



Official Newsletter of the National Qigong Association

Welcome to our Spring Quarterly Newsletter, and the Year of the Dragon

This edition contains a variety of articles on different aspects of Qigong practice. To start off, Dr. Diego Sanmiquel brings us a discussion on the transformative qualities the year of the Dragon brings into our sphere of existence. Dr. Gayle Hubatch brings us her experience with the Microcosmic Orbit during her study in China. And, our own Research and Education Committee has published an eye-opening study on the effects of Taiji and Qigong on cancer patients.

Registration for the NQA Conference in Savannah, Georgia September 24-26 2024 is open. Here is the link to register:

<https://www.nqa.org/annual-conference>

This is a not-to-miss conference with knowledgeable teachers sure to enhance your own practice or teaching skills! The list of presenters is also on the conference web page.

The article on the Pre-Conference sessions at Forsyth Park and Tybee Beach not only talk about these beautiful venues conference goers have access to, but also highlights the different experiences of practicing Qigong under trees and by the ocean.

John Munro, one of the conference presenters, also enlightens us with his article on energy during Qigong practice and how to transform this energy into other factors of our lives.

And don't forget to check out the NQA Calendar of Events! There is a lot of great Qi flowing here!

Linda Kiesler
NQA Publications Committee Chair

Upcoming Events
PAGE 2

Enter the Wood Dragon
PAGE 3

Nine Benefits of Being
Able to Feel Your Energy
PAGE 5

NQA Conference- Two
Opportunities to Practice
Qigong in Nature
PAGE 9

A Journey Through the
Microcosmic Orbit-
Harbin, China 1992
PAGE 11

Research & Education
PAGE 13

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	MEMBER	EVENT
3/23/24	Vicki Dello Joio	Spring Break Through
3/31/24	Solala Towler	Spring Qigong Seminar
4/8/24	Vicki Dello Joio	Living in the Qi Field- Spring to Summer
4/26/24	Richard Clear	Chi Kung / Fa Kung Energy Healing Workshop
5/14/24	Solala Towler	Taiwan Qigong Tour
6/11/24	Bruce Frantzis	Wu Style Tai Chi Short Form Summer Intensive
6/19/24	Bruce Frantzis	Moving Qi Through The Body With The Swings of Qigong
6/26/24	Bruce Frantzis	The Daoist Meditation Practices of the Daodejing
9/1/24	Jessica Kolbe	Spiritual Trip to Bali: Going With The Flow
9/24/24	NQA	In-Person Annual Conference In Savannah, Georgia

Must be a professional member of the NQA to submit an event



Enter the Wood Dragon

BY DIEGO SANMIQUEL

As we navigate the beginning of 2024 and approach the Chinese New Year, we stand on the cusp of a significant cosmic shift: the Year of the Wood Dragon, starting on February 10, 2024, and extending until January 28, 2025. This time is very auspicious, and it occurs only every 60 years, bringing forth great change and transformation and a powerful visionary essence.

The Dragon Year is known for amplifying outcomes – success is celebrated on a grand scale, and failures are equally magnified. However, the Wood Dragon, this combination, in particular, brings a blend of calm, visionary intelligence. It harmonizes the creative spark of the right brain with the logical precision of the left.

As we edge closer to this new year, many of us are already feeling the stir of discomfort rising in various aspects of our lives. These are not random occurrences but are intricately linked to what the Wood Dragon heralds. Additionally, the leap year of 2024 presents an unparalleled opportunity for heightened consciousness and a shift toward humanism over technological reliance. The 29th of February combines numerological energies of 11 (2+9) and 2, creating a rare day symbolizing spiritual awakening and fulfilling our personal mission.

The message of the Wood Dragon year is clear: there is no single path to success. Flexibility and openness to evolving opportunities will be crucial. It's a time to reinvent, strengthen our assets, step out with our strong foot, and seek support in areas where we're less strong. The efforts we put in will be magnified - for better or worse.

On a global scale, the Wood Dragon brings forth the potential for new alliances between nations. However, we must tread cautiously, as this Dragon can unleash transformative but turbulent changes, signifying a purification process for humanity.

continue on page 4

Flexibility and openness to evolving opportunities will be crucial. It's a time to reinvent, strengthen our assets, step out with our strong foot, and seek support in areas where we're less strong. The efforts we put in will be magnified - for better or worse.

DIEGO SANMIQUEL



The key lies in 'surfing' the tail of the Dragon with grace - mastering the art of adaptability and enhancing our communication skills.



This year also emphasizes ecological consciousness - the 'Wood' element isn't just about growth and flourishing; it's a call to reforest our environment and ourselves.

