

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
POTENTIAL HEALING POWER OF
CHINESE QIGONG (CHI-GUNG)



5 SIMPLE ENERGIZING EXERCISES TO HELP
HEAL MIND AND BODY

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PREFACE

My relationship with traditional Chinese Qigong (sounds like Chi-gung), and translated into English as “energy-work”, begins with cancer.

My cancer ordeal was hard for me. When judged against what others have gone through perhaps the journey was not so difficult. But from my perspective it was hard.

The practice of Qigong, some call it Chinese Yoga, gave me new hope, energy, optimism and 12 years from a cancer diagnosis, seemingly successful healing results. I don't give Qigong credit for curing my cancer because I think a multitude of factors helped with that (surgeries, radiation treatments, improved lifestyle, etc.) But I do give Qigong credit for being a key element in the healing process.

This introductory booklet offers some of the basics of traditional Chinese Qigong, which has been around for thousands of years. I hope it might give a reason to those searching for healing power and new energy to explore more about this ancient healing practice.

INTRODUCTION (Just Another Cancer Story)

So many of us have a story about cancer. Either related to ourselves or a member of our family. Here's a little more of mine and how I got linked up with the healing power of Qigong.

In 2007 I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer thanks to an observation of a small lump by my GP at a routine physical. A biopsy of the thyroid revealed advanced cancer and I quickly scheduled the removal. The operation went very smooth and I was feeling great until my surgeons told me that they had biopsied lymph nodes on the right side of my neck showing the cancer had spread. One of our local doctors had some experience with neck dissections, a surgery which was required to explore the right side of my neck and upper shoulder, and we quickly scheduled another operation to try to remove all cancerous lymph nodes.

While I have gratitude for this first surgical treatment, especially now after many years of being cancer free, it left me feeling physically violated, perhaps a little like the small frog I had dissected in the 7th grade. Maybe this is the nature of the neck dissection operation but I was unprepared for what it did to the muscles and nerves in the right

side of my face, neck, throat and shoulder. I felt numb, with limited ability to swallow, sleep or talk, and found arm and shoulder movement on my right side almost impossible. I wondered how long it might take before the once easy movements of swinging a tennis racquet or throwing a right middle punch, (important for a martial arts practitioner and instructor of the last 36 years), could be accomplished.

Thus, began a topsy-turvy two-year journey of trying to kill, and understand the extent of, the cancer that was inside of me. Multiple radiation treatments, scans, experiments with medication and diet often left me feeling lifeless and hopeless with no energy. I became obsessed with finding sources of energy wherever I could. I have always been a spiritual person and of course prayer and meditation were high on my list when searching for new energy.

During a brief trip south to visit my parents in 2008, to grab some early March sunshine in Gulf Shores, AL, I came across a book that revolutionized my thinking on the healing energy that might be available to me, *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*. Author Kenneth Cohen simply and succinctly introduced me to the ancient world of Chinese Qigong, translated “energy work”, and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) with a

western voice that resonated with my experience of physical energy throughout my lifetime.

He described TCM's belief in energy channels and meridians that connect various parts of our body and link our major organs, and a practice (Qigong), that could increase that energy leading to good health and healing opportunities. While my intellectual mind quickly rejected certain aspects of TCM, I easily accepted its core beliefs and the existence of an internal energy system. I was anxious to begin the practice of deep breathing, and moving meditation, the foundations of Qigong philosophy.

As a cancer patient I was inspired as Cohen described his research on the healing power of Qigong even citing evidence from Chinese medical literature about tumors that had been reduced through the practice of "energy work". With my post-surgery physical limitations, I began to focus on the simple, easy movements of Qigong. Integrating my mind and breath I started the practice of visualizing the healing powers of energy travelling throughout my body as well as opening my energy "gates" (in the feet, hands and head) to the flow of universal energy that according to ancient Chinese philosophies like Taoism and Buddhism exist all around us in nature.

As I experimented, and remained faithful, to these Eastern Qigong healing practices, my Western style doctors were also beginning to better understand the status of cancer in my body. Luckily the cancer had not metastasized to other parts of the body but had spread into the left lymph nodes of my neck and shoulder area. On my 55th birthday, August 14th, 2009 a left neck dissection was performed at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee to try to get out as many cancerous nodes as possible. While the impacts of this operation seemed to be much less devastating, thanks to the experienced hand of the doctors at Froedtert, I thus began the long march back to reclaiming the normal functions of my physical body.

Pre-cancer I had been an active and competitive tennis player and a regular martial arts practitioner in my basement dojo. During most of my cancer and healing period, due to physical limitations, I was not able to play tennis nor perform the hard punches, kicks or falling techniques needed to practice my martial art. Qigong became a transition exercise to gradually prepare my mind, body and spirit for more strenuous activity.

