



Introduction to Chi Kung

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Introduction

This book is a very brief introduction to the Chinese art of Chi Kung, incorporating some history and summarising some of the different types of Chi Kung that have developed over the last few hundred years. We will also tell you how you can learn a number of simple daily exercises with Chi Master that will start you on the path to improved health and awareness.

Although the term 'Chi Kung' is relatively recent, this art form has been studied and developed over thousands of years in Ancient China, with the earliest written records dating back to the second century. Although Chi Kung is an umbrella term for many different medical and martial practises, they all have common elements and generally overlap with one another.

Unlike Western medicine, the practise of Chi Kung focuses primarily on prevention rather than cure and is non-invasive (non-surgical). It is a daily health maintenance system designed to bring harmony and well-being to body, mind and spirit. For existing ailments, the aim is to cure a person as a whole entity thus finding the root cause of an ailment, rather than just focusing on the specific area of illness. Although this makes the process of healing a little slower, by eliminating the root cause there is less chance of the ailment returning and the patient will be restored to better overall health.

Another unique feature of Chi Kung is that it combines movement with 'intent'. In otherwords, you are also focusing your mind on that which you are trying to accomplish. This combining of physical and mental energy is a much more effective system than using physical exercise alone and is a method that is being adopted in the training of many professional athletes, with them being required to 'visualise' success.



What is 'Chi' - Chinese & Scientific Explanations

Chi. A simple word and yet it evokes much scepticism and mysticism among the practical minded. So what exactly is Chi? It is sometimes referred to as cosmic energy, life essence or sometimes just 'the force'.

Our goal is to remove the mystery surrounding Chi and to present the concept in acceptable, everyday terms. (The benefits of Chi Kung practise should be available to everyone and it is a shame when mental barriers prevent someone from taking part in Chi Kung practises).

For Chi Kung practitioners, Chi is quite simply 'energy'. It is the energy inherited from our parents from conception to birth. It is the energy we gain through consuming food and drink. It is the energy we gain through the absorption and conversion of heat, light and air from external sources.

All living things contain different levels of energy and it is merely a process of converting one form of energy into another, much the same way that plants absorb water and light energy in order to survive. Through the course of nature, a plant absorbs energy and converts it for its own uses. So it is with humans. We are absorbing energy on a daily basis without always necessarily being aware of it.

All of the energy that a human absorbs is converted into electrical energy and carried around the body using our network of neurons. We are surrounded by electrical energy and each living thing has it's own magnetic field. A body can operate at different electrical frequencies, depending on whether in a state of play, work, rest or sleep. It is possible to measure these frequencies and science has now determined the optimum level at which a human being needs to function. From a Western perspective, Chi can be considered to be 'electromagnetic energy'.



What is 'Kung'

The Chinese word 'qong' means 'the study of' or 'mastery'. (There are many written variations on this word, the most common being kung, as in kung fu).

And so the term Qi Qong (or Chi Kung) simply means 'the study of Chi' or 'energy mastery'.

Chi Kung has been studied in China for many thousands of years, in so much depth and with such success that it is a recognised medical science. Eastern medicine does not believe in tampering with the human body in order to discover its workings, thus developing this external, non-invasive approach to medicine. The West is finally starting to take note of this preventive system of exercises and treatments, and to discover the more in-depth workings of this ancient knowledge.

Thousands of Chinese from all walks of life perform daily Chi Kung exercises in order to improve and maintain their own levels of health and fitness. Regular Chi Kung practise can be a good prevention against many of the illnesses we regularly face. By strengthening our physical and mental state through Chi Kung, our bodies become more balanced and resilient. This provides us with a good insurance policy against many common ailments.



Origins of Chi Kung – Shaolin and Bodhirhama

The tale of Chi Kung begins as early as the 2nd century B.C., when writings suggest that meditation and gymnastic practises were first combined. Other archeological findings from 168 B.C. include the 8 Silk Book, which displays with diagrams a number of Chi Kung exercises that are still being practised today.

One of the most famous stories is said to have occurred in the early 5th century, when it is said that Indian monk Bodhirhama travelled to China to spread the word of Bhudda. He became a guest of the now famous Shaolin Monks at their temple in Henan province.

