

Cultivating *Qi* and Activating the Healer Within

An Interview with Roger Jahnke, O.M.D.

Russ Mason, B.S.

Introduction

Roger Jahnke, O.M.D., has dedicated his professional life helping to launch the powerful ancient healing traditions of China in North America and Europe. He is the director and chief instructor of the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi, Santa Barbara, California; the chairperson of the Qi Cultivation Department at the Santa Barbara College of Oriental Medicine; and a cofounder and recent chairperson of the board of the National Qigong Association.

With 25 years of clinical practice as a physician of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine and eight research tours to China, Dr. Jahnke has emerged as a key spokesperson for *t'ai chi* (Taiji) and *qigong* (Chi Kung). He is a leading voice in the evolution of complementary and integrative medicine. He has studied hundreds of forms of qigong with master teachers and visited numerous hospitals, institutes, training centers, temples, and sacred sites in China, focusing on the cultivation of *qi* (Chi).

Dr. Jahnke has had presentations at major conferences on advances in alternative and complementary medicine throughout the United States. He has lectured on self-healing and emerging trends in health care and medicine to numerous hospital systems and health care associations, including the HealthCare Forum; the Catholic Health Association; the American Medical Association; the National Wellness Institute, Stevens Point, Wisconsin; and the American College of Healthcare Executives, Chicago, Illinois. He is a contributing author to numerous books on leading-edge methodologies for both clinical providers and health care administrators.

The workshops and training sessions that Dr. Jahnke conducts at retreat centers such as Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California; the Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, New York; and the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Petaluma, California, have inspired health care professionals and citizens throughout the United States, Canada, and Asia.

Dr. Jahnke's message is simple, striking, and empowering: The most profound medicine is not at the hospital, pharmacy, or doctor's office. It is produced within us through the balance and harmony of physiology, mind, and spirit. According to Dr. Jahnke, all of the necessary components of self-healing have been in place

within us since the beginning of the human race. Both ancient and contemporary philosophers have pointed to our naturally occurring self-healing capacity and contemporary science has confirmed the spontaneous function of self-repair and self-restoration.

The Interview

Russ Mason: As a result of your involvement with Traditional Chinese Medicine philosophy, t'ai chi and qigong, you have a unique perspective on health care. Please share some of your insights with us.

Roger Jahnke: In addition to over 25 years in clinical practice and almost as long in the position of clinical administrator for a complementary and holistic clinical facility, I have had the amazing opportunity to serve as a consultant in the design of complementary and alternative medicine and integrative medicine programs for hospitals and new clinical startup projects. I have had the incredible good fortune to work with numerous multihospital systems as well as small community hospitals as they "redesign" health care delivery for the 21st century.

I have been invited to do presentations on new clinical and health promotion models as well as t'ai chi and qigong at the American Hospital Association, American Academy of Health Care Executives, and other organizations. Consequently, I have been doing a lot of work within the conventional medical intervention community.

The American health care system is collapsing into a critical state. It is not a *health care* system. It is a terribly challenged system of financing medical intervention. There is only one solution to what we now recognize as a crisis in both quality (safety) and cost. It is actually a simple solution that is well-researched and well understood—70 percent of disease is preventable,^{1,2} and 8 out of 9 causes of disease are preventable.³

Through low-cost health enhancing behaviors that require little special training, heart disease can be reversed,⁴ risk for diabetes reduced by 58 percent,^{5,6} significant reduction in risk for injuries from falls in the elderly can be achieved,⁷ longevity for women with breast cancer can be extended,⁸ and more.

The science on methodologies that are low-cost, group-based, and incredibly efficient at reducing the need for medical intervention has helped to increase the budget of the National Center

for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (formerly the Office of Alternative Medicine) by 57 times from its original \$2 million budget in 1992 to \$114 million in 2003.⁹ Where else in health care research do you see that kind of budget increases lately? It is obvious to everyone that the concept of safer, more effective health care is of immense interest.

Our presidents, our Congress, our medical providers, and our medical insurance companies have all failed to take action on the fact that each citizen produces the most highly refined healing resource within his or her own body. What would happen if we took healthy doses of this inner medicine—the healer within—each day? This medicine has no side-effects, prevents most diseases, and requires no prescription, no doctor, no clinic, no hospital, no drug store. You can not buy this medicine—it is only available for free.

