I have two dreams. One is to preserve the ancient Chinese martial arts in its current state of value and quality. Therefore, I am now attempting to establish a non-profit YMAA California Retreat Center. As I mentioned in YMAA Newsletter 71, I will need many contributors to make this dream a reality.

The other dream I have is to establish a Qigong research center called the Qigong Public Research Foundation. Naturally, this foundation will also function as a non-profit organization and will have four goals:

1. Translate and Compile Ancient Qigong Documents into English.
2. Conduct Experiments using Qigong for Healing (as a Complementary Medicine).
3. Train and Certify Qigong Instructors and Healers.
4. Establish a Laboratory for Qigong Study and Research.

The following paragraphs will explain each project more in detail:

1. Translate and Compile Ancient Qigong Documents into English.

After more than 4,000 years of study and cultivation, Chinese have in their possession a tremendous collection of ancient Qigong documents related to health, longevity, and spiritual cultivation. Most of these documents were concealed in Buddhist and Daoist monasteries. It was not until the late 1900’s that these documents were revealed to the laymen society of China.

These recorded documents reveal almost all aspects of study and experience accumulated during the lives of thousands of Qigong practitioners. These documents can be effectively used as important human experiences in fighting sickness and aging. Additionally, these documents have pointed the way for future human spiritual cultivation.

Today, humans face the most dangerous and challenging time of this century, a time that almost puts us on the brink of self-destruction. I believe the reason for this is because there's a certain imbalance between the development of material science and spiritual science. We cannot deny that humans have reached a state of almost luxurious material enjoyment that they had never experienced before. However, this has also caused human materialistic desire to become more spiritually demanding.

In order to avoid future human self-destruction, we must encourage and work to improve our spiritual cultivation. The first step is borrowing experiences from the past. All of these past experiences are just like many road signs which can direct us to the correct path. Therefore, translation of these ancient documents has become the most urgent and crucial projects in this foundation.

First, the center will invite experienced Chinese Qigong researchers and practitioners to translate these ancient documents into modern Chinese language. In addition, they will...
interpret these documents based on their Qigong experience.

Second, these translated and interpreted ancient documents will then be translated into English. Finally, these documents will be compiled and analyzed from a modern scientific point of view and then published and made available to the public for further discussion and research.

Compared to others, this project is probably the easiest and the cheapest. To begin, this project $300,000 will be needed. However, if financial assistance is readily available, a library will be built, a complete computer and a compiling and editing system will be set up. And finally, a wider scale of translation and publication will be done.

2. Conduct Experiments using Qigong for Healing (As a Complementary Medicine).

It has been experienced in China in the past that Qigong can be used effectively to heal various sicknesses or illnesses such as: hypertension (high blood pressure), arthritis, asthma, heart problems, lungs illness, energy imbalance, different forms of cancer, etc. Therefore, it will be wise to conduct an experiment with volunteer patients and collect the data. To make this happen, a group of trained Qigong instructor or healers will be needed to conduct these experiments. Various pieces of modern equipment will be needed. Furthermore, cooperation from western hospitals and doctors will be necessary. At the beginning, this will only be done on a small scale. In this small scale experiment, it is estimated that $500,000 to one million will help get this project off the ground. Once it is proven that Qigong can be effective in treating a few illnesses, a fund or grant can then be applied.

3. Train and Certify Qigong Instructors and Healers.

In order to introduce Qigong healing correctly into western society as a complementary medicine, an educational structure or organization must be established. In this organization, those interested participants are able to receive correct theory, methods, and skills for treatment.

This educational center will not only provide training both in theory and practice, but will also invite those experienced Qigong healers from China to teach and conduct forums about their treating experiences. To begin this project, an estimated one million dollars will be needed immediately. This money will be spent to establish a library, collect and translate documents and information, and allow for a teacher’s stipend and traveling expenses. It’s expected that this fund will last only a couple years. To expand into a wider scale of educational programs, a few million dollars will be needed.

4. Establish a Laboratory for Qigong Study and Research.

This project is the most costly program. In order to understand the human body’s Qi circulatory system or network, many experiments or measurements will be needed. This will involve costly experimental equipment and personnel (expertise). In addition, if finances are available, various experiments using external energy sources such as magnetic or electric fields to affect the body’s Qi status will be conducted.

Theoretically, it is possible to use external energy sources to repair, nourish, slow-down the aging process, and to stimulate spiritual growth in the human body. If this project is successful, then the results can be used by companies to apply patents and produce products for commercial purposes.