However, during that time the temple was constantly raided and Bodhirhama noticed that despite trying to use Kung Fu to defend themselves, the monks were lacking in energy due to their many days spent meditating. He decided to help and legend has it that he retired to a cave in the mountain alone for nine years, where he developed a set of exercises that the monks could use daily to build their resistance and fitness levels.

On his return, the monks were delighted with the effectiveness of the exercises, as this allowed them to train in the shortest possible time, leaving plenty of time for meditation.

Although many scholars now feel that martial arts and meditation were combined by the Shaolin Monks long before this date and that Bodhidharma did not actually play this part in history, he is still associated with the idea that a combination of spiritual, physical and mental excellence are needed for true enlightenment.



As time went on, Chi Kung began to develop along different paths. While the monks honed martial Chi Kung, the Tang Dynasty Emperor became fascinated by their prowess and ordered research into Chi Kung for health benefits. Eventually this health Chi Kung would also divide into different specialist areas, including herbology, acupressure, acupuncture, herbology, moxibution and daily exercises for both general and sexual health.

Although the study of Chi Kung was suppressed for a while in favour of scientific research, it is now firmly established and regulated. While physical exercise still falls under the term Chi Kung, other health practises are collectively known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and many practitioners around the world are able to study TCM to a professional level, allowing them and their patients to benefit from this wonderful knowledge.



Modern Applications of Chi Kung

Take a walk around Hong Kong and you'll notice a couple of things that are quite remarkable. Firstly, there's an incredibly huge number of elderly people walking the streets, noticeably more agile than their Western counterparts.

Another surprise if you are not used to seeing it is the number of people who perform their daily exercise routines in their local park, often in classes. They meet every morning and afternoon to take part in their Chi Kung training, making the most of the good weather, getting closer to nature and turning their training into a happy social event.

On Sundays, you can even go to Kowloon Park across the harbour and see the Kung Fu masters performing feats of strength and Chi Kung mastery by incorporating concrete blocks and beds of nails into their demonstrations.

China even has hospitals where Chi Kung 'healers' use their skills to cure all kinds of ailments incorporating different elements of Traditional Chinese Medicine, plus the use of 'Chi transmission'.

Yes, the practise of Chi Kung is very much alive and an accepted part of the fabric of everyday life in China.

It is also taking a foothold in the West, with many practitioners benefiting daily from simple exercises that can be fitted around their daily routines.



Summary

The subject of Chi Kung is so vast that it would take ten lifetimes to master it all. For most of us who have busy lifestyles, it is impossible to dedicate a huge amount of our time to it, unless you happen to be a monk living halfway up a mountainside. Indeed had it not been for the monks and other scholars throughout the ages that have dedicated themselves to the development of Chi Kung, then it might not have matured to the extent that it has today. Luckily we are in a wonderful position where we can benefit from years of expertise and choose the best methods and exercises to complement our current lifestyles.

Remember that the study of Chi Kung is a personal one and that everyone's needs are unique. It is something that should be learned at your own pace and in accordance with your own needs. Some of us may want general health maintenance techniques, where other of us may be seeking relief from a specific ailment or maybe even looking to improve our Kung Fu techniques.

Whatever your needs, it is important that you learn to trust your instincts. Do not push yourself far beyond your own limits, but train at a pace that is comfortable and complimentary for you.



Learning Chi Kung With Chi Master

At Chi Master we offer a three level distance learning / online home study course incorporating some of the best techniques and exercises to be found in the 4000 year history of Chi Kung practise.

The subject matter contains numerous daily exercises and guidance on how to correctly use them for either health or martial purposes, with written guides, diagrams, pictures and video references.

Other topics covered include relaxation and meditation techniques, basic food cure and aromatherapy, massage and acupressure, meridians and isometric training.

The course is available to download in modules and can be taken at your own pace.

This training can be supplemented by attending group courses, retreats or 1-2-1 training with Master Chiu as required in order to ensure that you are getting the full benefits from your studies. All personal training with Master Chiu ensures that you receive a certificate of successful completion, essential if you are looking to reach a professional practitioner status.

For more details on how to download the first module, please visit:

www.chi-master.org