

ABOUT QIGONG

QIGONG, BODY-MIND & HEART PRACTICE

What is Qi?

Qi affects our energy but on a deeper level it is an essence of Life that fills all of the universe including ourselves. We are born with qi but it gets depleted over time. This loss affects our health and wellbeing not just physically but mentally, emotionally, energetically and spiritually.

What is Gong?

Gong are practices to enhance qi with applied and steady effort. In this way we cultivate, direct and learn to store this essence within our bodies with regular practice.

So Qigong is one of the ways we can revitalise ourselves. There are many Qigong practices to replenish our systems. One estimate is that there are more than 20,000 forms.

Qigong has evolved over three thousand years from that holistic Chinese perspective that everything is interconnected within and without, with our families, our community, our planet, our universe and our ancestors. We move in a world of interrelatedness: in relationship with everything. Qigong is a body-mind practice that accesses all of this.

Qigong has evolved alongside Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ch'an Buddhist monastic practice (which became Zen when it was exported to Japan), Spiritual Development (such as Confucian), Taoist longevity practices and Martial Arts. Every movement is precise, connecting to the meridians, channels, organs and other aspects of our anatomy and wider personal field. It's gentle, it's slow, but it's also very potent. And when we work at the 'edge of resistance' we deepen the impact of the practice.

We are enhancing the health and wellbeing of our whole system with every movement. And the great thing is that we do not need to know all the complicated connecting theories to gain the benefit of our practice.

Qigong is about healthy relationships, both internally and with the world & beyond. Internally it is a healthy balance between all aspects of your body, mind, emotions and spirit. By simply using our minds to pay close attention to the body there are immediate effects and an impact that grows over time. Where the mind goes the qi follows, so we are able to direct qi very precisely just with our attention. Qigong is also about sustaining a healthy relationship with Nature so that we can learn and benefit from all that is around us. We are fortunate to have access to this great Chinese tradition to gain the benefit of their wisdom and craft.

Zhening Qigong is a modern version developed by the prodigy Dr Pang. Many masters came to him to share their wisdom. Dr Pang brought together all his learning to create a very effective practice which integrated this wide range of teachings. He ran a medicine-less hospital for several years where people used Qigong instead of western medicine to cure illness. Although there are inherent health benefits in everything we do, my focus as a teacher is on opening us to the experience and allowing the body's intelligence to use new space we create within for naturally healing. For those who are interested in the science of Dr Pang's approach I am happy to recommend his books for further study.

Qigong has such a rich history because it is completely integrated into all aspects of Chinese life regarding health and wellbeing. Many centuries ago Buddhist Monks were impressed by the visible results of qigong and sought knowledge about how to improve their health from Taoists. Taoists were impressed by the Buddhist capacity to focus the attention of the mind and brought this meditative wisdom into their practices. For instance Zen (Ch'an) practitioners will be used to Kinhin (the walking meditation between sittings). This practice is pure Qigong. Modalities that use Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) such as Acupuncture and Shiatsu practitioners will learn Qigong to aid effectiveness in working with five element theory and in directing qi for health in their work.. Tai Qi is an internal martial art where Qigong is traditionally used to start the practice. Martial artists such as Shaolin monks and Kung Fu practitioners integrate Qigong as an essential aspect of their art.

On a deeper level it is not just a practice, it is a way of life, a way of seeing and being. It is very spacious which makes room for the new and we can gain this benefit every time we do Qigong even if we do small regular formal 'practice'. So it is very accessible for all.

Qigong is moving and collecting qi. The most important feature of Qigong is our capacity to RELAX. We develop this ability over time. It's about harmony and balance. Qigong opens a space where we can experience harmony and have harmony as a touchstone for the rest of our life. As challenges arise in our practice we do not always need to name them. We can just let things dissolve into the flow of things in their own good time.

It's about ease as well as working to our edges but we don't push past our edges. There is something very subtle to be learnt in paying attention to a physical, physiological or emotional edge and then giving ourselves permission to ease a position when it gets too much. This is a skill that balances our western culture of endless pushing to achieve and forgetting about the release that completes our actions.. Here the release is as important as the effort. Appreciating relaxation and release is really valuable. We can be so yang (doing) in our culture that we lose the equal value of yin (being). Professional athletes know the value of relaxing and recuperation for their muscles between periods of exertion. They rest their bodies and improve their performance. This is a balance we bring to our whole body system in our practice of Qigong.

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