

Qi Gong as a Transformative Healing Art

facilitated by Roxana Ng

An Introduction to Transformative Martial Arts Summer Workshop Series

Organized by Brian Milani for the Transformative Learning Centre

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

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Brief description

Qi gong is a form of meditation and physical exercise, as well as a martial art, originated in ancient China 5,000 years ago. It has received renewed attention recently due to its health and anti-aging benefits. It is used widely as a healing modality in China, either on its own or as an adjunct to other treatments (such as surgery and medication). Its effectiveness lies in its simplicity; its integration of body, mind and spirit in healing; and its focus on the vital energy (Qi) circulating in the human body and in all living things. This workshop will address the healing aspect of qi gong. It will begin with a brief explanation and discussion of its basic principles, to be followed with qi gong exercises so as to enable participants to experience this exercise form. There will be time for questions and discussion.

About the facilitator

Roxana Ng teaches in the Adult Education and Community Development Program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. She has written extensively on issues pertaining to immigrant women; globalization and work restructuring; and marginality and equity in education. Dissatisfied with theories and practices that privilege the intellect (simplistically equated with the mind) over the body-spirit, in 1990 she began to explore eastern philosophical thoughts that do not create this bifurcation. Using Chinese medical theory and qi gong as a starting point, she has developed a form of transformative education, which she calls “embodied learning”, that she is integrating into her teaching and writing. She has practised tai chi and qi gong for over 15 years, and continues to study these healing and martial art forms.

What is Qi Gong and what does it do?

Qi = universal concept in Chinese culture that has no precise English equivalence. It is the air that circulates throughout our universe; it is the air we breathe; it is our breath. It is usually translated as vital energy. One way of thinking about Qi is this: if there is Qi, there is life. When there is no Qi, life ceases.

Gong = effort, to exert; exercise, to exercise

Qi Gong = to exercise the breath. It is at once meditative and martial.

The three regulations of Qi Gong: the breath (qi); the body (structure); the mind (spirit)

How is Qi Gong transformative?

Apart from its obvious health benefits, Qi Gong provides a way for us to reflect on conditioned patterns of behaviour without judgement, so that we are better able to determine what needs to be changed. Assumption: personal change and social change are inseparable; in order for social change to be sustainable, we have to change ourselves – our ways of being in the world.

Readings and references

Cohen, Kenneth S. (1997) *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*. New York: Ballantine Books.

James, Andy (2004) *The Spiritual Legacy of Shaolin Temple: Buddhism, Daoism, and the Energetic Arts*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Jwing-Ming, Yang (1989, 1997) *The Root of Chinese Qigong*. Roslindale, Mass.: YMAA Publication Center.

Ng, Roxana (2005) Embodied pedagogy as transformative learning: A critical reflection. Canadian Association for the Studies of Adult Education (CASAE) 24th Annual Conference Proceedings (available from the CASAE website).

Williams, Tom (1996) *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Chinese Medicine*. Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element Books. See the chapter on Qi Gong.

Other resources

<http://www.torontotaichimeditationcentre.com/>

<http://www.sammasich.com/>

<http://www.harmonydawnontarioretreat.com/>