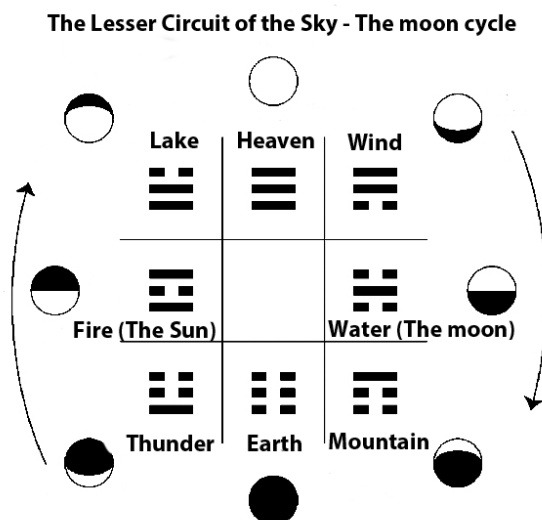


## The Yi Jing and Daoist Qigong a brief history and practice

*Lao Tzŭ provided the archetype for this in the Tao Te Ching when he wrote, "The soft and the pliable will defeat the hard and strong."*

Fu Hsi, is known as the first Emperor of China more than 5,000 years ago, before there was a China, during a time when the nomadic people of Asia were cultural diverse, nature inspired and great artisans. It is said that Fu Shi was a Shaman, he could tame wild animals through telepathic communication and



while he was sitting next to a river, a strange turtle came from the waters after a great flood, and it had very special markings that he deciphered as the lines of the yin and yang on its shell. He was inspired to write the lines down as he described them as changes in seasons, representations of nature like lake, river, sky, fire, mountain, thunder, wind and earth.

The story of Fu Hsi has carried down as a creation myth and worldview, including Nuwa, his wife, who survived a great flood, repopulated the world and established the human race. It is said Nuwa created people of yellow clay, and was the protector of all people and animals. (1)

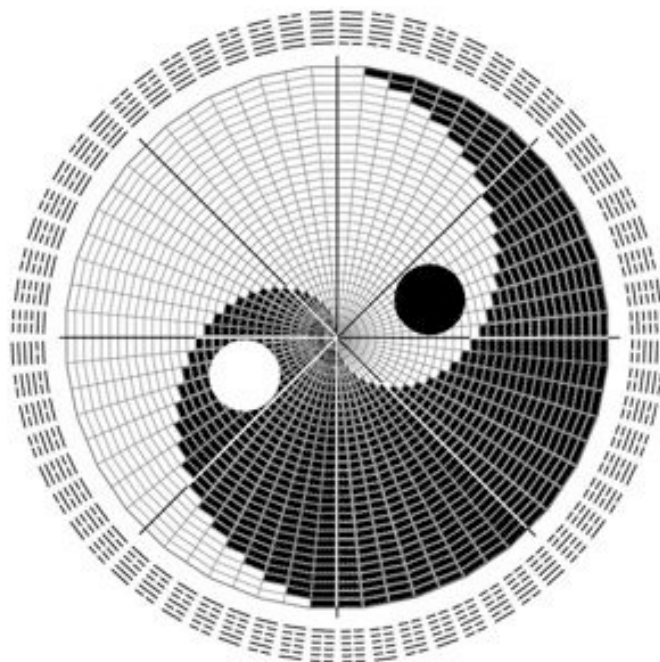
Historically, the Yi Jing (The Book of Changes) was commonly used as a daily almanac helping with farming, fishing and hunting and day to day life until King Wen, founder of the Chou Dynasty (1150-249BC) wrote essays on the meanings of the 64 hexagrams. He wrote these commentaries however while imprisoned by the tyrannical Emperor Chou Hsin. During his imprisonment, he saw visions on the walls of his cell, forming hexagrams of the yin and yang and elemental natures of the trigrams. These visions were so powerful he spent his entire time translating them into a language for all could understand. Finally King Wen was rescued by his son Wu who led a rebellion to overthrow Chou Hsin. King Wen took his rightful place on the throne, his son continued his father's work with the Yi Jing.

Hundreds of years followed and many used the words of the Yi Ching in their philosophies.

One of the most famous is the writing of Confucius (551-479BC) and his disciples.