Probably the most practical tools for mobilizing this remarkable inner elixir are t'ai chi and qigong from China; yoga, their sister from India; and meditation, with its roots in every culture and spiritual tradition.

So, therefore, the solution to the health care crisis is for individuals to have unrestrained support and information on how to cultivate and maximize the naturally occurring self-healing resources that are produced spontaneously within the human system with a minimum amount of daily practice.

RM: Please give us some details about qigong and t'ai chi.

RJ: Though they are often referred to as exercises, qigong and t'ai chi are more like mindfulness in motion, action meditation, mindful movement, dynamic meditation, meditation in motion, et cetera. This is the radical breakthrough of qigong and its most popular offspring, t'ai chi. The intentful integration of body focus and movement, purposeful breath awareness, and meditation optimize what Norman Cousins called the "healing system," which is the integrated function of all body-mind systems—including the nervous, endocrine, immune, circulatory, and digestive systems—with the psyche.

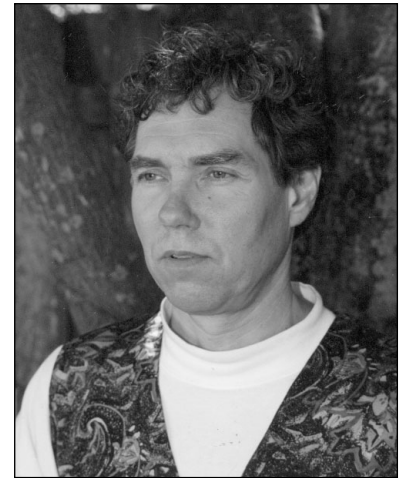
Qigong and t'ai chi have triggered an outpouring of research in Asia, Europe, and the United States. It has become apparent that these gentle self-healing and health-enhancement methodologies trigger a wide range of natural, physiologic mechanisms of self-repair that help to restore more healthy function in people with numerous diseases. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article¹⁰ stated that the National Institutes of Health has funded \$500,000 in research on qigong alone.

The gentle body-mind practices of qigong and t'ai chi can be implemented by anyone, even those in wheelchairs or hospital beds. No matter what disease one has, what medicine one takes, or what sort of physician is managing the case, mindful and relaxed body movement with breath practice and a focus on present-moment awareness make medicine within.

RM: What is the focus of integral qigong and t'ai chi?

RJ: Integral qigong and t'ai chi are only unique in that we focus on allowing the simple and the profound to coexist and we have carefully distilled and integrated the essence from 5000 years of history, tradition, and theory along with hundreds of

specific schools, styles, and traditions. Much of qigong and t'ai chi is esoteric, hard to learn, and bound up in the politics of religious sects and the martial arts in Asia. There is too much need for healing in our contemporary culture to allow something so radically wonderful, useful and cost efficient to remain inaccessible. China has given qi cultivation to the world, it deserves to be honorably embraced to heal and empower—that is the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi's focus.



Roger Jahnke, O.M.D., Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi. Photo credit: Dawn Mamikian.

Integral means "whole, complete, unified." In the programs of the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi, we work from the principles of harmony and balance—the essentials of qigong and t'ai chi—to unify the traditions, biases, and lineages of many eras into a highly refined distillation that is easy to learn and use today.

Integral qigong and t'ai chi integrate what Chinese medicine calls the Three Treasures—body, mind/emotions and spirit (*Jing, Qi* and *Shen* in Chinese). The integral model integrates ancient qi sciences with contemporary physiologic and quantum sciences. The practices are integrated so that, in the beginning, it is very easy, accessible, and fun with gentle progress toward deeper practice states and more subtle levels of healing. So, the program is integrated in many of its components and in many ways.

The Three Treasures of cultivation (or the three levels or stages) start at body healing, progress to longevity and vitality enhancement (which science has discovered is largely related to the state of the heart and mind), and, ultimately, evolve to sustained awareness of one's eternal nature. This is spiritual realization, the highest form of personal integration, also called "healing," which was held in high esteem in China even by politicians and military leaders, and called "immortality" by the ancients because it implies that the life of our eternal self is boundless—immortal.

RM: What is the role of the health care practitioner in this emerging new era of medicine?

