

Qigong

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Qigong, **qi gong**, **chi kung**, or **chi gung** (simplified Chinese: 气功; traditional Chinese: 氣功; pinyin: *qìgōng*; Wade–Giles: *chi gong*; literally: "Life Energy Cultivation") is a holistic system of coordinated body posture and movement, breathing, and meditation used for health, spirituality, and martial arts training. With roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy, and martial arts, qigong is traditionally viewed as a practice to cultivate and balance qi (chi), translated as "life energy".^[1]

According to Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian philosophy, qigong allows access to higher realms of awareness, awakens one's "true nature", and helps develop human potential.^[2]

Qigong practice typically involves moving meditation, coordinating slow flowing movement, deep rhythmic breathing, and calm meditative state of mind. Qigong is now practiced throughout China and worldwide for recreation, exercise and relaxation, preventive medicine and self-healing, alternative medicine, meditation and self-cultivation, and training for martial arts.

Over the centuries, a diverse spectrum of qigong forms developed in different segments of Chinese society. Traditionally, qigong training has been esoteric and secretive, with knowledge passed from adept master to student in lineages that maintain their own unique interpretations and methods. Qigong practices were brought to the public beginning in the 1950s, when the Communist Party institutionalized and began research into traditional Chinese medicine. Although the practice of qigong was prohibited during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s; it was once again allowed after 1976. On account of the political climate at the time, the emphasis of qigong practices shifted away from traditional philosophy and cultivation, and increasingly focused health benefits, medicine and martial arts applications, and a scientific perspective. Since a 1999 crackdown,

Qigong



Qigong practitioners at World Tai Chi and Qigong Day event in Manhattan.

Chinese name

Traditional Chinese	氣功
Simplified Chinese	气功

Transcriptions

Standard Mandarin

Hanyu Pinyin	qìgōng
Wade–Giles	chi-kung
Tongyong Pinyin	cìgōng
Yale Romanization	chìgūng
IPA	[tɕʰíkóng]

Wu

Romanization	chi ^去 khon ^平
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Yue: Cantonese

Yale Romanization	hei gūng
IPA	[h̥i.kóng]
Jyutping	hei3 gung1

Southern Min

Hokkien POJ	khì-kong
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Korean name

Hangul	기공
Hanja	氣功

Transcriptions

practice of qigong in China has been restricted. Over the same period, interest in qigong has spread, with millions of practitioners worldwide.

Research concerning qigong has been conducted for a wide range of medical conditions, including hypertension, pain, and cancer treatment. Most systematic reviews of clinical trials have not been conclusive, and all have been based on poor quality clinical studies, such that no firm conclusions about the health effects of qigong can be drawn at this stage.

[3]

Revised Romanization	gigong
McCune–Reischauer	kikong
Japanese name	
Hiragana	きこう
Kyūjitai	氣功
Shinjitai	気功
Transcriptions	
Romanization	kikō

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Etymology

Qigong (Pinyin), ch'i kung (Wade-Giles), and chi gung (Yale) are English words for two Chinese characters: *qì* (氣) and *gōng* (功).

Qi (or *chi*) is often translated as life energy,^[1] referring to energy circulating through the body; though a more general definition is universal energy, including heat, light, and electromagnetic energy;^[4] and definitions often involve breath, air, gas, or relationship between matter, energy, and spirit.^[5] Qi is the central underlying principle in traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts. *Gong* (or *kung*) is often translated as cultivation or work, and definitions include practice, skill, mastery, merit, achievement, service, result, or accomplishment, and is often used to mean gongfu (kung fu) in the traditional sense of achievement through great effort.^[6] The two words are combined to describe systems to cultivate and balance life energy, especially for health.^[1]

Although the term qigong (氣功) has been traced back to Daoist literature of the early Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), the term *qigong* as currently used was promoted in the late 1940s through the 1950s to refer to a broad range of Chinese self-cultivation exercises, and to emphasize health and scientific approaches, while de-emphasizing spiritual practices, mysticism, and elite lineages.^{[7][8][9]}

History and origins

With roots in ancient Chinese culture dating back more than 4,000 years, a wide variety of qigong forms have developed within different segments of Chinese society:^[10] in traditional Chinese medicine for preventive and curative functions,^[11] in Confucianism to promote longevity and improve moral character,^[1] in Daoism and Buddhism as part of meditative practice,^[2] and in Chinese martial arts to enhance fighting abilities.^{[8][12]} Contemporary qigong blends diverse and sometimes disparate traditions, in particular the Daoist meditative practice of "internal alchemy" (Neidan 內丹術), the ancient meditative practices of "circulating qi" (Xing qi 行氣) and "standing meditation" (Zhan zhuang 站桩), and the slow gymnastic breathing exercise of "guiding and pulling" (Dao yin 導引). Traditionally, knowledge about qigong was passed from adept master to student in elite unbroken lineages, typically with



