millions of objects.”

Xuan Yuan 玄元 Means “the mysterious origin” and implies Dan Tians (丹田)

Xue Wei Hu Xi 穴位呼吸 Cavity breathing. Means the Lower Dan Tian breathing or Wuji breathing (Wuji Xi, 無極息)

Xue Wei Xi 穴位息 Cavity breathing. Implies Wuji breathing (Wuji Xi, 無極息) or Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi, 胎息)

Xun Dao Zhe 尋道者 Meaning “Dao searcher,” those who are studying the truth of the Dao.

Xun Feng 巽風 Means “great wind.”

Yan 言 Means “speaking” or “negotiating.”

Yan 咽 Means “to swallow the saliva.”

Yan Guan Bi 眼觀鼻 Means “to use the eyes to look at the nose tip,” which implies to pay attention to the breathing.

Yan Xi 晏息 Meditation or profound breathing.

Yang 養 Means “to nourish, to increase, to raise,” and “to cultivate.”

Yang 陽 One of the two poles (or polarities) (Liang Yi, 兩儀). The other is Yin. In Chinese philosophy, the active, positive, masculine polarity is classified as Yang. In Chinese medicine, Yang means excessive, too sufficient, overactive, or overheated. The Yang (or outer) organs are the Gall Bladder, Small Intestine, Large Intestine, Stomach, Bladder, and Triple Burner.

Yang Jian 陽間 “Yang World,” the material world in which we live.

Yang Jing 陽精 Yang Essence.

Yang Quan 陽泉 Yang Fountain. The Yang center of the Real Lower Dan Tian.

Yang Shen 養神 Yang means “to raise, nourish, and maintain.” Shen means spirit. Yang Shen is the main Buddhist approach to regulating the Shen.

Yang Shen 陽神 When spirit (Shen, 神) is used to manifest the Qi into action, it is powerful. Therefore, though Shen itself is considered Yin, it is called “Yang Shen.”

Yang Style Taijiquan 楊氏太極拳 A style of Taijiquan created by Yang, Lu-Shan (楊露禪) (1799-1872 A.D.).

Yang Ying 養嬰 Nursing the baby.

Yang, Jwing-Ming 楊俊敏 Author of this book.

Yangqiao Mai 陽蹻脈 Yang Heel Vessel. One of the eight Qi vessels.

Yangwei Mai 陽維脈 Yang Linking Vessel. One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.

Yao 藥 “Herb.” Implies elixir.

Yao Min 杳冥 Means “Profound Abyss,” which represents the Yin spiritual world (Yin Jian, 陰間).

Yi 一 Means “singularity.”

Yi 義 Justice, righteousness.

Yi 意 Mind. (Pronounced “ee”) Specifically, the mind which is generated by clear thinking and judgment, and which is able to make you calm, peaceful, and wise.

- Yi Jin Jing** 易筋經 Literally: Changing Muscle/Tendon Classic, usually called The Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic. Credited to Da Mo (達磨) around 550 A.D. This work discusses Wai Dan Qigong (外丹氣功) training for strengthening the physical body.
- Yi Jing** 易經 *Book of Changes*. A book of divination written during the Zhou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) (周).
- Yi Shou Dan Tian** 意守丹田 Keep your Yi on your Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian, 下丹田) In Qigong training, you keep your mind at the Lower Dan Tian in order to build up Qi. When you are circulating your Qi, you always lead your Qi back to your Lower Dan Tian before you stop.
- Yin** 陰 In Chinese philosophy, the passive, negative, feminine polarity. In Chinese medicine, Yin means deficient. The Yin (internal) organs are the Heart, Lungs, Liver, Kidneys, Spleen, and Pericardium.
- Yin Jian** 陰間 “Yin world.” The spirit world after death is considered a Yin world.
- Yin Shen** 陰神 “Yin Spirit.” The Yin center of the Upper Dan Tian.
- Yin Shui** 陰水 Yin Water. Implies that the Qi stored at the Lower Dan Tian is calm and pure.
- Yin Tang (Yintang)** (M-HN-3) 印堂 Seal Hall. Name of an acupuncture cavity. Also called “Tian Men” (天門) (Heaven Gate) which implies “The Third Eye.”
- Yin Yang Xie Tiao** 陰陽諧調 The harmony and balance of Yin and Yang.
- Ying Er** 嬰兒 Means “baby” (son) and implies “the Spiritual Embryo.”
- Ying Gong** 硬功 Hard Gongfu. Any Chinese martial training which emphasizes physical strength and power.
- Ying Qi** 營氣 Managing Qi. The Qi which manages the functioning of the organs and the body.
- Ying Zhou** 瀛洲 A holy mountain in the east sea where the immortals dwell (in Chinese legend).
- Yinjiao** (Co-7) 陰交 Yin junction. A junction of two vessels, Conception Vessel (Ren Mai, 任脈) and Thrusting Vessel (Chong Mai, 衝脈) Yinjiao belongs to the Conception Vessel.
- Yinqiao Mai** 陰蹻脈 Yin Heel Vessel. One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.
- Yintang** (M-HN-3) 印堂 Seal Hall. An acupuncture cavity belonging to miscellaneous cavities. Yintang is located at The Third Eye area.
- Yinwei Mai** 陰維脈 Yin Linking Vessel. One of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.