RJ: It is important to recognize two logical, but entirely unmentioned, aspects of health care: the "first party" and the "first resort." We always hear about the third party and the last resort. Paraphrasing from conventional health care: "We will have to see if the third party (insurance company) will reimburse for this alternative method as a last resort." Everybody knows what the third party is; however, the first party is unknown and unmentioned. It turns out that the first party is the most significant participant in health care—the customer, the citizen, the

About the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi

Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi

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The Institute offers various programs for studying *qigong* and *t'ai chi* for professionals as well as public participation programs. For information on Levels of Qigong and Tai Chi Study and Professional Certification visit the above Web site. Some of the programs offered include:

Enthusiastic Citizen

Many people, when they experience the power of just a little *qigong* in their lives, typically from *The Healer Within* (the Vitality Enhancement Method), are inspired to share their experience and understanding with other people. Because the Healer Within Methods are very gentle, these people are encouraged to share the methods with family and friends and become a part of a nationwide, grassroots solution to today's problems in health care.

Community Practice Facilitator

This is Level One of the Qigong and Tai Chi instructor certification, usually a 7-day intensive course. Participants learn the basic *qigong* curriculum and are given certification to organize community practice as facilitators but not as professional instructors.

Qigong and Tai Chi Instructor

This involves Levels Two and Three of the 200-hour instructor training. Level Two is the Tai Chi intensive, for which the practice is modified for specific populations for disease management and wellness, including: Tai Chi Qigong; Tai Chi Easy; Tai Chi Three; and Tai Chi Chair. Level Three penetrates even deeper into both *qi* cultivation and the Transmission of *Qi*. The participant receives a certificate as an Integral Qigong and Tai Chi Instructor.

Advanced Qigong and Tai Chi Instructor

Advanced *Qi* Cultivation, Medical Qigong, and Qigong Healing courses are added to the 200-hour program above, with selected courses in traditional Chinese medical theory to qualify for certification from the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. This is a 500-hour certification that is still being designed.

The 200-Hour Instructor Certification

This certification is consistent with the professional membership standards of the National Qigong Association (www.NQA.org). It can be achieved through a month-long intensive retreat or as three week-long intensives. Many participants have experienced significant personal healing at these events and, often, individuals immerse themselves in this way, even if their intentions were not to become teachers. The Institute provides numerous additional professional programs including Medical Qigong, Qigong Physician, and Daoist Inner Alchemy as well as numerous programs for the public.

individual. Everyone has heard of the last resort but what about the first resort? What should be the first action in caring for health? How about simply caring for health!

With this said, my response to your question is very direct. Every health care practitioner is a citizen and an individual—a first party. Each health care practitioner would optimally model the solution to the health crisis by personally implementing the first resort. He or she would refine personal nutrition, manage stress, live a health-enhancing lifestyle, and have a robust health-maximizing practice like *qigong*, *t'ai chi*, or yoga as part of a body–mind fitness program.

By living in this way, having a personal practice like *t'ai chi* and *qigong*, health care practitioners become the models for the solution to waste and error in health care. Such practitioners are in an excellent position to assist their patients in awakening their own healing capacities in conjunction with their chosen medical treatment. And, by doing so, they assist in resolving the cost and quality crisis in health care. . . seems rather idealistic but, at their entry levels, *t'ai chi* and *qigong* are amazingly easy to learn and practice.

RM: Are there any drawbacks to *t'ai chi* or *qigong*?

RJ: Very few. Just think of the answer to this question: When is it contraindicated to activate the naturally occurring mechanisms of self-repair within the human system? Answer: Never or almost never. You could argue that some people are too weak or compromised to do the practices. However, *qigong* and *t'ai chi* can be modified and tailored for both bed- and chair-bound practitioners. You could argue that autoimmune disorders may get worse and certain chemotherapy may be neutralized if you enhance the immune system; however, no studies have shown this and it is just as likely that maximizing natural function is just what people with these health challenges really need.

I have observed that self-healing methods do not particularly help with nail fungus or balding. It is common to say that there is no panacea. I would simply add that there is never a reason to neglect the potential for optimizing self-healing, no matter what the disease.

RM: You seem to feel that there is not just a clinical benefit to *t'ai chi* and *qigong*, but an economic benefit as well. Please expand on this idea.