The physical exercise chart; a painting on silk depicting the practice of Qigong Taiji; unearched in 1973 in Hunan Province, China, from the 2nd-century BC Western Han burial site of Mawangdui Han tombs site, Tomb Number 3.

secretive and esoteric traditions of training and oral transmission,^[13] and with an emphasis on meditative practice by scholars and gymnastic or dynamic practice by the working masses.^[14]

Starting in the late 1940s and the 1950s, the mainland Chinese government tried to integrate disparate qigong approaches into one coherent system, with the intention of establishing a firm scientific basis for qigong practice. In 1949, Liu Guizhen established the name "Qigong" to refer to the system of life preserving practices that he and his associates developed based on Dao yin and other philosophical traditions.^[15] This attempt is considered by some sinologists as the start of the modern or scientific interpretation of qigong.^{[16][17][18]} During the Great Leap Forward (1958–1963) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), qigong, along with other traditional Chinese medicine, was under tight control with limited access among the general public, but was encouraged in state-run rehabilitation centers and spread to universities and hospitals. After the Cultural Revolution, qigong, along with t'ai chi, was popularized as daily morning exercise practiced en masse throughout China.

Popularity of qigong grew rapidly during the Deng and Jiang eras after Mao Zedong's death in 1976 through the 1990s, with estimates of between 60 and 200 million practitioners throughout China. Along with popularity and state sanction came controversy and problems: claims of extraordinary abilities bordering on the supernatural, pseudoscience explanations to build credibility,^[19] a mental condition labeled qigong deviation,^[18] formation of cults, and exaggeration of claims by masters for personal benefit.^{[7][20]} In 1985, the state-run "National Qigong Science and Research Organization" was established to regulate the nation's qigong denominations.^[21] In 1999, in response to widespread revival of old traditions of spirituality, morality, and mysticism, and perceived challenges to State control, the Chinese government took measures to enforce control of public qigong practice, including shutting down qigong clinics and hospitals, and banning groups such as Zhong Gong and Falun Gong.^{[9]:161–174[22]} Since the 1999 crackdown, qigong research and practice have only been officially supported in the context of health and traditional Chinese medicine. The Chinese Health Qigong Association, established in 2000, strictly regulates public qigong practice, with limitation of public gatherings, requirement of state approved training and certification of instructors, and restriction of practice to state-approved forms.^{[23][24]}

Through the forces of migration of the Chinese diaspora, tourism in China, and globalization, the practice of qigong spread from the Chinese community to the world. Today, millions of people around the world practice qigong and believe in the benefits of qigong to varying degrees. Similar to its historical origin, those interested in qigong come from diverse backgrounds and practice it for different reasons, including for recreation, exercise, relaxation, preventive medicine, self-healing, alternative medicine, self-cultivation, meditation, spirituality, and martial arts training.

Overview

Practices

Qigong comprises a diverse set of practices that coordinate body (調身), breath (調息), and mind (調心) based on Chinese philosophy.^{[25][26]} Practices include moving and still meditation, massage, chanting, sound meditation, and non-contact treatments, performed in a broad array of body postures. Qigong is

commonly classified into two foundational categories: 1) dynamic or active qigong (dong gong), with slow flowing movement; and 2) meditative or passive qigong (jing gong), with still positions and inner movement of the breath.^{[27]:21770–21772} From a therapeutic perspective, qigong can be classified into two systems: 1) internal qigong, which focuses on self-care and self-cultivation, and; 2) external qigong, which involves treatment by a therapist who directs or transmits qi.^{[27]:21777–21781}

As moving meditation, qigong practice typically coordinates slow stylized movement, deep diaphragmatic breathing, and calm mental focus, with visualization of guiding qi through the body. While implementation details vary, generally qigong forms can be characterized as a mix of four types of practice: dynamic, static, meditative, and activities requiring external aids.

