



# CHI CHAT

## with the Grandmaster

Issue 37

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### From the Grandmaster's desk

I came across an article reported by AFP news agency (Source: Friday, May 15, 2015 - "30 minutes of exercise is key to health in old age"-AFP) that *elderly men who do 30 minutes of physical activity, six days a week, are likely to have a 40-per cent lower risk of death.* The evidence comes from a major research project in Norway called the "Oslo Study" that was started in 1972 where volunteered men born between 1923 and 1932 were monitored right through 2011. The results of the study suggest that a moderate use of time -30 minutes, six days a week, irrespective of whether the activity was light or vigorous, was associated with a reduction in mortality rate of 40 percent. The results also suggest that those who exercised vigorously extended their lifespan by five years compared with those who led sedentary lives.

In our hustle and bustle world, finding time and the commitment to do 30

minutes of light exercises can be challenging for many of us. If time is a constraint, try the Chi Dynamics "*15 minutes Capsule*" (2 mins-hand flicks, 3 mins-shoulder rolls, 8 mins-butterfly stretch, and 2 mins of standing zen or 4<sup>th</sup> posture (in the Ten posture Qi Meditation).

In my interaction with some Qigong members, I have also received feedback on their commonly suffered health ailments and would like to help address them by incorporating them as topics in our 2016 workshops . Thus, in addition to the Cancer Care Workshop and Volunteer Project, we will explore \* Lower Back Pain, \*Tendonitis - (thumb, wrist, elbows), \*Trigger Finger and Carpal Tunnel, \*Arthritis - knees, fingers, other joints, \*Frozen Shoulder, \*How to Remain Flexible and Overcome Joint Stiffness, \*High Blood and Low Blood Ailments, \*Diabetes and \*What constitutes a Good Diet.

On the subject of proper diet for cancer care and the

importance of angiogenesis in cancer, here is the [link](#) for those who are interested

As the New Year approaches us with hopes anew, I would like to thank all of you for the continued support and goodwill. **May good health and happiness be yours through the New Year.**



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*This publication is for internal distribution to CDI members only. Should you have any health-related experiences to share with fellow members, please email them to gmasteranthony@gmail.com.*

### Grandmaster Welcomes



(Clockwise from top left) Basil, Rebekah, Bernard, Steven & Rose

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# Of Qigong and Yoga

*Today, many people all over the world practise yoga; there is also increasing interest in qigong. Some have wondered whether both can be practised together, or the practice of one means giving up the other. Not many know that yoga and qigong share a common history. So in this article, Grandmaster Anthony Wee and Senior Instructor Royston Tan, who is also a certified Yoga Instructor, will take you through the common historical and cultural connection between Yoga and Qigong, and answer some commonly asked questions.*

**ChiChat: When did Yoga and Qigong develop and become documented as systems of Mind- Body development with a focus on Physical strength and Meditative development?**

**Grandmaster:** The credit goes to Bodhidharma or DaMor in Mandarin. Traditional accounts contain as much myth as history about Bodhidharma. This much we know. He was born sometime in the 5th or 6th Century into a high-caste family in India but decided on a life of renunciation in pursuit of enlightenment. After receiving spiritual transmission from his teacher/master, he set sail from the Southern Indian State of Kerala to China, a journey that was said to have taken him three years. The Chinese emperor Wu Ti was steeped in his own views and did not like what Bodhidharma taught. So he banished him from court. Bodhidharma thus travelled further North to a monastery, but was rejected by the Abbott of the Shaolin Temple on his concept of Zen. The Abbott preferred the transcription and recitation of the Sutra which Bodhidharma thought was a waste of time. Undaunted, Bodhidharma was said to have sat in meditation in a cave, beyond the temple walls, for nine years. The monks were so impressed with his tenacity and perseverance that they then welcomed him into the monastery. He later took over the old Abbott 's place after his death

**ChiChat: How did he come to teach Qigong?**

**Grandmaster :** Bodhidharma was a very skilled Yogi who was able to impart the Grand of Pranayama (breathing exercises) to the Chinese monks. This, in the Chinese language, became known as Qigong or the Art of breathing exercises. Apart from the practice of Pranayama, he was also skilled in "Kalarari Prayet " a martial art form known in Kerala, which is said to have become the foundation of Shaolin Temple's Kungfu, with far-reaching significance in the history of Chinese Culture. *Today this system is practised*

*by many around the world.*

**ChiChat: Why did he teach the monks these Art forms?**

**Grandmaster:** When Bodhidharma met the monks, he was alarmed at how weak and tired they were from their diet, their studies and sedentary lifestyles. He thus taught them exercises to improve their well-being and boost their energy.