RJ: That's right. Consider these statistics: In the United States \$1.35 trillion dollars (some estimate \$1.75 trillion) are spent on medical intervention—usually called health care. The Department of Health and Human Services, in two Healthy People Reports (DHHS 2000 and DHHS 2010), declared that 70 percent of all disease is preventable!^{1,2} This means that 70 percent of \$1.35 trillion, about \$1 trillion dollars, is inappropriately allocated (we won't say "wasted"). Obviously, this is an overly simplistic scenario but the point is that \$1 trillion dollars per year could be reallocated to prevention and eventually to get art back into schools. The citizens of the United States, by increasing their "intake dosages" of the medicine within, could literally reallocate \$1 trillion or more. This is inspiring.

I have actually had defenders of the medicine of the past [conventional medicine] stand up in my lectures and say, half in jest: "If we apply your ideas it will collapse the American economy."

It is true that health care expenditures represent 13 percent–17 percent of the gross national product of the United States; however, all of the money we save by being more proactive and more healthy can eliminate unneeded medical costs and be spent in other areas of the economy that would improve our society.

For perspective, consider that the estimated cost of America's recent war in Iraq was estimated by many sources to average \$2 trillion* to be spread over a decade—\$200 billion per year for 10 years. Health care costs \$1.35 trillion every year and climbs by 10 percent–20 percent every year. Annual health care costs are nearly 700 percent more than the annual cost of a war!

If 70 percent of disease is preventable, then we ought to be ensuring that everyone is given the basic tools to prevent disease. It is just that obvious. In fact, it is a kind of patriotic act.

RM: Certainly, among allopathic practitioners of conventional medicine, there is almost no incentive to encourage their patients to practice qigong or t'ai chi. How can our society overcome this disincentive?

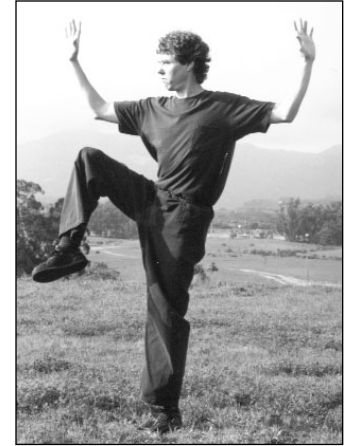
RJ: This may be true in the context of old style [conventional] medicine and 20th-century biases but it is hard to find a sound reason why any health care provider would neglect to encourage the best for his or her patients. Given the naturally occurring capacity of the human system for self-repair, it is embarrassing that it is not conventional and standard to urge patients to do self-implemented health care. I imagine that, in the near future, it will be grounds for malpractice if a physician neglects to urge a patient to reduce risk for disease while advising surgery instead.

There are now t'ai chi, qigong, and yoga teachers at YMCAs, community centers, and even hospitals in many communities around the United States. At the Institute of Integral Qigong and T'ai chi we are very seriously working with national organizations like the National Qigong Association to build a training program to help fill the need for teachers in every community no matter how small. This is a matter of national importance—and it is a lot of fun.

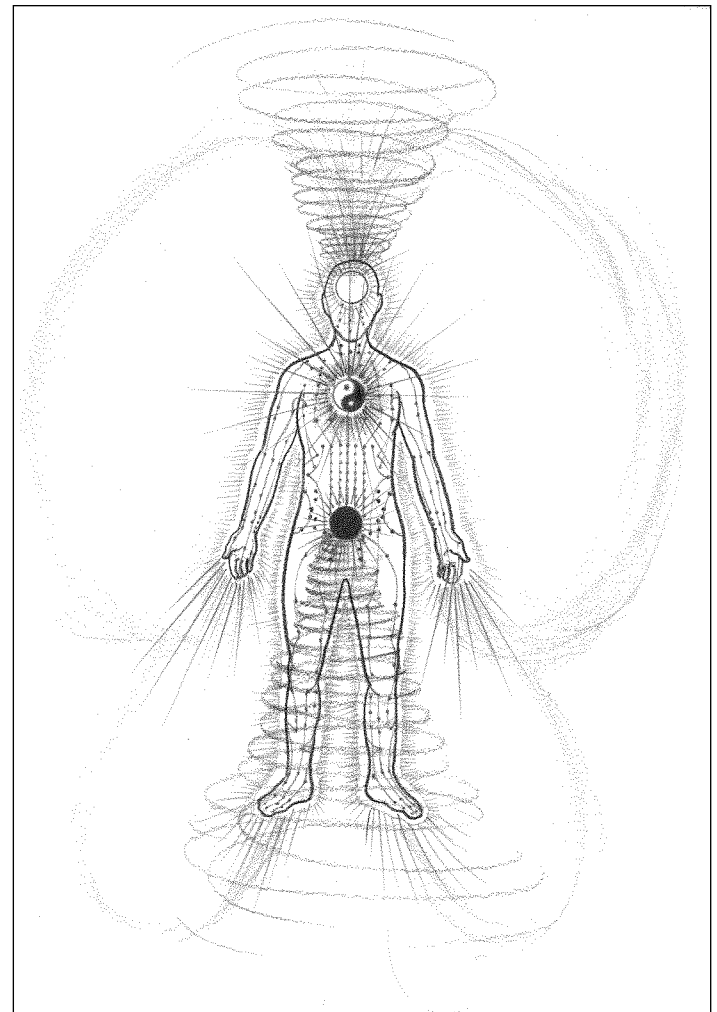
RM: How can practitioners get this information for themselves and for their patients?