- Yong Bao** 永寶 “Forever treasure” and means the treasure that you are able to keep forever.
- Yongquan (K-1)** 湧泉 Gushing Spring. Name of an acupuncture cavity belonging to the Kidney Primary Qi Channel.
- You Xin** 有心 To have a heart. Means to have an intention.
- Yu** 雨 Rain.
- Yu** 慾 Desire or lust.
- Yu Chi** 玉池 Jade Pond. Implies the place underneath the tongue which is able to generate an abundance of saliva during meditation.
- Yu Guan** 玉館 Means “Jade Hall.” An alternative name of the “heart” (Xin, 心).
- Yu Hu** 玉壺 Means “Jade Kettle.” An alternative name of the “heart” (Xin, 心).
- Yu Huan** 玉環 Jade ring.
- Yu Huan Xue** 玉環穴 Jade ring cavity. It means the space inside the solar plexus area (Huang Ting).
- Yu Men** 玉門 “Jade Gate” and means “The Third Eye.”
- Yu Tang** 玉堂 Means “Jade Hall” and implies “the palate of the mouth.”
- Yu Tu** 玉兔 Means “Jade Rabbit” and implies “Original Essence” (Yuan Jing, 元精).
- Yuan** 猿 An ape.
- Yuan Dao** 元道 Original Dao.
- Yuan Hai** 元海 Original Ocean.
- Yuan Jing** 元精 Original Essence. The fundamental, original substance inherited from your parents, it is converted into Original Qi (Yuan Qi, 元氣).
- Yuan Qi** 元氣 Original Qi. Created from the Original Essence (Yuan Jing, 元精) inherited from your parents.
- Yuan Shen** 元神 Original Spirit. The spirit you already had when you were born.
- Yue, Fei** 岳飛 A Chinese hero in the Southern Song Dynasty(1127-1280 A.D.) (南宋). Said to have created Ba Duan Jin (八段錦), Xingyiquan (形意拳), and Yue’s Ying Zhua (岳家鷹爪).
- Yujia** 瑜珈 Indian Yoga.
- Yun** 雲 Cloud.
- Zai Jie Pai** 栽接派 Plant and Graft Division. A division of Daoist Qigong training.

Zen (Chan) 忍 (禪) Means “to endure.” The Japanese name of Chan.

Zhan Guo 戰國 Warring States Period. A period in Chinese history (403-222 B.C.)

Zhang 丈 A Chinese unit of length which is a little bit longer than 10 feet (3m)

Zhang, Dao-Ling 張道陵 A Daoist who combined scholarly Daoism with Buddhist philosophies and created Religious Daoism (Dao Jiao, 道教) during the Chinese Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.) (東漢)

Zhang, Xiang-San 張祥三 A well-known martial artist in Taiwan during the 1960s.

Zhen 真 Truth.

Zhen Dan Tian 真丹田 The Real Dan Tian, which is located at the physical center of gravity.

Zhen Qi 真氣 Means “Real Qi.”

Zhen Ren 真人 Means “real person” or “truthful person.” A Daoist aims to be truthful and is therefore called “truthful man.”

Zhen Ru 真如 Means “Real Buddhahood.”

Zhen Xi 真息 The real breathing or true breathing. That means the breathing has been regulated to a deep and profound level. It implies Embryonic Breathing.

Zhen Xia Dan Tian 真下丹田 Real Lower Dan Tian, which is the main Qi reservoir or bio-electric battery in our body.

Zhen Yi 真一 Means “Real One,” “Real Singularity,” or “Real Singleness.” “One” or “singularity” implies the main energy polarity of a human constructed by spiritual center and the Qi center.

Zhen Yuan 真元 Means “Real Origins” and implies the “Original Essence, Qi, and Shen” (Yuan Jing, Yuan Qi, and Yuan Shen, 元精、元氣、元神)

Zheng Fu Hu Xi 正腹呼吸 Formal Abdominal Breathing. More commonly called Buddhist Breathing.

Zheng Qi 正氣 Righteous Qi. When a person is righteous, it is said that he has righteous Qi which evil Qi cannot overcome.

Zhi 止 Stop.

