

## Basic Daoyin Theory I

Let's start with some easy stuff.

First, what is qigong?

Ok, nothing too complex, just a dictionary definition.

Qi can be translated as energy or breath and Gong is translated as exercise. So quite simply qigong (pronounced chee-gong) is energy exercise or breathing exercise.

When people first come to the classes or workshops, I always tell them that qigong is acupuncture without the needles. Instead, you use the physical movements of all the different parts of your body to stimulate the exact same acupuncture points, channels (meridians) and internal organs as the physician or massage therapist.

There are many different types of qigong, hundreds, probably thousands. There's Wild Goose qigong, White Crane qigong and the Eights Strands of Brocade qigong

There are also five distinct traditions:

Medical, Martial, Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian

Within these traditions, some areas overlap and are complementary and other areas, if practiced together can cancel each other out. Strange eh?

Anyway. You may try a few different qigong styles / traditions before you find one you like, I did.

But I settled, in the end, for a system of Chinese medical qigong. A system called Daoyin Yangsheng Gong.

Bit of a mouthful, right?

I'll explain all about that later, but for now let's consider that first word. Daoyin. (Dow-yin).

Daoyin is a more ancient term for qigong. Qigong itself was coined in the 1950's so it's relatively new. Daoyin goes back a couple of thousand years or so.

Daoyin means guiding and leading. Dao, or to guide refers to the use of the mind or intent to guide the Qi through the body to a desired location or area. Yin, to lead, refers to the use of the limbs to help lead the Qi to the extremities of the body. Together they ensure that all parts of the body are bathed in life enhancing energy.

Daoyin has a written history of over 2,000 years and the Basic Daoyin Theory 1 (BDT1) will get you effortlessly answering the following questions:

1. What is qigong?
2. What is daoyin?
3. What is Yangsheng?
4. What is Daoyin Yangsheng Gong?
5. What makes qigong different from normal physical exercise?
6. What are the 3 regulations?
7. What are the 3 Treasures?
8. How do the three regulations relate to the three treasures?

You've got the first two so let's start to explore the rest

Daoyin Yangsheng Gong is the name of the system I teach and you already know what Daoyin and Gong mean which is to guide and lead and exercise respectively.

Yangsheng is another ancient practice and it means to "Nourish the Vital Principle"

As a logical progression, from what you already know, Daoyin Yangsheng Gong can be translated as "Guiding and Leading Exercises to Nourish the Vital Principle"

The next question is "What makes qigong different from normal physical exercise?"

The answer is what the Chinese call San Tiao or the 3 Regulations, and they are

1. Regulating the body
2. Regulating the breath
3. Regulating the mind

If one of these is missing then what you're doing becomes normal physical exercise.

So we regulate the body with physical movements designed to stimulate certain acupuncture points, organs or channels (meridians, although channels is commonly used in China so I like to use that)

And we regulate the breath by coordinating the breathing with the physical moves to take in and effectively circulate energy or Qi to certain parts of the body.

Finally, we regulate the mind by moving our awareness to certain acupuncture points, organs or channels as in Chinese medicine the intent moves the Qi and the Qi moves the blood.

I always remember Gordon Faulkner telling me, "*I spent 22 years in the military. There, they get you to dress up in funny clothes and run up and down hills and what-not. Now, that was certainly regulating my body and definitely regulating my breath. Unfortunately, my mind was usually in the nearest pub.*"

Only two out of three. Very nearly qigong. Nice try, no cigar eh.

And this is the main problem with qigong, people (not you, obviously, but someone you may know) ignore the regulation of mind and the mental focus required to become not only competent but proficient and even accomplished.

Others ignore regulating the body and don't design their movements with enough precision and depth to trigger the points, channels, organs etc in the right order. Or even at all in some cases.

And still others don't control their breathing. You don't allow the breath to control you, you control the breath. This would be a Qigong Master - someone who has mastered breathing exercises.

Make some sense?

Ok, let's move on to the 3 Treasures, or in Chinese, San Bao.

The three treasures are:

1. Jing or Essence
2. Qi or Energy
3. Shen or Spirit.

Jing is a very powerful energy, the reproductive force. In other words, it gives life. Probably one of the most powerful healing tools, too. It's sometimes likened to the consistency of treacle, a thick, concentrated energy.

Qi, as you're probably familiar with, is the energy that runs through the channels. It's called Zhen Qi or True Qi. It's a good time to point out that there are many different types of Qi. Its consistency is more like water, lighter and with an easy flow. Qi is refined Jing.

Shen, or spirit, is refined Qi. Closely associated with the mind and heart, it has a cloud or vapour like quality.

Each of the three treasures transforms into the others:

Jing => Qi

Qi => Shen

Shen => Jing

And so on.

How do the three regulations relate to the three treasures? If you haven't already worked it out:

- Regulating the Body nourishes Jing (essence)
- Regulating the Breath nourishes Qi (energy)
- Regulating the Mind nourishes Shen (spirit)

I hope that I'm explaining everything clearly as we're going along and you can start to build a picture of how the mind, body and energy work together to complement and nourish each other.

That includes the physical stuff (muscles, bones, blood vessels, organs etc.) and non-physical (mental, emotional, spiritual and psychological)

At this point I'll just do a quick recap for you. What we've covered so far are the terms:

- Qigong = breathing or energy exercise
- Daoyin = guiding and leading

- Yangsheng = to nourish the vital principle
- Daoyin Yangsheng Gong = guiding and leading exercises to nourish the vital principle
- San Tiao = three regulations: body, breath, mind
- San Bao = three treasures: essence, energy, spirit

We've also covered how they make qigong different and how they all relate to each other and I'm glad to say that that's your basic daoyin theory covered.

Try to remember this info 'cos you'll need it for the test later.

Only jokin'. There's no test...

Although it's probably a good idea to read this a few times, so that you become familiar with the material. You could print it out and keep it to hand which will let you browse whenever you have five minutes.