I hope these projects are not only my dream but a dream for the entire human race. If I can get these projects started and completed to some level before my life ends, it will be a tremendous contribution to the future of human society.

I sincerely appreciate your support both spiritually and financially.

**TROUBLED LEGS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM**

By now Most people have heard or read about RLS, Restless Leg Syndrome.

If you have RLS here are some of the symptoms you may have experienced: When you’re lying in bed, or sometimes just sitting either at the office or in front of the TV for long periods, your legs begin to itch, pull, ach and burn. Eventually, you can’t resist the urge to move them. Walking around may help (RLS is triggered by rest). The majority of times, RLS occurs in the evening or at night, and can put an end to a restful sleep. But that’s only half the problem. It can also disturb the person who shares your bed or bedroom—secondhand RLS, as it were.

Involuntary leg jerking (“periodic limb movement disorder”) may accompany RLS, however, RLS is unrelated to the calf cramps that most people experience at one time or another.

**Is low iron the culprit?** Much research has been done on RLS, but no one knows what causes it. It can occur at any age, even in children, but people over 45, especially women, are most likely to be affected. Pregnant women are particularly susceptible, and may experience RLS in the last three months before giving birth.

Researchers believe that iron deficiency is a factor—the clue is that pregnant women often have iron deficiencies, and RLS sometimes accompanies iron-deficiency anemia. Another theory is that the body somehow fails to process iron properly. Iron supplements are sometimes prescribed for RLS, but medical experts advise that you should get medical advice first. They also say that you should not take an iron supplement on your own, beyond what’s in a daily multivitamin/mineral pill.

Sometimes martial artists experience RLS. If it is frequent or severe, see a doctor. However, you should first know that there may not be much a doctor can do, but checking for iron deficiency might be a good idea. There’s no standard medication, though tranquilizers may provide temporary relief, and the drugs used for Parkinson’s disease can be prescribed in severe cases. New drugs are currently under review by the FDA.

**Here are some tips on what you can do on your own:**

Avoid caffeinated beverages and alcohol in the evening. Smoking, too, will worsen RLS—so here’s another reason to quit if you smoke.

- Massage your legs before going to bed. Stretch your leg muscles and rotate your ankles.
- A hot water bottle or, conversely, cold compresses applied to your legs at bedtime may help. Try both and see which works. It may be simpler just to take a warm (or cool) bath before bed.
- Sleep on your side with a pillow between your legs.
- If RLS keeps you awake, get up and try distracting yourself. Do a few exercises. Walk around. Stand at a counter and read or watch TV.
- RLS tends to become less severe, or even vanish, after age 60. You may simply get better on your own.

The Restless Leg Syndrome Foundation promotes research and offers support. For more information, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to 819 Second Street SW, Rochester, Minnesota 55902, or phone 507-287-6465.
One thing that any martial art should teach is attention to detail. The focus on the moment is vital to any person. The distractions to ourselves at any given moment can be overwhelming; a well-learned martial art gives us respite from these distractions. The calm, relaxed and focused mind can encompass the events going on around us and permit us to act in the most appropriate manner. Indeed the goal of a martial art can be expressed as knowing when to act and then acting without hesitation. This sounds simple on the surface but is very difficult to accomplish. The many years of training necessary to hone oneself into the focused individual of the martial arts stories is truly daunting. The many levels of refinement encompass the physical, mental, and spiritual - not every practitioner makes it to the end of his training. As with many things, the “devil is in the details.” I will examine a problem in my own Push Hands to show this process.

Not long ago, I noticed that in the beginning of each Push Hands match I got bounced out several times. The skill of my partner is virtually unimportant to this result: the first few exchanges ended with me on the losing end. Afterwards I was told repeatedly to “invest in loss.” I finally started to examine the events going on around me and permit us to act in the most appropriate manner. Indeed the goal of a martial art can be expressed as knowing when to act and then acting without hesitation. This sounds simple on the surface but is very difficult to accomplish. The many years of training necessary to hone oneself into the focused individual of the martial arts stories is truly daunting. The many levels of refinement encompass the physical, mental, and spiritual - not every practitioner makes it to the end of his training. As with many things, the “devil is in the details.” I will examine a problem in my own Push Hands to show this process.

When I begin a match, I am excited. I greatly enjoy Push Hands and tended to look forward to my matches with great anticipation. This turbulence of emotion helped me to forget the most fundamental ideas in Taijiquan: namely, to relax and sink my root. I also realized that after the first few losses, I would settle down and have more balanced exchanges with my partner.