RJ: Number one: It is in the textbooks. The body naturally sustains itself; the science that confirms spontaneous biological rehabilitation is completely conventional. Unfortunately, the medical and pharmaceutical sciences of diagnosis and intervention were the total focus of health care until very recently. However, we are in a revolution where there is a dramatic shift to base all medical activities on evidence and the evidence that reconfirms the capacity to implement and benefit from self-healing strategies is monumental. Number two: The media. Last year, *TIME* magazine stated: "Tai Chi is the perfect exercise."¹¹

Just last week, I was quoted about qigong and t'ai chi in a major feature article in the *Chicago Tribune*. The Internet is a virtual fountain of information on self-healing. True, the Internet



Dr. Jahnke engaged in qigong movements in Santa Barbara, California. Photo credits: Rebecca McLean.



The qi matrix. Drawing by: Susan Spellman.

*A large number of articles and Web sites were reviewed to arrive at this figure.

has some terribly biased information; however with t'ai chi and qigong it is not like promoting fad cures within hype or expensive and dangerous weight-loss schemes based on false science. In t'ai chi and qigong, the individual relaxes, moves the body

About Qigong and T'ai Chi

According to the ancient *qi* (*Chi*) Masters, *qi* is the fundamental energy of the universe, and may be purposefully cultivated by the following formula:

Practice + Intention = Inner Harmony = Qi Flow = Health and Longevity

Qigong (*Chi Kung*)

Qigong is one of the four pillars of Traditional Chinese Medicine: acupuncture, massage, herbal medicines, and qigong. Of these, qigong is the one that can be most easily self-initiated (and is the least costly). Both massage and herbal remedies can also be done as self-care, however, qigong is considered to be the mother of Chinese self-healing. Patients who use qigong faithfully need less medication, less acupuncture, and heal faster. In Chinese tradition, there are thousands of methods and practices for self-healing that are called qigong and an estimated 100 million Chinese people practice in the parks every morning.

T'ai chi (*Taiji*)

T'ai chi is one particularly well-known form of qigong. Traditional t'ai chi consists of 108 separate movements that flow together into a specific order. There are several kinds of t'ai chi, including: Yang Style, Chen Style, Wu Style, and others. Most of these schools of t'ai chi have created modified short forms that allow for beginners to learn more quickly to work toward wellness and master stress, for elders to have an abbreviated practice that is easier to learn, and for patients who are ill to practice without too much distracting complexity.



Shen (spirit). Calligraphy by Jianye Jiang.

slowly in the zone of comfort, and deepens the breath—all activities that are well-known to be safe and to trigger well-known physiologic mechanisms of self-repair.

RM: Would you comment on how these active meditation practices can help to resolve stress and improve impaired health?

RJ: The body has a tremendous capacity for self-healing but stress compromises this function in a number of ways. Stress compro-

mises the immune system, shifts the neurotransmitter profile out of self-repair mode, contracts the blood vessels, and raises blood pressure, and more. In order for health-sustaining function or healing to occur, patients (people or, even better, students of health improvement) need to have support in learning to practice stress mastery. Techniques that help to promote relaxation—the active meditations such as qigong, t'ai chi, yoga—are perfect for this.