A FEW MORE OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS INTO THE POTENTIAL HEALING ENERGY AVAILABLE THROUGH QIGONG PRACTICE

The Qigong movements shared in this booklet have been passed down as Chinese healing and health practices for thousands of years, helping practitioners to connect with the universal energy all around them. They are respected for a proven ability to fill the energy meridians and channels of the body with new power and life the Chinese call Qi.

As mentioned earlier, my own practice and research into Qigong started in 2008 while I was desperately searching for new ways to help my body heal from numerous cancer surgeries and radiation treatments.

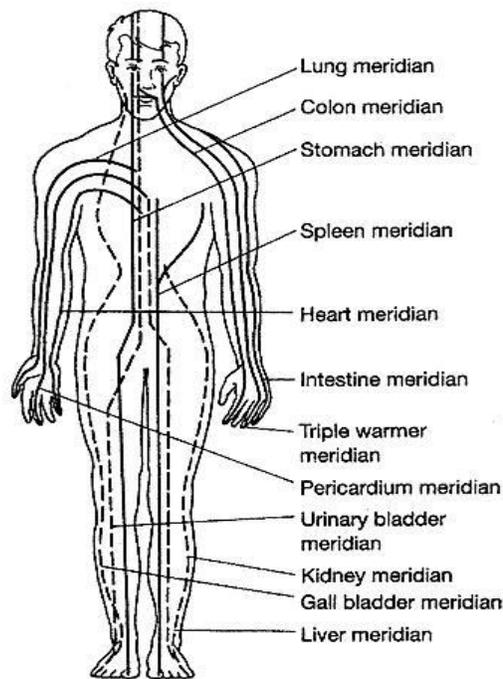
I started Qigong practice to help support the health and survival of my physical body as it dealt with cancer. Yet one of the reasons I continued doing Qigong in recent years, after cancer remission, was to support my political survival as a Town Administrator, and to improve relationships with my local body politic/community and those I served.

The insights of Qigong helped me see more clearly the similarities between a healthy physical body and a healthy organization or political body/community. While Qigong relies on disciplined, daily practice to move healthy energy to every part of the body from head to toe, the success of our public/private organizations and communities rely on the daily flow of good communication to employees or citizens to allow for aligned and educated decision-making and action. Just as the physical body deteriorates without the movement of energy to all its parts, so does the organization and community without regular communication and quality relationships.

I would like to review and re-emphasize a few basic points about the practice of Qigong for beginning practitioners as they learn the simple movements described in this book:

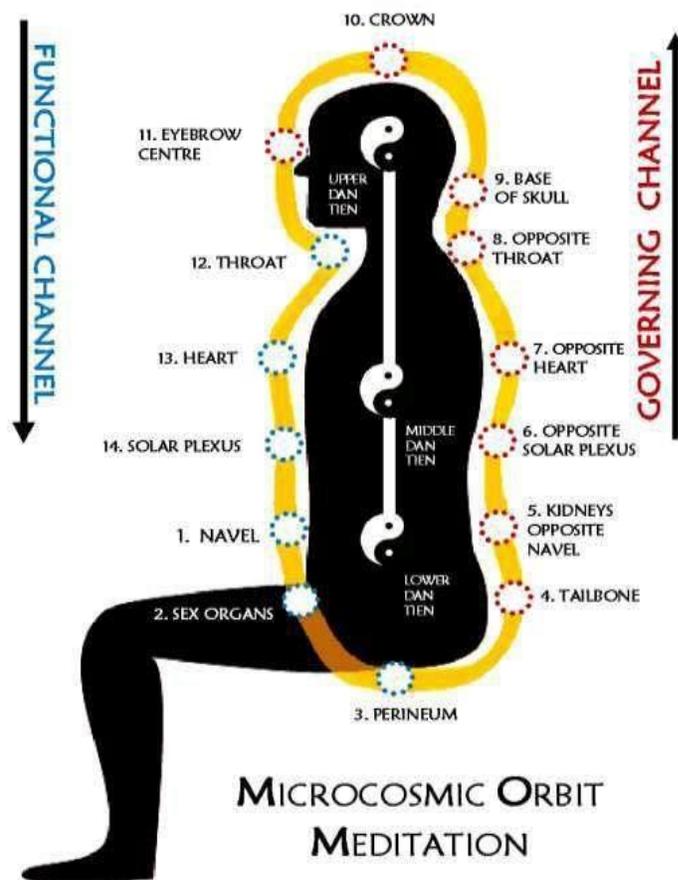
- 1. Though there are many variations of Qigong (Medical, Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian, Martial), most are based on the precepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and the belief that there are channels, meridians and reservoirs of energy (Qi) within the physical body that connect and sustain well-functioning organs and our overall health. Meridian pathways are like rivers flowing inside the body. Where a river flows, it transports life**

giving water that provides nourishment to the land, plants and people. Similarly, where energy channels and meridians flow, they bring life giving Qi that provides nourishment to the organs, glands and cells of the body. The field of acupuncture utilizes this well documented and complex system of energy channels when treating pain and disease in the body (See the very basic picture below);