- **Dynamic practice**

involves fluid movement, usually carefully choreographed, coordinated with breath and awareness. Examples include the slow stylized movements of T'ai chi ch'uan, Baguazhang, and Xing yi.^[28] Other examples include graceful movement that mimics the motion of animals in Five Animals (Wu Qin Xi qigong),^[29] White Crane,^[30] and Wild Goose (Dayan) Qigong.^{[31][32]} As a form of gentle exercise, qigong is composed of movements that are typically repeated, strengthening and stretching the body, increasing fluid movement (blood, synovial, and lymph), enhancing balance and proprioception, and improving the awareness of how the body moves through space.^[33]

- **Static practice**

involves holding postures for sustained periods of time.^[34] In some cases this bears resemblance to the practice of Yoga and its continuation in the Buddhist tradition.^[35] For example Yiquan, a Chinese martial art derived from xingyiquan, emphasizes static stance training.^[36] In another example, the healing form Eight Pieces of Brocade (Baduanjin qigong) is based on a series of static postures.^[37]

- **Meditative practice**

utilizes breath awareness, visualization, mantra, chanting, sound, and focus on philosophical concepts such as qi circulation, aesthetics, or moral values.^[38] In traditional Chinese medicine and Daoist practice, the meditative focus is commonly on cultivating qi in dantian energy centers and balancing qi flow in meridian and other pathways. In various Buddhist traditions, the aim is to still the mind, either through outward focus, for example on a place, or through inward focus on the breath, a mantra, a koan, emptiness, or the idea of the eternal. In the Confucius scholar tradition, meditation is focused on humanity and virtue, with the aim of self-enlightenment.^[10]

- **Use of external agents**

Many systems of qigong practice include the use of external agents such as ingestion of herbs, massage, physical manipulation, or interaction with other living organisms.^[2] For example, specialized food and drinks are used in some medical and Daoist forms, whereas massage and body manipulation are sometimes used in martial arts forms. In some medical systems a qigong master uses non-contact treatment, purportedly guiding qi through his or her own body into the body of another person.^[39]

Forms

There are numerous qigong forms. 75 ancient forms that can be found in ancient literature and also 56 common or contemporary forms have been described in a qigong compendium.^{[40]:203–433} The list is by no means exhaustive. Many contemporary forms were developed by people who had recovered from their illness after qigong practice.

In 2003, the Chinese Health Qigong Association officially recognized four health qigong forms:^[41]

- Muscle-Tendon Change Classic (Yi Jīn Jīng 易筋经).^{[42][43]}
- Five Animals (Wu Qīn Xī 五禽戲).^[44]
- Six Healing Sounds (Liu Zī Jue 六字訣).^[45]
- Eight Pieces of Brocade (Ba Duān Jīn 八段錦).^[46]

In 2010, the Chinese Health Qigong Association officially recognized five additional health qigong forms:^[47]

- Tai Chi Yang Sheng Zhang (太极养生杖): a tai chi form from the stick tradition.
- Shi Er Duān Jīn (十二段锦): seated exercises to strengthen the neck, shoulders, waist, and legs.
- Daoyin Yang Sheng Gong Shi Er Fa (导引养生功十二法): 12 routines from Daoyin tradition of guiding and pulling qi.
- Mawangdui Daoyin (马王堆导引术): guiding qi along the meridians with synchronous movement and awareness.
- Da Wu (大舞): choreographed exercises to lubricate joints and guide qi.

Other commonly practiced qigong styles and forms include:

- Soaring Crane Qigong^[48]
- Wisdom Healing Qigong^[49]
- Pan Gu Mystical Qigong^[50]
- Wild Goose (Dayan) Qigong^[51]
- Dragon and Tiger Qigong^[52]
- Primordial Qigong (Wujigong)^{[53][54]}

Techniques

Whether viewed from the perspective of exercise, health, philosophy, or martial arts training, several main principles emerge concerning the practice of qigong.^{[1][33][55][56]}

- **Intentional movement:** careful, flowing balanced style
- **Rhythmic breathing:** slow, deep, coordinated with fluid movement
- **Awareness:** calm, focused meditative state
- **Visualization:** of qi flow, philosophical tenets, aesthetics
- **Chanting/Sound:** use of sound as a focal point

Additional principles:

- **Softness:** soft gaze, expressionless face
- **Solid Stance:** firm footing, erect spine
- **Relaxation:** relaxed muscles, slightly bent joints
- **Balance and Counterbalance:** motion over the center of gravity

Advanced goals:

- **Equanimity:** more fluid, more relaxed
- **Tranquility:** empty mind, high awareness
- **Stillness:** smaller and smaller movements, eventually to complete stillness

The most advanced practice is generally considered to be with little or no motion.