(I didn’t care if I won. I just wanted to be in the game). My observation at this stage of the match showed me that my spirit would come up and some negative emotions would surface; I needed to defeat the other person to prove my skill. It is necessary to raise your spirit, and negative emotions will do just that; however, I am uncomfortable using negative emotions against my partner. The ritual that I decided to ritualize my Push Hands to reinforce my fundamentals and develop some consistency in my rooting.

The ritual consists of several elements that are physical, mental and emotional.

Physically I place my rear foot first and deliberately sink my weight through that rear foot into the ground and establish my root. The placement of the front foot is just as precise: I put the front foot in place with no weight in it. After the front foot is placed, I roll my weight forward under the ground so that the transition from rear to front foot further deepens my root. Once my root is established, I lift my arms and make contact with my partner. Energetically I stay as relaxed as possible and lead my Qi into the ground with each step and then expand it into my arms as they move into position. This is coupled with relaxed Embryo Breathing, with the active portion of the movements coordinated with the exhalations.

Emotionally I accept the fact that I’m excited and do not try to suppress it. I find that suppressed emotion returns with more force than it left with. Besides, I still want to enjoy the experience. This ritual takes a very short time: essentially three breaths so that it doesn’t keep my partner waiting an undue amount of time. (The option does exist to really drag this out, to annoy your opponent. This can be quite useful in competition.) Consistency is important in any ritual. Over a course of a few weeks, I found that my root was improving and I could see a change in my performance. Creating the ritual helped me to implement the solutions that my observations suggested.

A ritual can be a good thing until it becomes a crutch. I’m somewhat of a lazy person so it helped me deal with a weakness in my skills. The important thing that I’ve learned was that I needed to go beyond the ritual at some point. My Taiji teachers all told me to do exactly those steps that I discussed: only my lack of focus during the act prevented me from doing what I was supposed to do. Now I have other things to ritualize, other flaws to work on. If you like the ritual I followed, feel free to use it. Just remember to eventually cast it aside or it has done you no good.

Jeff Pratt is YMAA senior Taiji instructor
CASHING IN ON QIGONG’S HEALTH BENEFITS

Qigong is one of the traditional Chinese “Breathing Exercises”, self-healing exercises welcomed by people worldwide. It has a long history and a great variety of forms and routines. Practicing Qigong has an all-around effect on all the human body’s organs and systems. It’s also an important way to strengthen your body and prevent disease. It has a curative effect on high blood pressure (hypertension), neurasthenia, heart disease, ulcers, tuberculosis, asthma and other chronic diseases.

In China, Qigong exercises combined with medicine have become an important method of treating some diseases in hospitals and health clinics.

In fact, China claims to be the first country to encourage its population to apply physical exercises to keep fit and prevent diseases. In 400 B.C., it was stated in Huang Di Nei Jing, Su Wen (The Yellow Emperor’s Classics of Internal Medicine), the oldest medical classics of China, that most diseases are caused by coldness or heat, and the best way to cure them is through physical exercise. In addition, scientists in ancient China worked out a theory explaining why and how physical exercises strengthen fitness and cure diseases.

More than two thousand years ago, a famous Chinese physician, Hua Tuo, developed the “Wu Qin Xi,” Five Animal Play, imitating the movements of birds, bears, tigers, monkeys, and deer, as physical exercises for strengthening the body. He said that if a person moved often, the ill gas (or sick Qi) in the body would be removed from the blood in the arteries and veins, and the blood would flow smoothly. In this way, a person would not get sick easily.

Recently, along with the development of science and technology, Chinese people are more and more interested in how to live longer, more productive lives. More are turning to Qigong and searching for the relationship between Qigong practice and the avoidance of premature aging.

The effects of Qigong on the cardiovascular system result from the controlled activities of the central nervous system. In terms of Qigong, when Qingqi, the clean gas in the body goes up, and Zhuoqi, the turbid gas comes down, abdominal pressure rises, and the veins in the abdominal cavity suffer pressure and carry the blood to the right atrium of the heart. Conversely, the blood is carried to the abdominal cavity when abdominal pressure comes down.

Thus, not only is blood circulation increased, but a massage effect on the liver is produced by the movement of the abdominal muscles and diaphragm, thereby removing blood clots in the liver, improving its function, quickening and strengthening the process of metabolism, and ensuring stable blood pressure.

