

Preface

The Eight Extraordinary Meridians have many names – The Eight Miraculous Meridians, The Eight Deep Pathways, The Eight Strange Flows, The Eight Miscellaneous Channels, The Eight Original Meridians... They are the deep, primary and core energy channels in the body, said to originate at conception, and to structure the familiar, common, shape of the human body. They underlie the more familiar 12 organ meridians, known and used in Acupuncture.

The Eight Extraordinary Meridians (8ExMs) are a reflection and manifestation of the Ba Gua – the eight-sided configurations of Trigrams known as the Earlier Heaven and Later Heaven arrangements. These are also the basis of the I Ching/The Book of Changes. The Ba Gua itself is widely regarded as a mystery by all authorities on Daoism – the ancient Chinese philosophy of the 'Way' of nature. The Ba Gua is a profound knowledge, and no accessible book explaining its function is known to exist. It is rooted in pre-history, and cloaked in legend. According to some people it may be the true operating system of reality.

The Qigong practices described here provide a training in how to access, open, develop and cultivate the Eight Extraordinary Meridians – how to turn them on, and put them under your conscious control. It is a 'Nei Dan' form of internal practice, in contrast to 'Wei Dan' external styles of Qigong, and it is an essential foundation for all higher forms of Daoist Inner Alchemy training and practice.

The Eight Extraordinary Meridians are common to all forms and styles of Qigong, as they underlie everything else. This is a valuable knowledge for primary self-control and personal evolution. The training outlined in this document is a unique program, not available from any other source. This document is the result of 25 years of teaching. It is a work in progress.

The material covers a developmental training in how to progressively access and open the Eight Extraordinary Meridians, which are the sub-structure of the whole energy system. It is comparable to learning the anatomy and physiology of the physical body, and how to operate it.

My original teacher in the early 1980s was Master Mantak Chia, and acknowledgement and special thanks are due to him and his assistants at the time - Gunther Weil and Michael Winn. This initial training provided the primary inspiration for this body of work.

My background and training in Classical Daoist Acupuncture, and my previous experience as a choreographer and director of The Natural Dance Workshop (London and Europe, 1975 - 1981), provided a foundation and freedom to work creatively with these practices over the years.

Having written three books - "Chi Kung : Cultivating Personal Energy" (1993), "The Chi Kung Way - Alive with Energy" (1997) and "Chi Kung - Energy For Life" (2002) - taught me how to put practices into writing. As Founder of the National Qigong (Chi Kung) Association * USA, I have been introduced to a multitude of forms and styles. Having attended a dozen international conferences I have met a vast array of teachers from around the world. And visiting China twice to train showed it in its own setting. Given all of this I have no question that the material presented here is at the root of all Qigong.

This program has been taught in a weekly, 1.5 hour, class format since 1983. This format was used because it was found that this was what worked for people in ordinary, everyday, life. The material has been modified and developed accordingly to fit this 1.5 hour format. Beginning as a 6 week series, it has evolved into a 9 month training program.

The early stages consisted of The Inner Smile, The Ba Gua and The Microsmic Orbit. In the late 1980s The Healing Sounds, Cleansing the Emotions and Cultivation of the Virtues were added. From the early 1990s this developed to include the The Belt Channel/Dai Mo, The Thrusting Channel/Chong Mo, the Bridge Channels/Yin & Yang Qiao Mo, and the Linking Channels/Yin & Yang Wei Mo. And then the Master and Couple points were added.

The program is presented here in a progression that constitutes one complete sequence - starting with Smiling at Yourself and ending with the whole system activated. However, specific parts and sections can be used and applied as needed or desired.

This text began as a Reference Manual and practice review document, written for reference purposes for people who have completed the 9 month training program. It was not intended as a comprehensive instruction and practice guide for people who had not received oral instruction or completed the training, because such a practice instruction guide would need to be of a different kind. There is a major difference in the way that these two approaches are treated in writing. It has now been re-written so that anybody reading it can start at the beginning and work their way through the practices developmentally and progressively.

It is advisable to read the accompanying 'Introduction To Qigong' before beginning these practices. In a weekly class situation each of these practices was preceded by a short lecture and overview, and this 'Introduction' serves some of the same purpose.

This material is continually evolving. During the process of development over the years, the teaching of specific practices changes from time to time. The sequence, progression and content change, and time considerations alter rhythm, pace and timing. Accordingly, some of this information is presented in the sense of basic information that does not change – the underlying primary laws and principles of the energy system and The Dao. Once these basic principles are understood and integrated it is possible to vary, alter and adapt any given practice in a variety of ways, for a range of purposes and situations. If you do modify the practices once they are familiar to you, use your best judgement. Try it out and see for yourself. Proceed carefully, adapting as you need to. Always return to basic principles.

My sincerest hope is that this document provides a practical aid to the practice of these most important channels, The Eight Extraordinary Meridians, and that this will result in the development and cultivation of your Qi - the Life inside you.

James MacRitchie

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