Traditional and classical theory

Over time, five distinct traditions or schools of qigong developed in China, each with its own theories and characteristics: Chinese Medical Qigong, Daoist Qigong, Buddhist Qigong, Confucian Qigong, and martial arts qigong.^{[57]:30–80} All of these qigong traditions include practices intended to cultivate and balance qi.

^{[10][58][59][60]}

Traditional Chinese medicine

The theories of ancient Chinese Medical Qigong include the Yin-Yang and Five Phases Theory, Essence-Qi-Spirit Theory, Zang-Xiang Theory, and Meridians and Qi-Blood Theory, which have been synthesized as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).^{[57]:45–57} TCM focuses on tracing and correcting underlying disharmony, in terms of deficiency and excess, using the complementary and opposing forces of yin and yang (陰陽), to create a balanced flow of qi. Qi is believed to be cultivated and stored in three main dantian energy centers and to travel through the body along twelve main meridians (Jīng Luò 經絡), with numerous smaller branches and tributaries. The main meridians correspond to twelve main organs (Zàng fǔ 臟腑). Qi is balanced in terms of yin and yang in the context of the traditional system of Five Phases (Wu xing 五行).^{[10][11]} A person is believed to become ill or die when qi becomes diminished or unbalanced. Health is believed to be returned by rebuilding qi, eliminating qi blockages, and correcting qi imbalances. These TCM concepts do not translate readily to modern science and medicine.

Daoism

In Daoism various practices now known as Daoist Qigong are claimed to provide a way to achieve longevity and spiritual enlightenment,^[61] as well as a closer connection with the natural world.^[62]

Buddhism

In Buddhism meditative practices now known as Buddhist Qigong are part of a spiritual path that leads



Qigong practitioners in Brazil

to spiritual enlightenment or Buddhahood.^[63]

Confucianism

In Confucianism practices now known as Confucian Qigong provide a means to become a Junzi (君子) through awareness of morality.^{[64][65]}

Contemporary Qigong

In contemporary China, the emphasis of qigong practice has shifted away from traditional philosophy, spiritual attainment, and folklore, and increasingly to health benefits, traditional medicine and martial arts applications, and a scientific perspective.^{[7][9]} Qigong is now practiced by millions worldwide, primarily for its health benefits, though many practitioners have also adopted traditional philosophical, medical, or martial arts perspectives, and even use the long history of qigong as evidence of its effectiveness.^{[10][55]}

Contemporary Chinese medical qigong

Qigong has been recognized as a "standard medical technique" in China since 1989, and is sometimes included in the medical curriculum of major universities in China.^{[66]:34} The 2013 English translation of the official Chinese Medical Qigong textbook used in China^{[57]:iv,385} defines CMQ as "the skill of body-mind exercise that integrates body, breath, and mind adjustments into one" and emphasizes that qigong is based on "adjustment" (tiao 調, also translated as "regulation", "tuning", or "alignment.") of body, breath, and mind.^{[57]:16–18} As such, qigong is viewed by practitioners as being more than common physical exercise, because qigong combines postural, breathing, and mental training in one to produce a particular psychophysiological state of being.^{[57]:15} While CMQ is still based on traditional and classical theory, modern practitioners also emphasize the importance of a strong scientific basis.^{[57]:81–89} According to the 2013 CMQ textbook, physiological effects of qigong are numerous, and include improvement of respiratory and cardiovascular function, as well as possible beneficial effects on neurophysiology.^{[57]:89–102}

Conventional medicine

Conventional or mainstream medicine includes specific practices and techniques based on the best available evidence demonstrating effectiveness and safety.^[67] Qigong is not generally considered to be part of mainstream medicine because clinical research concerning effectiveness of qigong for specific medical conditions is inconclusive at this stage,^[3] and because at present there is no medical consensus concerning effectiveness of qigong.