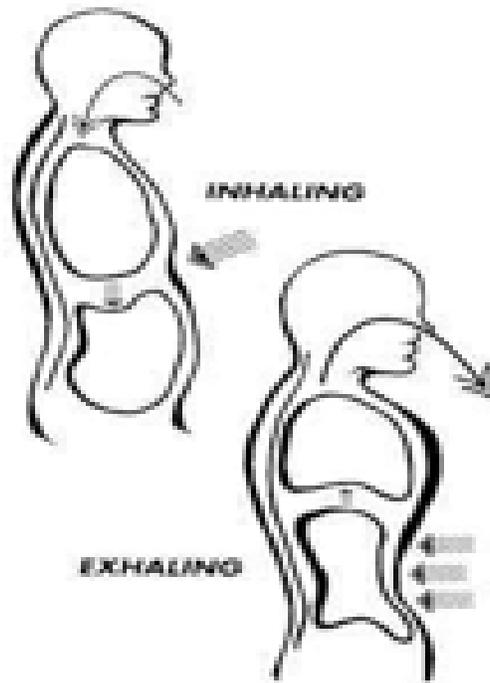


2. Many Qigong movements have been systematically designed and practiced over the centuries to stimulate key meridians, reservoirs and organs and help the physical body maintain health and well-being;

3. One key component of Qigong is deep abdominal breathing which in a way acts like a bellows to push new and vital energy to parts of the body where it may be lacking. The picture below of the Microcosmic Orbit displays the circular pattern of breath and energy flow which is used in sitting meditation, but can also be duplicated in standing and moving meditations.



Deep Abdominal Breathing (Inhale through the nose with tongue on roof of mouth and fill the belly. Exhale through the mouth and contract the stomach.)



4. Qigong practitioners believe they have access to an unlimited supply of universal energy surrounding them in nature and that there are key “gates” allowing significant entry points for this prime energy on the physical body. The feet, hands and crown of the head are seen as major energy collectors to be focused on in Qigong practice. Qigong, however, should never be regarded as some kind of magic pill or quick fix for a health issue. Success is based on daily, disciplined “energy work” together with the mind and body, and results are meant to be recognized over the

long-term as supporting the natural harmony and balance already present within us.

Chinese Qigong has recently become more well known in the U.S. and outside of China. The most recognized form of Qigong in the US is likely Tai Chi. Some of the classic Qigong movements are said to have been created by the Buddhist Monk Bodhidharma in the 5th century AD as special exercises to heal and energize his fellow monks and help them deal with long hours of sitting meditation.

TRADITIONAL QIGONG
POSTURE:
EMBRACE THE TREE,
HOLDING THE BALL
STANDING MEDITATION



Traditional Qigong practitioners stand and meditate in the *Embrace the Tree* position. There are other names given to the position and some call it *Holding the Ball* with slight variations in hand positions.

My Qigong focus for this standing meditation is on deep abdominal breathing and internal energy as I envision creating rootedness like a tree, with toes dug into the floor or ground for a solid foundation. I imagine the energy gates in my hands and head opening to new life and power from the natural environment and surrounding universe. I visualize stability, balance and security to face the day. I picture myself as a Tree of Life or pillar of power, creating life and family centered on the highest ideals, sending out energy from my roots to the extended family and community I serve. Though winds may blow this tree will not be uprooted!

I symbolically hold my purest optimism, idealism, nobility and desire to touch my true self like a large ball in front of me, a shield against negativity and insecurity and the voices of judgement, cynicism and fear that might surround me.

I gather the seed of hope for a truthful, beautiful and good future and embrace it, lead with it every day-allowing it to grow and develop and become a part of me.

I may visualize others standing together with me, holding a similar purpose, rooted in heart and connected in mind through attendance to the universal energy and love offered by nature. We may listen together for our harmonious emerging future both individually and collectively.

