



How to Cultivate and Integrate Yi, Qi and Jing - Part One - *also known as "Sexual energy" by Dr Paul Lam*

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Introduction

Yi, Qi and Jing are the three most essential internal components in the practice of tai chi. *Yi* is the mind, Qi the vital life energy and Jing (not to be confused with Jing which is the internal force or strength and Jing which means serenity) the sexual energy. These components constitute the internal power of tai chi. Improving them will enhance your level of tai chi.

Yi and Qi are well known concepts. Yi directs the Qi, and the Qi drives the internal force. Converting Jing to Qi is one of the most effective ways to enhance Qi according to Taoist's Qigong.

What is Yi?

Without a doubt, the most powerful organ in the body is the mind. Tai chi is characterised by integration of the mind and body. Practising tai chi without mental involvement, for example thinking about going shopping or about your office troubles, as you practise will never be as effective. Mindless tai chi is not really tai chi.

How to improve Yi

Yang Chan-fu said: "The mind is the emperor and the body is the subordinate." "Using your mind not your force" is the dictum in our practise. To do this requires constant training. Be aware and try to maintain a state of "mental quietness." In this mental state, be

focused and tranquil and at the same time try to maintain an awareness of relaxing and loosening (song) the whole body. Keep the body upright and supple, loosen all joints and muscles, and sink your Qi to the Dan Tian (the centre of Qi, located three finger breadths below the umbilicus and slightly inward).

What is Qi?

In Chinese, Qi has many meanings, the most common being air. In relation to tai chi, it means the life energy that comes from the integrating energy from the air you inhale, Qi from the kidneys, and from the food and water in your digestive system. Qi is the inner powerhouse of tai chi. It provides the internal Jin (internal force or strength), supplies continual energy, and improves your ability to withstand an attack. According to traditional Chinese medicine, Qi is life. It is vital in maintaining health. The definition of death is a body without Qi.

How to improve Qi

All the internal components are closely related; therefore the methods of improving each aspect often cross over. Fortunately, if you improve one aspect that will favourably affect the other. There are many ways to improve your Qi - more nutritious food, a better life style and most exercise will help. One of the tai chi best methods to enhance your Qi is through your tai chi breathing.

Breathe by inhaling slowly and evenly, and as you do that, consciously move your Qi up to the Shan Zhong acupuncture point (in the middle of the sternum, the breast bone at the middle of the chest). Then breathe out, moving your Qi down to the Dan Tian. Do this gently and don't force your breath or the Qi. Many people feel Qi as a warm feeling. But if you can't move your Qi, then just try to just think of it moving in the right directions. It doesn't matter if at first you can't feel your Qi. Simply think of the parts of your body in the sequence I just outlined and with concentrated practice, you'll be able to feel and move your Qi.

After a suitable period of practice (whenever you become tired or your knees become comfortable, stand up slowly) and when you're able to move Qi comfortably with your breathing, then try to circulate

your Qi in a microcosmic orbit. This is a circuitous route from the perineum, the area between the anus and sexual organ (which is the Hui Yin acupuncture point) along midline of the back, just underneath the skin (an acupuncture meridian - the governing vessel) up to the top at the centre of the head (Bai Hui acupuncture point), and then from the head down along the front midline of the body (another acupuncture meridian - the concession vessel) back to the perineum. Breathe in and move the Qi up from the perineum to the top of the head and breathe out while gently pushing your Qi down to the perineum.