**ChiChat: How does "posture Yoga " figure in this?**

**Grandmaster:** Bodhidharma also taught the Art of stretching and postures (*Asanas*) but the word *yoga* was not used by the Chinese. Instead the Shaolin Temple Monks called it " Tong Tze Gong " or Art of the young . However the real meaning was the Art that **keeps you young**. Something was lost in translation and misunderstood, and with the rising popularity of KungFu, the Art of the Young diminished in significance. However, it is noteworthy that in any Shaolin Temple Kungfu demonstration, they will always showcase the Yoga postures, such as the Headstand.

**ChiChat: Do you see any "conflict" in these two Art forms namely Qigong and Yoga?**

**Royston:** No. These 2 art forms are basically complementary and share some similarities. The *pi* breathing in Qigong is similar to *kapalabhati* breathing in Yoga. Both forms also emphasize that good health can be achieved by adopting proper postures, breathing exercises, diet, relaxation and meditation.

One pertinent difference is that in Yoga, all inhalations and exhalations are through the nose; in Qigong, some exhalations are done through the mouth as in *chui* (*soft/hard blowing*), *xi* (*teeth clenching, without the clench*) and *tu* (*the "ha" breath*).

**Chi Chat: What are the benefits to health when an exponent consistently practice both Art forms?**

**Royston:** Yoga asanas (postures) and pranayama (breathing techniques) focus on bending, stretching, twisting and breathing exercises. By so doing, the body becomes more flexible; the muscles and tendons are stretched, making them more pliable; and the internal organs are massaged. This leads to overall improvement in the well-being of the practitioner.

Qigong exercises use postures and the five forms of breathing to generate qi (energy) and to direct the qi to the various organs and parts of the body to strengthen and improve the

## Of Qigong and Yoga (continue)

health of the practitioner. There is no focus on stretching *per se*.

Meditation, which is taught in both Qigong and Yoga, helps one to calm the mind, promote equanimity and attain inner peace.

Thus, practising both art forms would result in the attainment of all-round flexibility for the entire body and an overall higher energy level.

**Chi Chat:** If Chi Dynamics combine the two Arts into one, from the view of an instructor, is it difficult to teach?

**Royston:** For an instructor to teach both art forms, he/she must be trained in both. Some Yoga asanas (postures) may look simple but there are finer points to take note of. An untrained eye will not be able to spot if the alignment of the body is incorrect, nor know how to make the necessary adjustment. With some grounding in basic Yoga, it should not be too difficult to teach both.

**Chi Chat:** What about trainees? Do you think they can accept this combination of Qigong and Yoga?

**Royston:** Acceptance by trainees is not an issue as currently we have already incorporated some of the Yoga *asanas* such as *cobra*, *bridge*, and *plank* exercises into our training. The *Fire Eagle Stretch* is a good example of Qigong and Yoga postures being combined into a set of exercises that have benefitted practitioners.

**Chi Chat:** Given the historical roots of Qigong and Yoga, does the religious affiliation of someone who is interested in both or either matter?

**Grandmaster:** The qigong we teach at Chi Dynamics is about proper breathing and exercises to strengthen one's physical and mental well-being. While it's good for us to understand the origins of these exercises, and give thanks to the people who helped create them, I do not think we should be too concerned about their religious affiliation and background. Our human bodies are the same, regardless of our personal or religious belief systems. Physically, we are all made up of energy, bones and mass, which should be well-looked after and properly charged-up. This will allow us to lead healthy lives, free to pursue the things important to each of us.



Grandmaster demonstrating breathing and relaxation techniques

## Ask Grandmaster

**Question:** The inner smile is encouraged in Chi Dynamics - Qigong, why?

**Answer:** When we put on an inner smile, the vagus nerve is stimulated. Stimulation of the nerve counteracts the sympathetic nervous system, the one that causes stress by activating the fight or flight response. It 's almost like the Yin and Yang effect where the parasympathetic nervous system is instead activated and calms you down.

The inner smile releases an array of anti-stress enzymes and hormones such as Endorphins and Serotonin as

negative thoughts are erased by a smile. Positive thoughts and feelings enhance the immune system, conversely, negative thinking reduces the potency of our immune system and stresses us emotionally.



# Remedies to relieve knee pain

Knee pain is a common problem with many causes, from acute injuries to medical conditions. If your knee grinds or clicks when you move, hurts when you use the stairs, this may degenerate into permanent knee problems which may then require medical attention.

To manage knee pain problems and to maintain the health of the knees, Grandmaster Anthony Wee shared some strategies with our Qigong members:

- i) Cupping therapy on the acupressure points
- ii) Massaging the acupressure points above the knees and below the knees to improve drainage, qi flow and lubrication of the knees
- iii) Practising exercises which strengthen the muscles supporting the knees such as the Sword Stretch or cycling in the air.



[Watch](#) Grandmaster Anthony Wee point out and demonstrate how to massage these pressure points.



Massaging the knee area (front and back) to allow blood flow which helps to strengthen and lubricate the knee joints.



Massaging these points on either side help drainage after cupping. It also relieves tired legs after too much standing or walking.



Pressure point to massage for those with problems walking down the steps.



Cycling in the air to exercise the joints without wear and tear