TRADITIONAL QIGONG MOVEMENT: MERGING HEAVEN AND EARTH

Traditional Qigong students practice the movement described below as *Merging Heaven and Earth*. For me it is an exercise to balance heavenly idealism with earthly difficulties: an opportunity to visualize my highest expectations becoming reality. In this exercise energy from the earth is drawn up from the feet and celestial energy is drawn down from the crown. The two merge at my core and the energy of that fusion is pushed deeply into my body's channels, meridians and reservoirs. It is a great exercise for synchronizing the breath with a simple relaxing movement and can help, with its smooth and swaying movements, to create emotional calm and stability.

I have named this the *Planter Exercise*. With the deep breath and slow movements of this traditional form, I may visualize myself as a gardener cultivating the field and planting

new seeds of love, providing nourishment for the sprouts of life that I am offering in the fertile soil of my community.

- 1. Start in the basic *Embrace the Tree* standing meditation position. Briefly allow your arms to hang loosely in front of the thighs, palms down.**
- 2. Then raise arms straight up to height of the chin with palms still down, bent slightly at the wrist and relaxed. At the same time take a deep abdominal inhale.**
- 3. Then bring palms back to the body at about chin level still during inhale and push down with hands toward ground bending knees and back straight in a squat position during deep abdominal exhale. I call this motion *Pushing Down to Nourish the Roots* as I might visualize the highest energy gathered at the head, then heart level, being pushed down willfully to the deepest core of my being, my roots, to nourish and fertilize my vision. If physically able try to widen your stance and squat deeply to strengthen the legs.**

1.



2.



3.



**Finally, return to original position *Embrace the Tree*
standing meditation position with a scooping motion of hands I
call *Scoop and Store at the Core*. I visualize created energy from
my practice being gathered, collected and stored at my power
point just below the navel. The Chinese call this power point
the dan tian, literally meaning heaven.**



**I plant myself firmly and activate the possibilities and
opportunities of the fertile field, again and again and again....**

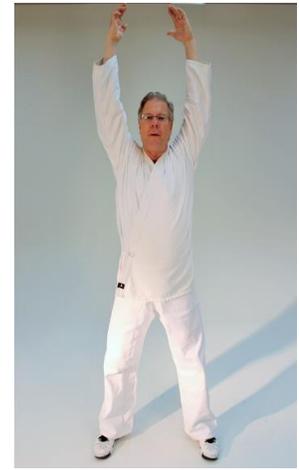
TRADITIONAL QIGONG MOVEMENT: GREAT TAI CHI CIRCLE OR EMPEROR'S DELIGHT

One of the most valued and respected movements for traditional Qigong practitioners is the *Great Tai-Chi Circle*, also called the *Emperor's Delight* described below. It is said to have been taught to Chinese emperors to protect health, prolong life and enhance vitality. It is a great exercise to balance and straighten the body and allow for the real experience of energy flow from the tip of the head to the feet with a strong stretch of the shoulders, rib cage, chest and abdomen.

I call this movement the *Harvester Exercise* as I seek with the gathering motion of my arms to harvest the energy from all around me and bring it down the spine and deep into my body.

1. Start from the *Embrace the Tree* standing meditation position.





- 2. Arms are brought up straight from the side with palms up to as high as you can reach, symbolically harvesting all the energy around us. A slow and deep abdominal inhale accompanies this movement.**
- 3. At the top of our reach flatten out palms, capturing the energy and together with slow deep abdominal exhale bring it down through our entire body and then *Pushing Down to Nourish the Roots* into squatting position.**

From the final squatting position *Scoop and Store at the Core* motion and return to *Embrace the Tree* standing meditation position with cultivation of energy and storage at the dan tian.



This Qigong movement focused on harvesting energy reminds us to be aware of and observe the natural world and plant life in particular. Seeds are planted and through a process of growth reach maturity and are eventually harvested.

Most of human growth and development takes place in a similar organic fashion and we need to be patient while in our growth stage on the way to maturity or attempting to substantialize an idea.

While practicing this form I may also visualize harvesting the love of my family and extended family, or harvesting growth experiences I have gone through in my life which have helped create the person I am in the present.

TRADITIONAL QIGONG MOVEMENT: PALMS RAISED TO HEAVEN TO REGULATE THE TRIPLE BURNERS

As mentioned earlier many Qigong movements are based on the precepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The *Palms Raised to Heaven to Regulate the Triple Burners* exercise is done to open up the valves and gates of what TCM calls the Triple Burners of our body's energy system.

The *Upper Burner* is believed to govern the movement of energy and blood from the top of the throat to the entrance of the stomach, including lungs and heart. The *Middle Burner* is said to regulate vital functions of the major digestive organs the stomach, spleen, pancreas, liver, gall bladder, kidneys and small intestine. The *Lower Burner* controls excretory orifices and their functions and distributes energy to the bowels and bladder. Qigong practitioners believe that this exercise helps to balance these three energy systems and regulates vital functions of the organs.