Confucius took this book of daily living values, and put them into context of commerce, politics, social changes and

most importantly as a moral ethic of how to live one's life. He was quoted as saying



“Instead of indulging in empty talk, I consider it more meaningful and enlightening to express myself in definite actions.” (2)



In the early 1900s, Carl Jung studied the Yi Jing for more than 30 years, in context of the archetypes and psychology of the 64 hexagrams. Jung crossed paths with Richard Wilhelm's translation in the early 1900s and was so intrigued, he convinced the Mellon family to underwrite a publication of an American edition.

He saw that the Chinese sages were directly in living with mythic heroes and warriors, gods and kings and it was Jung who saw that human nature and cosmic order had a symbiotic relationship, a shared collective unconsciousness through symbols that affected all people of all times and any culture. It was Carl Jung and Isabel Briggs Meyers who later developed the typological approach to personalities based upon the archetypes of the Yi Jing and is currently used today as, Taoist psychology is an inspiration for Jungian psychology.

The Tao, as R.L. Wing writes, is the “search for a solution to the mystery underlying the constant motion and change in the universe.” This search is the fundamental quest of science of physics and metaphysics. Physical change in the universe is forever constant, just as life carries on through a genetic code, everything lives and dies. The seed is the potential, the cycles however are the rhythms of life such

as the orbit of earth around the sun, the changing of the seasons, the repeating cycles of comets and weather and migrations of birds, and on and on. The Tao is an understanding that we are part of this rhythm and path of life in a forever changing cosmos, and one definition explains it best:

*The tao literally means the way or gate through which all things move.*

*“The Chinese philosophers were fond of comparing taoist behavior with that of water: it flows onward always. It penetrates the crevices, it wears down resistance, it stops to fill deep places and then flows on. Always it holds to its true nature and always it flows with the forces of the cosmos.” (Wing, p. 12)*

Confucius wrote in the Ten Wings, his treatise on the Book of Changes, “Whoever knows the tao of the changes and transformations, knows the actions of the gods.” It is this very literal action that the Taoist began to emulate in somatic movement, enacting the stories of the archetypes into a healing modality we know today as Tai Ji and Qigong.

### **The Practice we know as Tai Ji/Qigong**

The oldest documented form for longevity is called Ba Duan Jin (Eight Brocade) Qi Gong which Taoist influence is documented at 1300. The actual origin of this Qi Gong is estimated at 1150. Posture, Breathing, Intention and Concentration were equally trained

in Ba Duan Jin and built a perfect foundation for the Tai Chi principles we know today.

(Wudang)

The principles of Nei Gong, Qi Gong, Kung Fu and Liang Yi are integrated in the Wudang Tai Chi system. Meditative (Wuji) aspects of Nei Gong, breathing, stretching and posture from Qi Gong, fighting aspect and intention from Kung Fu, harmonizing Yin and Yang with the doctrines of Liang Yi. Tai Chi is the connecting element to control all this aspects in motion. That Wudang Tai Chi is so well developed today we owe to the ancient documented Taoist experiences.(4)

### **Tai Ji** (*“the Source”*)

The term *taiji* refers to a philosophy of the forces of yin and yang, related to movement. It is the invisible energy we call Qi, and upon which the Tai Chi Chuan, a systematic practice of movement began thousands of years later. There is great divisiveness in the actual creation or beginning of Tai Chi Chuan (taijiquan), but it is known that Chen Tai Chi is associated with Buddhism while the Wudang Tai Chi is based on Taoism. But that is a religion and a culture that have been intermingled for thousands of years. Their meanings interchangeable and equally as vague.

According to the Wudang Martial Arts, Wudangshan was previously called Tai He Shan, the name was different and the Taoists were all killed by the Chinese republic revolution. Most of their temples and books were burned. The taoists had strict rules and were not available for outsiders. The practitioners were monks, it was a secretive practice inside

the royal kingdom practicing martial art, and most certainly did not include women practitioners. These movements also became healing movements for medicine practitioners. Health and being balanced being the number one mission, those that could cultivate qi began what we know as Qigong, the movement of Qi and opened medicine clinics in China. That was until Mao Zedong shut all of the Medicine-less hospitals down for political reasons. One of these hospitals named Chi Lei was under the supervision Dr. Pang Ming and there are many that studied Qigong as medicine. During its existence more than 400,000 people were treated for more than 180 documented diseases. Today, Mingtong Gu, a Qigong Master who studied under Dr. Pang Ming, is now living in the United States in Santa Fe, New Mexico where he has created a residential healing retreat to continue the work that they were practicing in China. My Qigong teacher, a sifu trained in China is Master Zhenzan Dao. His institute is also in Santa Fe, New Mexico and is called MogaDao Institute. The New Dao, created from his life as a martial arts practitioner and from his time working in Qigong clinics after a severe illness brought him to their practice. His last teacher a 93 year old master from the hills, rather than the city has kept much of the old practice that was not allowed, alive. Grateful for my teacher and their teachers and all the ancestors that survive in this archetypal invisible energy we know as Qi.