Before the new year, a thorough physical, energetic, and spiritual cleansing of our self and living spaces is highly recommended. This act symbolizes removing the old and making way for the new, aligning with the Dragon's transformative energy.

The Wood Dragon year is also a time for introspection and awakening. It's about finding quiet spaces away from the chaos, reconnecting with ourselves, and focusing on what truly matters.

As we navigate the tail of the Dragon (November, December til January 28, 2025), we will face emotional challenges. How we handle these will determine our transition into the Snake Year, which offers opportunities for dramatic progress and new beginnings.

The key lies in 'surfing' the tail of the Dragon with grace - mastering the art of adaptability and enhancing our communication skills. As we learn to 'surf', we prepare ourselves for a powerful entry into the Snake year, poised for new leaps in life and being.

To summarize, let it be clear that The Year of the Wood Dragon is not just another year; it's a pivotal moment for personal and collective transformation. It challenges us to grow, adapt, and awaken to deeper truths. By embracing the lessons of the Dragon and preparing for the Snake, we can navigate these times with wisdom, balance, and a vision for a renewed future.



Diego Sanmiquel, MBA, DMQ
Member, Board of Directors- NQA
<https://www.diegosanmiquel.net/>

Nine Benefits of Being Able to Feel Your Energy

BY JOHN MUNRO

One of the things that we do within Qigong practice is seek to tune into and actually feel and become aware of our living energy. After all 'Qi' translates as energy, and 'gong' translates as work or skill, and it is definitely easier to work with your energy and develop skill with it if you have conscious awareness of it!

If you've never really tried to pay attention to your energy before, this concept and some of what you may experience when you direct your attention and awareness in this way can seem a bit weird or unusual to begin with. It can also take quite a bit of time and dedicated practice to really tune into your energy, and you may wonder if it is really worth all that effort. So, in this article we will look at nine benefits that come from being able to feel your energy!

1. Health and Healing

Our living energy or 'Qi' is comprised of many parts. When we tune into the energy which flows through us, in subtle ways we are becoming aware of the electricity which flows through our nervous system, the flow of blood through our arteries and veins, the tension in our muscles and connective tissues, the function of our organs, and the heat produced in our cells. As we become more aware of this energy we are able to find where it is flowing freely, and where it may be blocked and stagnant. We are then more able to balance these flows within us, which has tangible effects on all the functions of our body mentioned above – regulating our nervous system, improving circulation, improving the function of our organs and the other tissues in our body and so on.

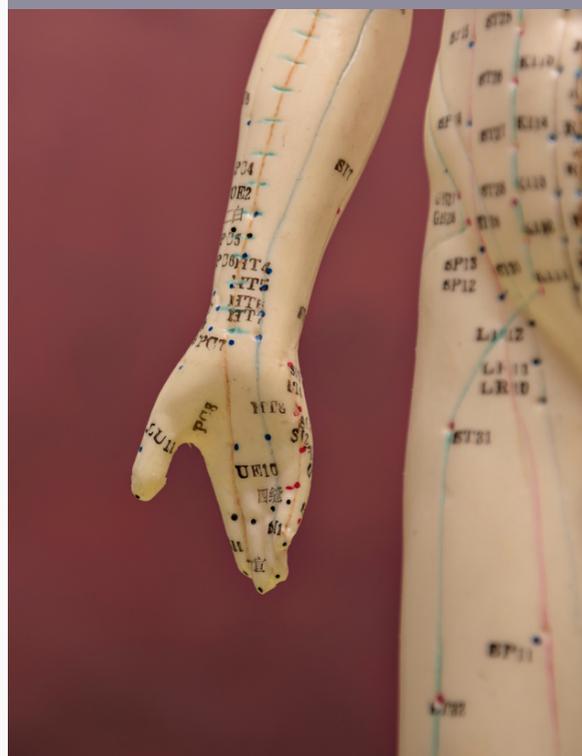
This awareness can help us in our efforts to guide our bodies resources to heal existing illnesses and to change and avoid patterns that could lead to more serious health problems down the track if left to continue.

2. Peak Performance

An extension of the first benefit on our list is that developing our awareness of our energy can lead not only to health as in an absence of sickness, but to fine-tuning our system to function at its highest level of performance.

When we tune into the energy which flows through us, in subtle ways we are becoming aware of the electricity which flows through our nervous system, the flow of blood through our arteries and veins, the tension in our muscles and connective tissues, the function of our organs, and the heat produced in our cells.