I call this Qigong form *The Unifier Exercise*. While raising my palms high to the sky I sometimes imagine trying to extend and penetrate the floor of heaven, pulling back down with me all the truth, beauty and goodness that might exist in that place. For me, this movement prepares my mind and heart on a daily basis for the possibility of bringing unity and harmony to the relationships and work I find myself involved in.



1. Start from *Embrace the Tree* standing meditation position.
2. While inhaling lift your hands straight up above your head. As your hands begin to reach above your head turn hands so that they are facing upward with palms pointing toward the sky and stretch as high as you can.



- 3. While exhaling keep arms extended and slowly bring them down on your sides until returning to the *Embrace the Tree* Standing Meditation position. This *Unifier Exercise* should be repeated as many times as you feel necessary to create a sense of unifying energy and deep intention within yourself to reach out and develop connective and harmonious relationships with your community.**

TRADITIONAL QIGONG MOVEMENTS: COSMIC BEING, BEAR RISING UP, CAT STANCE AND ROCK PUSH

The Five Animal Frolics is one of the oldest traditional Qigong systems that is still practiced today. It is a dance-like set of exercises modeled after the Crane, Bear, Monkey, Deer and Tiger. Creation of the set is attributed to Hua Tuo (A.D. 110-207) often called the Father of Chinese Medicine.

The Frolics, similar to the movements described below, are said to increase the circulation of qi (internal energy) in the body and improve health, build martial and fighting skills, and also teach harmony with animals and all of nature. The *Bear Rising Up* exercise is part of one animal frolic and the *Cat Stance* and *Rock Push* movement asks practitioners to imagine a rock wall in nature and the cat-like energy force needed to move it. The *Cosmic Being* movement is believed to strengthen the immune system, increase the strength and density of the bones, help store qi in the body and stimulate the flow of internal energy through the skin.

- 1. With heels together make a fist with the left hand and cover with right hand and raise above your head representing your highest principles and ideals.**



- 2. With a deep inhale slowly lower two fists together to just above the position of the heart where our highest ideals can make an explosive connection to our deepest love and compassion. Then exhale deep and slow and perform traditional Qigong**

movement *Cosmic Being* by pushing out both right and left arms with palm heel strikes (palms pulled back vertically as close to 90 degrees to wrists as possible) on a horizontal plane. Push your love and energy into the world with a strong will and courage and imagine your body is filling the universe: head touching the heavens, feet reaching to the center of the earth, right and left arms extended out infinitely. Attempt to visualize the pores of your skin opening and that there is a lightness and porosity to the entire body allowing for a universal healing energy to enter in. Try and hold for 20-30 seconds.

3. Inhale and drop your arms slowly to the side, slightly widen stance and slowly raise your arms like a standing bear. This is the traditional Qigong *Bear Rising Up* position. While the *Cosmic Being* movement tends to take our focus outside of the body the purpose of the *Bear Rising Up* movement is to keep us internally heavy and rooted,



grounded, anchored and immobile like a mountain. From this position of authentic strength and bear-like power we can courageously act in the world.

4. While inhaling step forward with your right foot and form a left *Cat stance and Rock push* position while slowly exhaling with left hand above right at about chin level. This movement symbolically represents the shaping of an idea, crystallizing our vision, pushing it into the world and generating opportunities for co-creation.



5. Return to the Embrace the Tree standing meditation position.



This combination of movements should be repeated many times, until we begin to connect with the powerful creative energy available to us as we open our most thoughtful minds, expand the depth of our love and compassion, and courageously express our most profound desires into the world.

I have studied the following books for years and learned from them during my traditional qigong practice. I have also relied on their expertise when trying to explain the movements shown in this booklet. If interested in qigong I highly recommended these books for review:

Kenneth S. Cohen. *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1997.

Daniel Reid. *The Complete Guide to Chi-gung: Harnessing the Power of the Universe*. Great Britain: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Dr. Jwing-Ming Yang. *The Root of Chinese Qigong: Secrets for Health, Longevity and Enlightenment*. Massachusetts: YMMA, 1997.

Lam Kam Chuen. *Chi Kung: Way of Power*. London: Gaia Books, 2003.

Dave Tebo. *Way of Harmony Qigong Based on Tong-il Moo-Do the Unified Martial Art: Helping You Cultivate the Energy and Wisdom Needed to Live Well and Love in the 21st Century*. Oklahoma City: CSP. 2016

C. Otto Scharmer. *Theory U: Leading From the Future as It Emerges, 2nd Edition*. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