Qigong can also strengthen the contraction of the heart muscles, and increase the output capacity of heartbeats. Over a period of time, the capacity of the heart is increased. Therefore, the blood pumped out by the heart is increased, the utilization ratio of blood-oxygen in the body is improved, the elasticity of blood vessel is increased, and peripheral resistance is decreased. Consequently, the contracting of the heart is easier. Blood can be pumped farther by the heart’s contraction but without great effort.

All this strengthens the cardiovascular system, promoting physical fitness and stabilizing the blood pressure. Evidence clearly shows that a person who constantly exercises Qigong has a slow pulse rate when calm, and the blood pressure is lower than the normal value of someone the same age.

In people who practice Qigong, the pulse rate and systolic blood pressure rises less and the recovery time is shorter than normal. This phenomenon is called “economic functioning.” All of these are positive effects that Qigong has on the cardiovascular system.

The Research Group of the Chinese Gongfu Institute (comprised of two Wushu Masters, two medical doctors, and one research assistant from Northwestern University) has done research recording the number of heartbeats per minute for fifty people, resting ten minutes before practicing Qigong. The average number of heartbeats per minute is 75. The heartbeats are weak and fast. The number of heartbeats per minute decreases to 61 beats per minute after practicing 20 minutes of Qigong, the average decrease being 14. Ten people had heartbeats decrease to less than 53 beats per minute. The heartbeats are strengthened and slowed.

The heart beats about 70 times per minute; here are two kinds of nerves associated with the heart. One belongs to the sympathetic nerve, which strengthens and speeds up the heartbeat; the other belongs to the vagal (vice-sympathetic) nerve, which slows the heartbeat. Therefore, the heartbeat is slowed when you practice Qigong, reflected in the increased intensity of the heart vagal, and the decreased intensity in the sympathetic nerves of the heart.

We also have done research on high blood pressure in fifteen people who did relaxation Qigong exercises for twenty-five minutes. The blood pressure dropped from 156/99 mmHg to 135/81 mmHg after one year of Qigong exercise. The systolic blood pressure dropped 21 mmHg and the diastolic pressure dropped 18 mmHg.

Cholesterol is an important blood fat. It can be obtained by eating animal fats (such as too many eggs or too much cheese, cream, liver, pork, beef, etc.) Increased cholesterol values correlate with a tendency towards atherosclerosis. Values of 200 mg or less are associated with a lower risk of heart attacks and strokes. The desirable range for people under 40 is less than 200 mg; for those over 40, the desirable range is 220-240 mg.

People with a family history of heart attacks or stroke should pay special attention to cholesterol so they can prevent these conditions. One way to prevent high cholesterol is not to eat too much meat or junk food. Another way, which we most recommend is to do Qigong or Taiji exercise at least twice a week.

More on the subject of Qigong can be found in Hong-Chao Zhang’s book, Wild Goose Qigong, Natural Movement for Healthy Living (YMAA 2000) www.YMAA.com.
Honoring Those Who Showed Us The Wei
Saluting Those Who Shared These Photographs and Biographies in 2004

Wu Jien Chuan
Separate left foot looks easy for this master of the art

Cheng Man Ching
“How do I know about the world? By what is in me.”

Chen Xiao Wang
Grandson of Chen Fa Ke, 19th generation standard bearer of the Chen family.

Bow Sim Mark
Her form is one with nature-solid as the mountains, light as the clouds, fluid as a river.

Tung Hu Ling
Prepares to make a Lotus sweep.

Liang Qiang Ya
Playing Jade Maiden at Shuttles.

William C. C. Chen
Tai Chi is doing anything well.

Wang Ju Rong
Performs fan through back.

Feng Zhi Qiang
All of the heavenly bodies spin and rotate. This round, circular, coordinated movement is called ‘Hunyuan’.
Yang Chen Fu

Grandson of Yang Lu Chan (founder of Yang style) was the first taiji master to popularize the art, teaching openly in Beijing and Shanghai and later in Canton. Known for his pushing hands ability and his peng (expansive, rebounding) energy. He taught a version of the Yang family form that was even in tempo, large in frame, without jumping or stomping, or fajing.

Kuo Lien Ying

The weight concentrated on the rear foot, the crown of the head lifted, the arms like a steel hoop, the fingers stretched. How could a posture so full, so upright, so yang, be held by an elderly man for a whole hour every morning? Because his spirit is serene, and his form is filled with emptiness.

Duan Zhi Liang

In this photo, Master Liang holds an ear of corn and begins to move in a swirling ancient chi kung passed down through generations, created anew in the moment. Look: the fingers of his empty hand and the splay of the corn husk are the same. In him (were) all the seasons, the centuries, the beauty of human life devoted to self-cultivation and healing.