JOHN MUNRO



Avoiding unnecessary conflict, not allowing our energy to be drained excessively, and engaging in interaction in a way that leads to positive and healthy energy flow for everyone involved.



Tuning into our energy can help us to develop sharper focus, greater strength, speed, endurance, and heightened sensitivity, as we fine-tune not only the function of each of our individual tissues, but also the way they work together collectively. Peak performance requires a fine balance between all of the parts of our body and mind, and tuning in to our energy is a way for us to focus on the effect of all these parts together, allowing us to effectively fine-tune that balance.

3. Harmonize Ourselves with Nature and Our Environment

As we become more aware of our own energy in finer detail, we naturally also start to notice the interaction we have with the energy of nature in the environment around us. There are many layers of benefit that come from this, such as being better able to arrange our living and working spaces to make us more productive and happy, or transitioning more comfortably through changes of season, or even really practical things like reducing the effect of jet lag when we travel.

4. More Harmonious Interactions with Other People

Of course we also become aware of more nuance in our interactions with other people as well. Observing not only the surface level of our interactions – like the words said, or posture and body language used, but also the energy that lies behind this, can help us to tailor our interactions to bring more harmony between ourselves and others- avoiding unnecessary conflict, not allowing our energy to be drained excessively, and engaging in interaction in a way that leads to positive and healthy energy flow for everyone involved.

5. Richer and More Joyful Experience of Life

All of this leads to a richer and more joyful experience of life. As we develop our awareness of energy it is like having a new lens to observe and interact with the world through, which allows us to see and experience more fascinating detail. When we walk in a forest, we don't just see the trunks, branches, and leaves of the trees – we also feel the energy that flows through them, and the patterns of interaction of the energy of all the plants and creatures within it. When we visit the mountains we not only see the grandeur of the wide open views and taste the freshness of the air, but we also feel the currents of energy that flow through the earth beneath us. We start to become aware of the bigger patterns of energy that ebb and flow through life, and the dance of different phases of activity and interaction.

6. Understand the Mysteries of the Universe

This richer, more detailed, experience of life helps us to understand the mysteries of the universe. Stated that way it sounds a bit grandiose – but anything that we don't understand is by definition a mystery to us, and awareness of energy has an effect on our understanding of every facet of life and the world around us. We probably won't understand all of the mysteries of the universe in an instant, but little by little as our awareness develops, so will our understanding, and little by little

individual mysteries will unfold within our understanding.

7. Make Better Decisions

This greater more nuanced awareness and understanding of ourselves, the world around us, and our interaction with others, helps us to make better decisions in our lives. Some decisions in life can be challenging, with many factors in favour or against. And sometimes what may seem like a good decision on the surface may actually really not be beneficial for reasons that may not be clear from superficial analysis.

Tuning into our energy can help us to move beyond just our conscious ability to reason our way through this type of decision, and let our sense of our energy help us to appropriately weight all of the many factors known and unknown, and maybe even find other alternatives that we had not thought of. Reading the patterns of energy flow within and around us can help us to move out of and avoid patterns that may have been blocking our energy or causing conflict in our lives and find pathways and make decisions that will allow our energy to flow with the most freedom and vitality.

8. Fun

I think this is a pretty important benefit actually. Sometimes we can get very serious about life and all the many things we need to do, and challenges we may face (I know I certainly do). But what is the point of life if we can't enjoy it? Tuning into energy is a lot of fun in my experience. I remember the first time I was shown some simple Qigong exercises by my mother when I was about 10 years old. I thought it was fascinating! Feeling my own energy between my hands and within my body – it was a bit like being a Jedi!

Those initial experiences captured my imagination, and over the years as I have explored Qigong practices more and more, I have had many more experiences of wonder as I have discovered new (to me) aspects of my energy, new insights into my interaction with the world around me, and new possibilities of how I can use my energy. Even after all these years, gaining a more sophisticated understanding of the many complexities of how our mind, body and energy work, my most satisfying and beneficial practice sessions are the ones where I truly connect to my energy and play with it with a sense of wonder, curiosity, and fun! When I do that I am more able to let go of my preconceived ideas and obstructions I have made for myself, and let the energy and the patterns of nature inherent within it guide and teach me.

9. Refine Your Qigong Practice

Qigong practices use our mind, our body, and our breath, and sometimes other tools as well, to work with our energy and develop skill with it. There are literally thousands of different Qigong practices,

But what is the point of life if we can't enjoy it? Tuning into energy is a lot of fun in my experience.



each with their own specific benefits and modes of action. Many of these practices do not require you to be aware of your energy to get the benefits from them. Simply doing the movements, training the mind, or using the breathing techniques will give you many benefits by themselves. So if you don't feel much energy in your practice yet – that is ok, and in fact it is important to not 'chase' after sensations of energy, as this can actually be detrimental to your progress, you will still get many benefits from just doing the practices as well as you can.