### **The Death of the old Medicine by Mao Zedong**

Commonly known as Chairman Mao (1893 –1976), was a Chinese communist revolutionary, poet, and political theorist of the People's Republic of China, which he

ruled as the Chairman of the Communist Party of China from 1949 until his death in 1976. His theories, military strategies, and political policies are well known for their autocratic totalitarian regime which was responsible for mass repressions and destruction of religious and cultural artifacts and sites, which through executions, and forced labor caused an estimated 40 to 70 million deaths. (Wikipedia)

“Religion is poison.” And Mao didn’t just mean religion — he meant anything traditional, therefore everything cultural including medicine of the sages was forbidden. Facing a health crisis of unprecedented proportions, Mao Zedong, surprisingly in 1956, asked the Chinese Sports Committee to create a simplified form of Tai Chi for the public, and promoted it on a national level, billions of Chinese people now practiced Tai Chi Chuan, a repetitive form of exercise.

Mao Zedong was also responsible for westernizing Traditional Chinese Medicine into the form that we are taught and practice today. TCM is the creation of Mao just like Tai Chi Chuan was. Where the medicine is devoid of its spirit points, spirit names, and anything culturally and traditionally linked, it is now a system of medicine without reference to the origins of the original Tai Ji, the Elemental medicine that came from the archetypal movements from thousands of years ago.

## **Today**

In 2018, Qigong is recognized as a powerful healing art, an effective form of exercise to support the practice of acupuncture and TCM. There are some that are Qigong teachers

that carry the energy medicine into their treatment rooms and offer it as a modality for healing. It is based upon the same 5 Element medicine, is self-directed, can be practiced with groups, while laying in a bed, as ceremony, bringing in ancestors, with a deeper spiritual connection to the practice of TCM. Enacting the archetypal forms that Fu Hsi saw on the back of a turtle, that carried onto the wall that King Wen envisioned, into the forms of the Ba Gua and the 64 personalities of nature in how they move and change in the cosmos everyday is reflected in the same nature within us as humans. It is difficult to put this kind of practice under a microscope for scientific testing, but in modern research qi is recognized, it is documented, results have been identified, and it is supported as an effective form of healing long before there were needles and other modalities.

To learn Qigong, there are teachers that come from a lineage of Taoist and Chinese Masters, as many as there are versions of Yoga in the world. Each teacher is unique but the fundamental principles of each set of forms has a timeless identify. To become a Daoist Qigong teacher is to commit to a lifetime and lifestyle that matches the belief system. It is not something you can go and do, pay money for, accumulate hours and become, it is a community of practice, and daily ritual that becomes your life, not something you go home with and put it away. The Daoist are different than the Chinese practitioners in many ways. The Chinese are patriarchal and follow in lineages and use these names as their identifying credibility. The Taoist are day by day, with no gender



specifications of who can and cannot become a master and who is allowed to practice a lineage. This practice is not regulated by the State of Colorado.

### References:

1. Zeisky, Joseph. 2017. *Fuxi: The First Emperor of China*. Zeigua Arts, [http://www.zeigua.com/iching/iching\\_fuxi.html](http://www.zeigua.com/iching/iching_fuxi.html)
2. Wing, R. L. 1979. *The IChing Workbook*. Broadway Books, Random House. NY
3. Jung, Carl. 1949. Forward to the *IChing*, Translation by Richard Wilhelm. Zurich.
4. internal Wudang Martial Arts. 2016. *Chen Tai Chi is Not the Oldest Tai Chi*. Official Wudang Sanfeng Blog. <https://internalwudangmartialarts.com/2016/04/12/chen-tai-chi-is-not-the-oldest-tai-chi/>
5. Chan, Luke. 2001. The World's Largest Medicineless Hospital. <http://www.chilel.com/WhatIsChilelQigong/hospital.htm>