Integrative, complementary, and alternative medicine

Integrative medicine (IM) refers to "the blending of conventional and complementary medicines and therapies with the aim of using the most appropriate of either or both modalities to care for the patient as a whole",^{[68]:455–456} whereas complementary generally refers to "using a non-mainstream approach together with conventional medicine", and alternative refers to "using a non-mainstream approach in place of conventional medicine".^[69] Qigong is used by integrative medicine practitioners to complement conventional medical treatment, based on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) interpretations of the effectiveness and safety of qigong.^{[27]:22278–22306}

Scientific basis

Scientists interested in qigong have sought to describe or verify the effects of qigong, to explore mechanisms of effects, to form scientific theory with respect to Qigong, and to identify appropriate research methodology for further study.^{[57]:81–89} In terms of traditional theory, the existence of qi has not been independently verified in an experimental setting,^[70] and the scientific basis for much of TCM and CAM has not been demonstrated.^{[71][72]}

Health applications

Recreation and popular use

People practice qigong for many different reasons, including for recreation, exercise and relaxation, preventive medicine and self-healing, meditation and self-cultivation, and training for martial arts. In recent years a large number of books and videos have been published that focus primarily on qigong as exercise and associated health benefits. Practitioners range from athletes to the physically challenged. Because it is low impact and can be done lying, sitting, or standing, qigong is accessible for disabled persons, seniors, and people recovering from injuries.^[1]

Therapeutic use

Therapeutic use of qigong is directed by TCM, CAM, integrative medicine, and other health practitioners. In China, where it is considered a "standard medical technique",^{[66]:34} qigong is commonly prescribed to treat a wide variety of conditions, and clinical applications include hypertension, coronary artery disease, peptic ulcers, chronic liver diseases, diabetes mellitus, obesity, menopause syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, insomnia, tumors and cancer, lower back and leg pain, cervical spondylosis, and myopia.^{[57]:261–391} Outside China qigong is used in integrative medicine to complement or supplement accepted medical treatments, including for relaxation, fitness, rehabilitation, and treatment of specific conditions.^{[68][73]}

Effectiveness

Based on systematic reviews of clinical research, it is not advisable to draw conclusions concerning effectiveness of qigong for specific medical conditions at this stage.^[3]

Safety and cost

Qigong is generally viewed as safe.^[74] No adverse effects have been observed in clinical trials, such that qigong is considered safe for use across diverse populations. Cost for self-care is minimal, and cost efficiencies are high for group delivered care.^[75] Typically the cautions associated with qigong are the same as those associated with any physical activity, including risk of muscle strains or sprains, advisability of stretching to prevent injury, general safety for use alongside conventional medical treatments, and consulting with a physician when combining with conventional treatment.^[76]

Research

Overview of clinical research

Although clinical research examining health effects of qigong is increasing, there is little financial or medical incentive to support research, and still only a limited number of studies meet accepted medical and scientific standards of randomized controlled trials (RCTs).^[75] Clinical research concerning qigong has been conducted for a wide range of medical conditions, including bone density, cardiopulmonary effects, physical function, falls and related risk factors, quality of life, immune function, inflammation,^[75] hypertension,^[77] pain,^{[78][79]} and cancer treatment.^[80] A 2011 overview of systematic reviews of clinical trials concluded that "the effectiveness of qigong is based mostly on poor quality research" and "therefore, it would be unwise to draw firm conclusions at this stage".^[3] Although a 2010 comprehensive literature review found 77 peer-reviewed RCTs,^[75] systematic reviews for particular health conditions show that most clinical research is of poor quality, typically because of small sample size and lack of proper control groups, with lack of blinding associated with high risk of bias.^[3]

Systematic reviews of clinical research

A systematic review of the effect of qigong exercises on hypertension found that the available studies were encouraging for the exercises to lower systolic blood pressure. However, an analysis of the studies that found these results showed that they were of relatively poor quality, with the lack of blinding raising the possibility of bias in the results, so no definitive conclusions could be reached.^[77] Another systematic review found that qigong exercises improved blood pressure compared to doing nothing, but was not superior to standard treatment such as medications or conventional exercise.^[81]

A 2007 systematic review of the effect of qigong exercises on diabetes mellitus management concluded that there may be beneficial effects, but that no firm conclusions could be drawn due to the methodological problems with the underlying clinical trials studies, especially the lack of a control group.^[82] A more recent 2009 systematic review found that due to the underlying methodological problems, "the evidence is insufficient to suggest that qigong is an effective treatment for type 2 diabetes".^[83]

A systematic review on the effect of qigong exercises on reducing pain concluded that "the existing trial evidence is not convincing enough to suggest that internal qigong is an effective modality for pain management."^[78] Another systematic review, which focused on external qigong and its effect on pain, concluded "that evidence for the effectiveness of external qigong is encouraging, though further studies are warranted" due to the small number of studies and participants involved which precluded any firm conclusions about the specific effects of qigong on pain.^[79]