When you do start to become more aware of your energy, this can be very useful in refining your Qigong practice though. As you start to feel your energy, you will be more able to feel the difference that small changes to your technique, the positioning of your body, the speed you practice at and so on, have on the quality and flow of your energy. Your awareness of your energy will become a feedback mechanism to help you to know how to refine your Qigong practice to work with it even more effectively to make it stronger and healthier!

Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed this article on the benefits of being able to feel your energy. We often tend to focus on some of the more obvious benefits mentioned at the start of this article, such as improving our health, or improving our mental and physical performance, but I thought it might be useful to also consider some of the broader benefits to our lives that come from developing our awareness of our energy. The further you get into your practice, the more it is these benefits that really come to the fore.

Many people may have developed some level of awareness of their energy quite naturally simply from their own experiences in life, or from a variety of different practices that activate our energy in different ways. One of the really good things about Qigong and the Chinese philosophy on which it is based is that it provides us with a really useful framework that helps us to really understand what we experience with our energy, what it means, and how we can direct our energy in useful ways to bring health, vitality, balance, and harmony to our lives.



John Munro, MMQ

Founder and Head Instructor of
Long White Cloud Qigong

<https://longwhitecloudqigong.com/>

So if you don't feel much energy in your practice yet – that is ok, and in fact it is important to not 'chase' after sensations of energy, as this can actually be detrimental to your progress, you will still get many benefits from just doing the practices as well as you can.

JOHN MUNRO



NQA Conference- Two Opportunities to Practice Qigong in Nature

BY LINDA KIESLER

At the NQA Conference in Savannah, Georgia, September 24-26, two invigorating pre-conference Qigong sessions set against the backdrop of Savannah's breathtaking scenery will take place. Both sessions are included in the general conference registration fee, offering you the perfect opportunity to kickstart your mornings with rejuvenating Qigong practice.

The first session will take place in Forsyth Park. This 30-acre park in Savannah's historic district is filled with walking paths, a Fragrant Garden for the blind, and a large fountain. This fountain was built in 1874 and has been featured in many films: Forest Gump, Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, Cape Fear, and The Longest Yard. What a perfect photo opportunity to remember your time at the conference by taking photos in your favorite Qigong move near this iconic landmark!

The Park also has interesting historic monuments: an 1874 monument to the Confederate Dead, and a Spanish-American war memorial called the Georgia Volunteer. This statue was erected in Savannah because this city had more soldiers fight in the war than any other city in Georgia.

Although the park is a beautiful setting with many interesting sites to explore, here is the Qigong opportunity: Forsyth Park is home to many varieties of trees: Magnolia, Tulip, Poplar, Hickory, Ginkgo, Beech, White Ash, Sycamore, Oak, Pine, and a 300-year-old oak tree, called Candler Oak.

As you enter Forsyth Park and view these majestic creations, ask yourself: can I feel the energy of the trees as I walk among them? What is my favorite tree? How does it reflect my personality? Pick out a tree or two, take time to ground with the earth and land it stands on, and feel the healing energy it can offer.

The session in the park is a fantastic opportunity to feel the energy of the different trees, and recalibrate your own inner flow as well. Take some time during a break or after the daily activities to connect with these beautiful trees. No doubt practicing Qigong under their canopy will change our energy field and practice.

The second pre-conference group Qigong session will be held at Tybee Beach. This beach also has many sites for the curious to wander about and enjoy! Fort Pulaski is Georgia's oldest and tallest



What a perfect photo opportunity
to remember your time at the
conference by taking photos in
your favorite Qigong move near
iconic landmarks!

light house, and played a large part in the Civil War. The movies Baywatch, and Cobra Kai were filmed at Tybee Beach.

In general, Tybee Island has three miles worth of beaches. It also has a Marine Science Center and there are many other fun activities to do on the island and beaches! What a treat it would be to head to the ocean after the conference sessions!

Practicing Qigong by the ocean can be a very different experience than practicing around trees and earth. It has a much different energy, as do Qigong water flows and earth flows.

Part of my own Qigong training was held on a beach in Santa Cruz, CA, and I still practice Qigong on beaches today. My own experience has been that the sand on the beach gives a very different feel of grounding with the earth, since it is more fluid than stable land.

