



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout May 22, 2022

Qigong

In recent months, I have been incorporating more Qigong routines into all of the classes. And, I offer two Qigong classes; one by ZOOM every Tuesday at 2 PM (PT) and in-person every Thursday at 10 AM at Hillcrest Church.

I believe that to give you the best experience as a student of T'ai Chi, qigong should be part of the curriculum. According to the traditional Chinese medical community, the origin of qigong is commonly attributed to the legendary Yellow Emperor (2696–2598 BCE) and the classic Huangdi Neijing book of internal medicine.



20th Century statue of the Yellow Emperor, carved by Ju Ming on display at the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Ju Ming born 1938 is a Taiwanese sculptor who attained fame in Taiwan in the 1970s, and in New York City in 1983. Ju Ming was trained as a woodcarver but creates in a range of media including bronze, Styrofoam, ceramics, and stainless steel. He has some beautiful large stone Tai chi statues that you can view by googling Ju Ming.

Qigong (pronounced “chee-gong”) meditation is an ancient Chinese healing practice that combines meditation, controlled breathing, and gentle movement. It’s roughly translated as “the master of one’s energy. Qi means “vital life force,” while gong means “mastery or cultivation”. So, Qigong translates to “cultivating breath/energy” or the “discipline of vital breath.” This practice is meant to cultivate the energy and strength of nature into one’s body to promote better mental, physical, and spiritual health

In traditional Chinese medicine, the belief is that poor health is the result of energy that flows through the twelve meridians – or sections – of the body that becomes blocked and stagnated. Thus, qigong is believed to promote health by allowing your energy, or qi, to flow through the body unimpeded.

Qigong is popular throughout the world for exercise, recreation, relaxation, preventative medicine, and physical and mental healing. Plus, it’s employed in martial arts training. The flow of qi is more of a belief system than an empirically studied concept. In my past professional life, my work relied on evidenced-based practices- social sciences and health care. However, I am a believer in the idea of the importance of breath, energy flow and directing the breath for wellness and wellbeing. This comes in part from my musical training. The proper use of breath is essential to creating beautiful sound and performing musically. Thus, the easy flow of breath is good for our mind, body, spirit connection.

Qigong involves intentional, active movement and breathwork that enhances yang energy (active energy, strength, and vibrancy) as well as passive movement that embraces energy through stillness and mental focus.

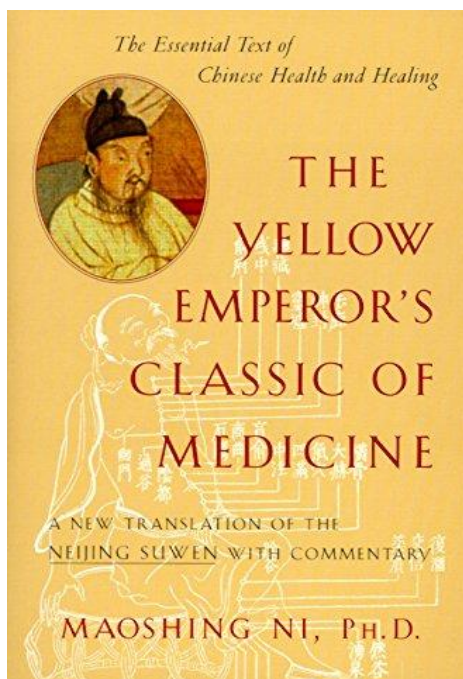
One of the more important benefits of Qigong is awareness of one’s own body space. This is known as proprioception. Being aware of your position in space and time is essential to fall prevention. Qigong helps achieve this.

Qigong is much older than T’ai Chi by centuries. T’ai Chi was developed as a fighting form and was kept secret for eons among the families and villages (Chen, Yang) and then entered the public mainstream in the 1900’s.

Both Qigong and Tai Chi combine slow, deliberate movements, meditation and deep relaxed breathing. Both activate the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) which is the rest and restore system of the body. We activate the PNS while performing qigong and T'ai Chi. It is calming and soothing to the mind, body and spirit. The main benefits of Qigong are calming the brain, improving posture, circulation and body alignment. Qigong can reduce stress and create harmony within and without.

I have taught a number of Qigong routines. Here are the ones that you may know:

1. The 5 Breaths
2. Shibashi- 18 form
3. The 5 Animal Frolic
4. The 5 Treasures
5. Eight pieces of Brocade
6. Tiger Mountain
7. Pieces and concepts of Primordial Qigong



Peace, *Linda*