Biographical notes

Yang Cheng Fu (Chen-Pu) (1883-1936) Grandson of Yang Lu Chan (Founder of Yang style) son of Yang Jien-Hou. The first Tai Chi master to teach taiji in public.

Feng Zhi Qiang Born in 1928 in Hebei Province, China. Studied chi kung and martial arts from age 8, and by 12 was known for his strength and fighting ability. Moved to Beijing at age 12 and studied Tongbei Chuan.

Wu Jien Chuan (1870-1942) Wu’s father was Quan Yu, a Manchurian bodyguard to the Imperial Court, who was one of the top students of Yang Lu Chan and his son, Ban-Hou. Quan Yu specialized in the Small Frame of the Yang style, and in evasion/neutralization methods.

Cheng Man Ching (1900-1975) * Known as a “master of the Five Excellences”, Cheng Man Ching was not only an exceptional Tai Chi master, but also an acclaimed brush painter, calligrapher, poet and doctor of oriental medicine.

Chen Xiao Wang Born in Chenjiagou, Henan Province, in 1945. He’s the grandson of the famous Chen Fa Ke. In the tradition of his grandfather, he has attained a high level of gongfu through arduous training and study over many years.

Kuo Lien Ying (1885-1991) Born in Inner Mongolia, North China in the last decade of the Manchu dynasty. Starting with Northern Shaolin, he made extensive study of Tai Chi, and later Bagua and Xingyi, studying and comparing skills with the greatest masters.

Bow Sim Mark Born in Taisun, Guandong Province, in 1942. She studied with many of the greatest Wushu and Tai Chi masters, including Li Tian Ji and Fu Wing Fay. In 1976 she moved to Boston, where she established the Chinese Wu Shu Research Institute.

Tung Hu Ling (1917-1992) Born in Ren Xiang Cheng, Hopei Province, China. Son of Tung Ying Jie, one of Yang Cheng Fu’s longest studying and most accomplished disciples. Tung Hu Ling learned from his father as well as directly from Grandmaster Yang himself.

Liang Qiang-Ya Born in Guangzhou, China in 1931. In 1945, he became a disciple of the legendary internal master Fu Zhen Song, becoming an instructor of Fu’s system while still in his teens.

Duan Zhiliang Born in the Forbidden City in 1906, into a family of physicians and martial artists. Master Duan has trained in the internal arts for almost a century. He is the lineage holder of his family’s Primordial Chaos (wuji) Chi Kung System, as well as the original Taoist WuDang Tai Chi.

William C. C. Chen Born in Chekian Province, China in 1935. Moved to Taiwan in the late 1940’s. Became the youngest student of Cheng Man Ching, and lived in his house for 3 years, becoming one of his favorite disciples. Began teaching in 1953, at age 18. Became the lightweight champion in full-contact martial arts tournaments in the 1950’s.

Chen Fa Ke (1887-1957) The most famous Chen style master of the 20th century. Chen Fa Ke was the first to extend Chen Tai Chi’s reputation outside of Chen Village. He came to Beijing in 1928, and quickly established his phenomenal fighting abilities.

Wang Ju Rong Born 1928 in Hebei province, China, the daughter of the legendary martial arts hero, Wang Zi Ping, master of both external and internal arts. She began training with him at age five, learning Tam Tui, Cha Chuan, Ba Ji and Tai Chi.

All of the information contained herein can be found in Tai Chi Inspirations, 2004 Calendar by Don Ethan Miller.
Editor’s Corner

Dan Hood
YMAA News
4354 Washington St.
Roslindale, MA 02131 USA
fax: (617) 323-7417

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Yang’s Martial Arts Association has set up its own web page so it is imperative that every school affiliated with YMAA send all of its news information directly to the school or e-mailed to me. Dr. Yang has requested that this be done on a number of occasions over the past six months, however, we still have not received anything from anyone. The YMAA newsletter is considered a valuable source of information for everyone to share. And whenever Dr. Yang returns from a seminar abroad or visits a school, he tells the headquarters’ staff about the many positive things that have taken place. So please take time to keep us informed on a weekly or monthly basis. Believe me, your efforts are sincerely appreciated.

Attention Authors

YMAA Publication Center continues to seek manuscripts on Martial Arts and Qigong. If you’ve got a book to publicize, let us know.

Write or e-mail
David Ripianzi/YMAA Publication Center
4354 Washington St.
Roslindale, MA 02131 USA
e-mail: davidr@ymaa.com