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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON QIGONG

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In June 1982, Psi Research published the paper "Some Theoretical Ideas on the Development of Basic Research in Human Body Science" by Dr. Qian Zue-sen (Xuesen), a well known physicist and an expert on military rocketry in China. In his paper, Dr. Zue-sen emphasized the interconnection between the ancient Chinese practice of Qigong and exceptional human body functioning (a term for psi coined in China). Some researchers believe that Qigong can be used for training and facilitating psi to a larger extent than yoga and related systems. To date, there have been a number of excellent publications on yoga in the West, but we possess very scarce knowledge on Qigong practice. Therefore, we asked Dr. Cyrus Lee, presently Professor of Psychology at the Edinboro State College in Pennsylvania, to share his views on Qigong with readers of Psi Research. - Ed.

In August of 1982, I had the honor to present (in absentia) the paper "Qigong and Its Major Models" at the 12th International Parascience Conference held at the University of San Francisco. The paper was well accepted and later was published in Chinese Culture journal [1]. Ever since, I have been receiving many letters and telephone calls asking me various questions about Qigong, and this brief article is an attempt to answer at least some of these questions.

1. The English Translation of Qigong

Qigong has been a practical exercise of both body and mind of the Chinese people for many centuries, yet there is no equivalent word for Qigong in English. Joseph Needham translated Qi or Chi as "breath," "spirit," and "pneuma" in his opus magnum, Science and Civilization in China [2]; but

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none of these three English words can adequately represent the Chinese word Qi or Chi. Thus, when I wrote my paper on "Qigong and Its Major Models" [1], I chose to use a phonetic translation of "Qigong."

Recently I have read a short article about the English translation of Qigong in a Chinese journal named Qigong and Science. According to Mr. Pang Zu-ru, author of the article, the existing translations such as "breath exercise," "transcendental meditation," "biofeedback," "vital energy," and "pneuma" can not well represent the idea of "Qigong." Mr. Pang was convinced that "aura almost has the exact meaning of Qi," therefore he suggested that Qigong should be translated as either "aura-exercise" or "exercise of human aura" [3].

Last month Professor Hsu Ding-ming mailed me a copy of his new book entitled The Chinese Psychic Healing. To this bilingual text I wrote a short foreword in Chinese and I quoted the "Hao Ren Chih Qi" of Mencius. The two translators of the Foreword (Professor Hung Tie-sheng and James Decker) rendered it as "the splendorous Chi (Qi)." On this they made a footnote: "The word Chi (Qi) is the equivalent of Sanskrit Prana. Splendorous Chi seems to be the equivalent of the Sanskrit Sakti, an all-encompassing subtle generative power, also identifiable with Love" [4].

Whether or not Qi is the equivalent of Prana, Mr. Hung's translation is basically phonetic. Whether or not aura is truly an English word, it does not fully represent the Chinese word Qi. besides, aura means also "an invisible atmosphere supposedly arising from and surrounding a person or thing." It has not only a metaphysical connotation but also a religious implication, consequently it may be very misleading. (I still remember the reason why Dr. Charles Tart had changed his original title of "Spiritual Psychologies" into "Transpersonal Psychologies," because the word "spiritual" might be a very misleading word for the readers.) I am quite convinced that if English readers have accepted Chinese words such as Taifoon and Chowmien, they can also accept another sinonized word, Qigong.

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2. The Definition of Qigong

Once a European scholar asked me: "What is Qigong, anyway? Is there any good definition for it?" Jokingly but also seriously, I borrowed Mencius' answer to his disciples: "It is hard to say."

Qi and Qigong must be rather experienced than to be defined. Rollo May, a very sophisticated psychologist and philosopher, has described love in many different ways in his bestseller book, Love and Will. He did give us a good definition of love, because he experienced love before he defined it. I believe if you experience Qigong first, then you will understand it better.

One of the well experienced Qigong masters is Kuo Lin. After many years of practice in qigong, she has the following description: "Qi (or Qigong) cannot be seen by your eyes and it cannot be grasped by your hands. But a Qigong master is different from ordinary people, because he can apparently realize something moving and promulgating in his body, something like the electric current circulating within you and making some tingling feelings" [5].

If you are a scientist or a researcher, you may like to have a scientific and operational definition of Qigong. Professor Yang Binjen offers such a definition as follows: "Qigong is a self-oriented exercise, in which and by which one specifically mobilizes and utilizes the power-flow of his own body field" [3]. According to Mr. Yang, this operational definition can satisfy three basic scientific demands: (1) it can differentiate Qigong from other similar exercises; (2) it can summarize the common characteristics of various kinds of Qigong; and (3) it can reflect some aspects of scientific methodology as well as adopt some of the international terminology.

3. The History and Theoretical Considerations of Qigong

Last year a Canadian researcher of Qigong wrote to me that he has been very much frustrated because he cannot find enough primary sources for doing his research. I think this is true not only in English but also in Chinese Qigong

literature. Some twenty years ago, Ilza Veith translated and published an abridged edition of The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine [6], in which one may find some relevant material on Qi and Qigong.