A systematic review of the effect of qigong exercises on cancer treatment concluded "the effectiveness of qigong in cancer care is not yet supported by the evidence from rigorous clinical trials."^[80] A separate systematic review that looked at the effects of qigong exercises on various physiological or psychological outcomes found that the available studies were poorly designed, with a high of bias in the results. Therefore, the authors concluded, "Due to limited number of RCTs in the field and methodological problems and high risk of bias in the included studies, it is still too early to reach a conclusion about the efficacy and the effectiveness of qigong exercise as a form of health practice adopted by the cancer patients during their curative, palliative, and rehabilitative phases of the cancer journey."^[84]

A systematic review of the effect of qigong exercises on movement disorders found that the evidence was insufficient to recommend its use for this purpose.^[85]

Mental health research

Many claims have been made that qigong can benefit or ameliorate mental health conditions,^[75] including improved mood, decreased stress reaction, and decreased anxiety and depression. Most medical studies have only examined psychological factors as secondary goals, although various studies have shown significant benefits such as decrease in cortisol levels, a chemical hormone produced by the body in response to stress.^[75]

Research in China

Basic and clinical research in China during the 1980s was mostly descriptive, and few results were reported in peer-reviewed English-language journals.^{[27]:22060–22063} A 1996 review of selected Chinese research concluded that there are many potential medical applications of qigong.^[86] Qigong became known outside China in the 1990s, and clinical randomized controlled trials (RCTs) investigating the effectiveness of qigong on health and mental conditions began to be published worldwide, along with systematic reviews.^{[27]:21792–21798}

Challenges for research

The White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Policy recognized challenges and complexities to rigorous research concerning effectiveness and safety of CAM therapies such as qigong; emphasized that research must adhere to the same standards as conventional research, including statistically significant sample sizes, adequate controls, definition of response specificity, and reproducibility of results; and recommended substantial increases in funding to for rigorous research.^[87]

Most existing clinical trials have small sample sizes and many have inadequate controls. Of particular concern is the impracticality of double blinding using appropriate sham treatments, and the difficulty of placebo control, such that benefits often cannot be distinguished from the placebo effect.

^{[27]:22278–22306}^{[88]:22} Also of concern is the choice of which qigong form to use and how to standardize the treatment or dose with respect to the skill of the practitioner leading or administering treatment, the tradition of individualization of treatments, and the treatment length, intensity, and frequency.

^{[27]:6869–6920,22361–22370}^{[88]:130–133}

Meditation and self-cultivation applications

Qigong is practiced for meditation and self-cultivation as part of various philosophical and spiritual traditions. As meditation, qigong is a means to still the mind and enter a state of consciousness that brings serenity, clarity, and bliss.^[2] Many practitioners find qigong, with its gentle focused movement, to be more accessible than seated meditation.^[55]

Qigong for self-cultivation can be classified in terms of traditional Chinese philosophy: Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian.

Martial arts applications

The practice of qigong is an important component in both internal and external style Chinese martial arts.^[2] Focus on qi is considered to be a source of power as well as the foundation of the internal style of martial arts (Neijia). T'ai chi ch'uan, Xing yi, and Baguazhang are representative of the types of Chinese martial arts that rely on the concept of qi as the foundation.^[89] Extraordinary feats of martial arts prowess, such as the ability to withstand heavy strikes (Iron Shirt, 鐵衫)^[90] and the ability to break hard objects (Iron Palm, 鐵掌)^{[91][92]} are abilities attributed to qigong training.

T'ai chi ch'uan and qigong

T'ai chi ch'uan (Taijiquan) is a widely practiced Chinese internal martial style based on the theory of taiji ("grand ultimate"), closely associated with qigong, and typically involving more complex choreographed movement coordinated with breath, done slowly for health and training, or quickly for self-defense. Many scholars consider t'ai chi ch'uan to be a type of qigong, traced back to an origin in the seventeenth century. In modern practice, qigong typically focuses more on health and meditation rather than martial applications, and plays an important role in training for t'ai chi ch'uan, in particular used to build strength, develop breath control, and increase vitality ("life energy").^{[28][93]}

See also

- Asahi Health
- Cybersectarianism
- Falun Gong
- Hua Tuo
- Jing (TCM)
- Physiotherapy
- List of ineffective cancer treatments
- Mind-body problem

- Mindfulness (Buddhism)
- Neidan
- Neigong
- Prana
- Silk reeling
- Sima Nan
- Tao Yin
- Taoist sexual practices
- World Tai Chi and Qigong Day
- Zhong Gong

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