Moving meditation accelerates the delivery of self-healing factors and accelerates the elimination of metabolic byproducts that can become toxic if they accumulate. What many practitioners, even in alternative and complementary medicine, do not fully realize is that t'ai chi and qigong are extremely powerful and



Ming (life). Calligraphy by Jianye Jiang.

they complement any form of medicine by significantly increasing the functionality of numerous internal systems. I predict that, along with yoga, these moving meditations from China will help create a major renaissance in the new medicine.

RM: So, if people have the ability to produce a spontaneous healing resource—a medicine within—would you say, then, perhaps, they do not require physical medicine or even doctors?

RJ: Of course I am not talking about acute physical trauma. If you're hit by a car, you had better get to a hospital. Nor am I referring to necessary surgeries for chronic syndromes, as in arthroscopic knee work that has helped my son or the amazing titanium prostheses that replaced the damaged bones of my wife's middle ear. Integrative medicine does not eliminate doctors or medicine; complementary medicine coordinates the best of natural healing with the best of modern medicine. For general, overall health maintenance, for chronic degenerative diseases, and for syndromes aggravated by stress, people can optimize the healer within. It's very low-cost. We could easily solve the health care crisis by helping t'ai chi and qigong become as common as Monday Night Football, Starbucks, or good daily hygiene.

RM: What would become the role of the doctor or practitioner?

RJ: An ancient Chinese medical text states: "The superior physician teaches people to sustain their health." I have always wanted to be a superior physician. I would suppose that all doctors would claim to want to be superior physicians.

RM: Being that qigong, t'ai chi, and acupuncture are all based in the energy of the body, the qi, it is important for us to understand qi. Can qi be translated into a concept that is familiar here in the West?

RJ: That is an interesting question. I have discussed this with many Chinese physicians and scientists and there is no short answer. The concept is so large, it only becomes a problem to call it something else. For instance people like to say that qi is energy but, if you ask in China, where the idea was born and is very alive and well today, no one will say that qi is energy. They may agree that energy is one aspect of qi.

Now, with this stated, I am just as curious as you about this and have done a mountain of research on the question through the literature of Chinese medicine and Daoist (Taoist) philosophy, via 8 research trips to China and my own practice of qi cultivation.

Briefly, there are a number of possible equivalents to qi in Western science as expressed in the following concepts:

- *Physio-functional expression*—Gland and organ functions, not their substance, are aspects of qi.

- *Bio-energetics*—Ions activate and control many functions in the body and flow in “preferential ion conduction pathways”; this is an aspect of qi.
- *The biofield*—The flow of ions anywhere in nature, including in humans, causes the generation of a magnetic field; this is an aspect of qi.
- *Quantum physics*—there is good research that suggests that our “self” may have an aspect that is boundless in distance and eternal in time; whatever this is may be one of the ways that qi is or acts.



Qi (Chi). Calligraphy by Jianye Jiang.

RM: Do you feel that qi will have an influence on our culture and in medicine.

RJ: Qi and *prana*, its sister from India, and all of the other invisible forces that are referred to by ancient cultures and spiritual traditions, are going to have a transformative effect on our culture. Science figured out nearly 100 years ago that the Newtonian model of mechanics for physics including the physics of ourselves, was not the fundamental model.

Our fax machines, telephones, and televisions are all based on the new quantum worldview. All of society and medicine will catch up with this eventually. Complementary medicine, including Chinese medicine, qigong, and t'ai chi are having a radical effect on health care right now.

It is imminent that science and culture will be transformed by all this. Why? Because a science of medicine, or even of economics, that is based on a view of the world and its function that has been evolved and updated to a new framework, will have to evolve.

Our medicine and our culture are, without question, due to evolve to embrace the reality of quantum interactions, connectivity, probability, and the relativity of what we call time. Interestingly, the people who have been evolving qigong and t'ai chi didn't just come to understand this 100 years ago. The Chinese system has been based on this kind of framework for 3000 or even 5000 years. Qigong is literally a personal practice of aligning with our deepest nature that has been refined and enhanced for millennia.

RM: Tell us about your clinical practice.

