

## Basics of *Daoist* and Classical Chinese Medicine



*Yin – Yang*  
Describes the complementary opposites that all things are based upon



*Tian* (Heaven) – described as the “Universe” or “Cosmos” not the heaven of Judaeo-Christian belief  
“will of heaven” = following natural law

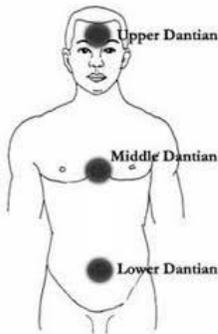


*Ren* (Humanity) – human beings are in between heaven and earth – this term also defines compassion or “human-heartedness”



*Di* (Earth) – our temporal home, source of sustenance and physical life, *yin* to heaven’s *yang*  
Five elements are centered on earth our “mother”

Each person is a Microcosm and center of harmony  
ex: hair = plants on the surface, arteries are rivers, bones are rocks



3 *dantians* – elixir fields  
– locate each as a center of intelligence and internal power  
– gut instinct, heart intuition, third eye/forebrain insight

3 treasures  
– *Jing* (essence/sexuality)  
– *Qi* (energy/vitality)  
– *Shen* (heart/spirit)

Constitutional Essence and Acquired Essence = “nature/nurture”

Five Phases – Metal, Water, Wood, Fire, Earth – metaphors for the process of change  
Organ System Correspondences: Lung, Kidney, Liver, Heart, Spleen/Pancreas  
*Zhang* (yin) and *Fu* (yang) Organs – LU/LI, KD/UB, LV/GB, HT/SI, SP/ST  
12 Channels – same as the organ systems plus Pericardium and Triple Warmer  
8 Extraordinary channels - especially Governing (*Du*) and Conception (*Ren*) and Belt (*Dai Mai*)  
Pathogenic Factors – Heat, Fire, Cold, Dry, Damp, Wind  
Emotional Excesses – Sorrow/Grief, Fear/Fright, Anger/Rage, Joy/Mania, Worry/Anxiety

*Daoist* “immortals” – the goal of a long life free from strain; follow nature’s way  
-antidote to Confucian emphasis on social structure and “right” conduct

### What is Qigong?

*Qi* – the image of steam rising over a pot of rice  
*Gong* – work, practice, expertise as in “kung fu”  
*Qigong* translates well as “energy cultivation”  
*Qigong* is a modern term – ancient terms are:  
– *yang shen* (nurturing life)  
– *nei gong* (internal exercises – usually martial arts)  
– *dao yin* (to guide or lead the healing process)



*Qigong* is aerobic, strength, and stretching exercise  
*Qigong* is spiritual, medical, and healing practice  
*Qigong* is internal martial art foundation (*taiji*, *bagua*, *hsing-i*, etc.)



### Three Tunings

*Qigong* is practiced to harmonize the body-breath-mind – 3 tunings:

- Breathing Method – slow, deep, smooth, even, fine, rounded, natural/relaxed
- Postural Correction – fine points of standing, sinking weight, lifting bones, unlock joints
- Mind Intent – calm, empty, quiet, alert, aware, open, present, humble, non-judgmental

### How much *qigong*? “dosage”

Repetitions – numbering systems usually are multiples of threes and nines

70% rule – take it easy, build results slowly over time (pain = no gain)

100 days to change – neuroscience confirms, neural networks grow

Practice is often best in the morning as a foundation for the day but may be done at any time

### Contraindications

Avoid doing vigorous *qigong* exercise if you are feeling weak or ill. Breath-work and meditation while lying or sitting may be all one can do until strength returns. You may feel faint or weak after practice while building strength and health. Nausea from exertion and holding postures too long for one's current level of vitality may also occur. Muscles may become sore from being used in new ways. Take it easy if need be. Avoid exercising in cold drafts or excess heat. Keep hydrated. It is best to avoid practice right after eating. Relieve yourself before practice to preserve *qi*. Rarely, a person will develop obsessive or compulsive desires to overdo it. If you have such tendencies, be reasonable. Be aware of your own limitations. If you experience pain, modify or avoid the specific exercise. Stay in tune with yourself.

### Some Key Principles of *Qigong* Practice

Here are many of the principles I have found that make *qigong* uniquely identifiable. Many of these will be explored in greater depth throughout your training.

- Origins in *Daoist* health and philosophy
- Three Tunings – breath, body, and mind
- Five Dynamics – *Yi* (mind intent), *Li* (body mechanics), *Qi* (energy), *Jin* (power), *Shen* (spirit)
- Standing Practices – with a variety of hand and foot positions – bones lift, muscles sink
- Posture and Attitude – centering, grounding, uplifting
- Open the Gates – joints are never locked, keep them engaged and open
- Three Plates/Planes – eyes, shoulders, hips remain parallel, level-headed
- Linkages – ankles & wrists, knees & elbows, hips & shoulders
- Four “Empties” – feet, palms, chest, mind, relax (*song*) and settle down (*chen*)
- Cloud Hands – floating and sinking, lightness of being
- Three “C’s” of Coiling Silk – Circularity, Continuity, Complementarity
- Fluid Dynamics of Weight Shifting – the ocean within, lava lamp, kelp forest
- Walking Dynamics – the redwood tree and the water strider
- Movement comes from the core (*dantian*) – gyroscopic spinning ball of energy
- Spiraling – screws are stronger than nails
- Seven directions of movement – up, down, forward, back, left, right, center
- Single-weighted vs. double-weighted – freedom of movement
- Whole body integrated power – *jung ti jin* – movement starts, moves, and ends together
- Healing is based on energy flow – the beaver dam and the river
- *Qi* – gathering, circulating, storing, using, expelling

There are so many additional processes to discover that are not mentioned here. The realm of *Daoist* health philosophy itself appears to be nearly infinite in its ability to enrich our understanding.