Zhi Guan 止觀 Literally means “to stop the observation” and implies that the observation of the Xin’s activities is stopped.

Zhi Guan Fa 止觀法 Stop Looking Method. One of the methods used to regulate the mind.

Zhong 忠 Loyalty.

- Zhong Dan Tian** 中丹田 The Middle Dan Tian which is believed to be located on the Shanzhong (膻中) area which is the center between the nipples.
- Zhong Xi** 踵息 Sole breathing.
- Zhou** 周 Means “to be complete,” “to be perfect,” or “to be round.”
- Zhou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.)** 周朝 A dynasty in Chinese history.
- Zhuan Fa Lun** 轉法輪 “Turning the Wheel of Natural Law.” A Buddhist term meaning “Small Circulation.”
- Zhuang Zhou** 莊周 Zhuang Zi, Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.) A Daoist scholar. He wrote a book called Zhuang Zi (莊子)
- Zhuang Zi** 莊子 A book written by the Daoist scholar Zhuang Zhou (莊周) during the Chinese Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.) (戰國)
- Zi** 子 Midnight. One of the twelve Terrestrial Branches (Shi Er Di Zhi, 十二地支) (i.e. 11 P.M.-1 A.M.)
- Zi Guan** 自觀 Self-Internal-Vision. Means to observe the self-inner-mental activities.
- Zi Jue** 自覺 Self-awareness.
- Zi Shi** 子時 Midnight, 11 P.M.—1 A.M.
- Zi Shi** 自識 Self-recognition.
- Zi Tuo** 自脫 Freedom of emotional or spiritual bondage.
- Zi Wu** 自悟 Self-awakening.
- Zi Xing** 自醒 Self-awakening.
- Zi-Wu** 子午 Means “midnight and noon.”
- Zou Huo** 走火 Entering the fire path. False and unrealistic feelings can lead you to a state of emotional disturbance, and farther away from the correct practice of Qi cultivation.
- Zou Huo Ru Mo** 走火入魔 Walk into the fire and enter into the devil. In Qigong training, if you have led your Qi into the wrong path it is called “walking into the fire,” and if your mind has been led into a confused state, it is called “entering into the devil.”
- Zu Jue Yin Gan Jing** 足厥陰肝經 Leg Absolute Yin Liver Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.
- Zu Shao Yang Dan Jing** 足少陽膽經 Leg Lesser Yang Gall Bladder Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Zu Shao Yin Shen Jing 足少陰腎經 Leg Lesser Yin Kidney Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Zu Tai Yang Pang Guang Jing 足太陽膀胱經 Leg Greater Yang Bladder Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Zu Tai Yin Pi Jing 足太陰脾經 Leg Greater Yin Spleen Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Zu Yang Ming Wei Jing 足陽明胃經 Leg Yang Brightness Stomach Primary Qi Channel. One of the twelve primary Qi channels.

Zuo Chan 坐禪 Meditation in Buddhist society is called “Zuo Chan” which means “sit for Chan.”

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The Root of Spiritual Enlightenment

Chinese Qigong can be generally categorized into External Elixir (Wai Dan) and Internal Elixir (Nei Dan) Qigong. The first step of practicing Internal Elixir Qigong has been known as Small Cyclic Heaven (Small Circulation or Microcosmic Meditation). After completing Small Cyclic Heaven, a practitioner will learn Grand Cyclic Heaven (Grand Circulation or Macrocosmic Meditation). The purpose of Grand Cyclic Heaven is to re-open the Heaven Eye (Third Eye) to unite the natural spirit and human spirit. This is the ultimate goal of spiritual enlightenment in both Daoism (Taoism) and Buddhism. Although these kinds of meditations are popular, very few scientific books or documents are available to the public.

The Foundation of Internal Elixir Cultivation

In order to reach the goal of longevity and spiritual enlightenment, the Qigong practitioner must learn Internal Elixir Qigong. The first step to learning is to understand the theory and the method of Embryonic Breathing. Practicing this breathing technique will help you to establish your central energy system, conserve your energy, and store this energy to abundant levels. Once you have established this foundation, you will be able to practice Small Cyclic Heaven (Small Circulation or Microcosmic Orbit) and Grand Cyclic Heaven (Grand Circulation or Macrocosmic Orbit) effectively. It is understood that without this foundation, the root of spiritual enlightenment will not be established and the study and the practice of spiritual enlightenment, through meditation, will be in vain.

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Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming is a renowned author and teacher of Chinese martial arts and Qigong. Born in Taiwan, he has trained and taught Taijiquan, Qigong and Chinese martial arts for over thirty-five years. He is the author of over thirty books. Voted by *Inside Kung Fu* magazine as one of the ten people who have "made the greatest impact on martial arts in the past 100 years." Dr. Yang lives in Newton, Massachusetts, USA.



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