RJ: I have practiced Chinese medicine clinically for 25 years. My practice in Santa Barbara, California—the Health Action Clinic—has included three massage therapists, a physical therapist, two acupuncturists, and an occupational therapist who facilitated support groups and conducted educational classes. We developed a very comprehensive, holistic model that I now help other clinics and hospitals to implement.

To some extent, I modeled this practice after the Beechwood Clinic in Columbus, Ohio, which was started in 1942 by a

Books and Video by Dr. Roger Jahnke

Books

The Healer Within: The Four Essential Self-Care Methods For Creating Optimal Health

San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997

The Healing Promise of Qi: Creating Extraordinary Wellness Through Qigong and Tai Chi

New York: Contemporary Books (a division of McGraw-Hill), 2002

Video

Qigong—Chi Kung: Awakening and Mastering the Medicine Within
Health Action Productions (800-824-4325)

remarkable osteopath, Dr. Ernest Shearer. I am currently seeing fewer patients, helping medical practices and hospitals redesign their service lines, teaching the public and professionals qigong and t'ai chi, and lecturing quite a bit on these areas of health care.

RM: Did you have any interaction with allopathic physicians during this time?

RJ: Yes. I have always been involved in integrative medicine. I have always sustained peer-based relationships with the best M.D. physicians in my community. As a consultant to hospitals, insurance companies, corporations, and communities over a 15-year period, I have always gotten to know the best, brightest, most complementary thinking physicians.

My focus has been to assist these organizations and institutions in creating clinical and wellness programs based on the fact that the “first party” is intelligent and capable and that the “first resort” is to maximize the naturally occurring self-healing capacity.

Frequently, but not always, these new programs include t'ai chi and qigong. Health Action has another program, The Circle of Life, which is a powerful, low-cost, group-based component in the design of integrative and complementary programs. Physicians love these programs because they provide a low-cost way to provide what the public perceives as holistic or natural healing to complement medical treatment.

RM: It sounds like the need for qigong and t'ai chi teachers will continue to expand. Does the Institute of Integral Qigong and t'ai chi train instructors as well as training members of the public?

RJ: The Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi has three key objectives: teach and inspire the public through learning materials, workshops/retreats, and the Internet; train and certify instructors; and contribute to research by helping to design and



Xin (heartmind). Calligraphy by Jianye Jiang.

implement studies. We have created an education and research nonprofit, The Healer Within Foundation, to support these objectives.

Our 200-hour Integral Qigong and Tai Chi Instructor course is implemented as a month-long training retreat or as a series of 3-week-long intensive retreats. We have trained doctors, nurses, social workers, acupuncturists, massage therapists, psychotherapists, counselors, teachers, ministers, and program coordinators from all kinds of social service agencies. We have had trainees from Europe, Canada, Central and South America, and Asia.

Also, it is very common for people from other fields who want new careers in the exciting new arena of complementary medicine to quit their former jobs, train to be instructors, and return to their communities and create whole new lives and careers for themselves. It is a marvel really. We do some sort of training almost every month throughout the year. We usually do the instructor trainings and the workshops for the public in beautiful, natural settings with really healthy food. It is life-transforming for the participants. I love this work; it is so inspiring.

RM: So, would you recommend that every person, well or unwell, do t'ai chi or qigong on a regular basis?

RJ: I know it seems rather simplistic, but yes, absolutely! Unless a person already has both a meditation and exercise practice, qigong or t'ai chi are perfect—easy to learn; low-cost; effective; and engage body, mind and spirit. These dynamic meditation methods are showing up everywhere—schools, churches, corporations, community-service agencies—and even prisons.

RM: In prisons?

RJ: Yes. I was invited to present at Folsom Prison, a maximum-security facility, basically full of what we call criminals—bad people. They are doing qigong and t'ai chi there!

RM: Your optimism about the complementary and integrative medicine and the benefits of qigong and t'ai chi is exciting. Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. Any final thoughts to share with us?

RJ: Thank you for your interest. When people are exposed to

this kind of discussion and have a realization about the simple and profound truth that a powerful medicine is produced within the human body with very little effort or expense, they become very excited and eager. Then, when they experience t'ai chi and particularly some of the more simple and dynamic forms of qigong, these people actually can feel their inner resources circulating and are inspired to share with others. Good news spreads fast. This good news can really help our culture. Thanks for helping to inform people about qigong and t'ai chi. □

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