Historically the year of 1978 was certainly an important year for the study of Qi and Qigong. It was in this very year that The Thoughts of Qi was published in Japan under the editorship of Professor Hsiao-ye Tse-ging and his thirty associates [7,8]. This great source book of Qi and Qigong is divided into four major parts: (1) From Yin to Han Dynasties, on the Origin of Life and Qi; (2) From Wei to the Five Dynasties, on the Idea of Qi According to Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism; (3) From Sung to Chin Dynasties, on the Idea of Qi as Understood by Li-Qi Philosophies; and (4) From the End of Chin Dynasty to the Fourth of May Movement, on the idea of Qi in the new philosophies of Modern China. Unfortunately, there is no English translation of this comprehensive work as yet.

Although the practical cultivation of Qi or the practice of Qigong has been equally emphasized in Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, yet the specific theories of Qi and Qigong have been formulated only in Taoism. Perhaps the best and also the earliest Qigong theory is that of the "Peace Classic," which was composed some time in the Han Dynasty.

Among the Western psychologists, everybody knows about the Freudian personality "Trinity." However, among the Chinese Qigong scholars only few have paid attention to the "Trinitarian Approach" to human nature by the author of The Peace Classic. The Qigong theorist stated: "One is the seed (Chin), one is the spirit (Sheng), one is the breath (Qi). These three are actually one. Based upon the breath of heaven, earth and man: the spirit is received from heaven, the seed from earth and the breath from the harmonizer (man). Through their interactions there comes the Tao. . . The three are mutually governed, therefore, if anyone wants longevity, he must love the breath, revere the spirit and esteem the seed" [9, p. 728].

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By loving the breath, revering the spirit, and esteeming the seed, one can achieve enlightenment of his own being. Thus the classic says: "The human body derives from the muddy breath, then the breath produces the seed, the seed produces the spirit and the spirit produces the enlightenment" [9, p. 739]. Using our modern terminology, I would interpret that the seed seems to be the physical and material basis of our body, the breath seems to be the physiological and psychological development, and the spirit seems to be the transpersonal and transcendental destination or goal of our life, without which the human being would become meaningless.

4. The Methodology of Qigong

Basically there are two kinds of methodology by which Qigong can be studied: first, the extrinsic method which is also called "the phenomenological analysis;" and second, the intrinsic which is also named "the introspective reflection." In the traditional Chinese medicine, although the extrinsic method has not been rejected or ignored, the intrinsic method has been emphasized and widely used. Thus most, if not all, Chinese physicians do believe the basic principle which says: "When the Yin and Yang are equalized and harmonized, the seed and spirit are well governed; however, when the Yin and Yang are separated, the seed and breath are terminated."

Since the late seventies, there have been several groups of Chinese and Japanese researchers, who have initiated quite extensive scientific experiments on Qigong. For example, in 1978 a group of Chinese researchers used the MXZ-792 Model of Qigong Information Apparatus, and successfully transmitted Qigong master Chao's therapeutic input-message to the magnetic tape, then transmitted the same to the particular acupuncture spots of certain patients. After many times of clinical experimentation, they found the results were very successful [10]. This apparently confirms the view of researchers from the Institute of High Energy Physics in Beijing, who stated:

> The Chi [Qi] is considered today somewhat like radiation in modern physics, but there is a difference in that the Chi concept emphasizes not only an energy aspect, but also an information aspect. Thus it is emphasized that Chi makes it possible for separated bodies to transmit information as well as energy to one another [11, p. 17].

In promoting the modernization of scientific methodology, Professor Hsu Ding-ming has contributed quite a lot during the past decade. After my own close observations, I tend to believe that Hsu's psychic healing technique is actually a combination of the Chinese qigong and the Western hypnosis. Lately he wrote to me that the Chinese Parapsychological Association (Taipei) is going to sponsor an area parapsychological Symposium for the Pacific countries in March of 1985. Let us sincerely hope that many eminent scholars as well as serious researchers of different countries will attend this symposium and perhaps an East-West dialogue about Qigong can be arranged and exchanged.

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PSI CAN BE LEARNED

(Training Methods and Approaches Developed by Barbara Ivanova in Moscow)

I. Barbara Ivanova on the Development of Psi Abilities

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As is widely known, the issue of development of psi abilities is very controversial. Some researchers believe that the cultivation of these abilities, i.e., the implementation of a process of learning, is quite possible. Others think that a majority of the existing methods intended to develop psi (ESP, PK and/or psychic healing) abilities are only capable of eliminating the psychological obstacles of subjects and thus increasing their performance in experiments. Without a detailed discussion of this controversy and referring readers to the extensive work by Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove [2], I would like to describe briefly some training methods developed by Barbara Ivanova, a leading researcher and healer in Moscow. Her method of training of intuitive (possibly psi) diagnosis enabled her numerous students to identify various disorders of the body, as well as locations of scars, traces of former fractures, operations, etc. (under clothing and when a person was at some distance from the experimenter, even at a distance of dozens of kilometers).

In one of her publications [3], Barbara Ivanova partially explained her method for increasing the perception of "intuitive information" (in her terminology). She stated that during a group training session the leader of the group instructed the students as follows:

1. Imagine some pleasant event or any picture or image which pleases you.
2. Try to understand and remember how you have imagined this - what "place" this mental image occupied in your mind.
3. "Wipe off" from your "inner screen" everything that you imagined and create a "vacuum" in your

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