Sinking toes into the warm sand and moving with Qigong flows as it shifts into every crevice of the feet may give the feeling of comfort and floating. Depending on the exact location of practice, ocean water may gently pour over and massage toes, generating warmth and the feeling of being deeply held by the earth-being in the earth.

The waves can be a constant rhythm that plays into the flow of movement, especially water flows, a reminder of our own gentle breaths as we breath in and out during flows.

The gazing out into the horizon may lead to a calming effect, a sense of complete immersion into practice, unity with the earth, and endless possibility.

And sometimes, there may be sea life that pokes up between the waves to say hi and acknowledge they too can feel our wonderful energy!

No doubt these sessions in two very different locations with two excellent teachers will enlighten your body, heart, mind, and soul!

For more information on the conference and these sessions, go to the NQA Conference web site: <https://www.nqa.org/annual-conference>

Linda Kiesler
Chair, NQA Publications Committee

My own experience has been that the sand on the beach gives a very different feel to grounding with the earth, since it is more fluid than stable land.

LINDA KIESLER



A Journey through the Microcosmic Orbit

Harbin, China 1992

BY GAYL HUBATCH, OMD

I was in China to study Qigong; the ancient art of moving Qi in the body with intention, breath, and gentle movement (posture). Nei Gong refers to regulating Qi within the body-mind while being still-without moving the body.

The following Nei Gong exercise (Microcosmic Orbit) began when I gently placed my tongue against the roof of my mouth and focused my attention on the rhythm of my breath to awaken Qi at certain energy gates. First, in the Dantian, my lower belly, then gradually up my spine.

Shifting attention to breathing and opening specific points or energy gates; my mind, in focused awareness, had moved into a deep state of meditation.

I am lying on a hard table in a classroom at the Heilongjiang College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Harbin, China. It is 1992. (only 3 years after the tragic massacre at Tiananmen Square). There is breath, awareness, and a sense of deepening. I go in ... inward ... and inside of that, falling ... but not falling, expanding in a space with no boundary ... relaxing, opening, breathing. Exhale ... moving outward. There is only space, dark and comforting, embracing, moving without edge. Inhale ... lungs expanding, unaware of time ... No sight, no sound, just darkness and expansion. Breath deepening ... my mind letting go ... no body, no thing ... just space, consciousness expanding ...

Slowly, a sensation comes. I breathe; and suddenly a feeling-like being in a tunnel. Unattached, I follow it in ... deeper ... deeper ... in and in ... letting go into a void. Aware of movement, a slight intention, my speed picks up. I am moving fast, at lightning speed. Now aware of self, I move through an infinite expanse of darkness. Like a rocket propelled into outer space, I fly through this dark expanse.

Breath deepens.

Then, out of the black, a tiny spark appears. Turning my attention toward the spark, still in the tunnel, I follow it in. The light grows into a shape, a form, like a teardrop hanging down. Focusing attention on it as it grows, I see the shape become a uvula, that fleshy part of the throat that gives sound.

And suddenly, I hear-no... feel ... a clang, a vibration, like two metal hooks joining. I feel solid. Integrated. Aligned. Whole. Conscious of where I am. The central vessels of Ren and Du, conception and governing vessels, have fully connected through this Qigong meditation.

I open my eyes and remember that it is after lunch. My Chinese teacher and other students in the room are in various states of meditation, relaxation, and sleep. I can hear someone snoring. I smile. Another reality.

My experience in that classroom gave me a new reference point for what Qi is and how it connects consciousness and the body. Once the inner gates of Qi opened, I felt energy moving up and inside my spinal column, and then circulate deeply into the recesses of my being.

Breathing easily and deliberately, I had no idea what would happen. Images and sensations that occurred were spontaneous and felt very real. The experience was deeply relaxing and sensory. I was awake and guiding it, though I was also being guided as if through parallel dimensions. I was having a most vivid, lucid, luscious dream but fully awake, aware, integrating the experience with my consciousness as it was happening.

Summary:

The journey of using the Microcosmic Orbit and eight extraordinary vessels in practice and daily life is rich. These energy vessels contain vast knowledge of the ancient world and wisdom to help us navigate and stay balanced through the chaos of daily life. Knowing there are innate flows of Qi aligned with the cosmos can offer comfort in times of distress. Being able to let go of control and return to a natural balance of life, rejuvenates the senses and provides a way of living that is more open to spontaneity, flow.

The theory of Qi and vibrational sequencing through our bodies and minds is an interesting perspective in Qigong practice as well as TCM. The eight extraordinary vessel theory is not only for practitioners but anyone with an interest in understanding the interconnections of body/mind/soul. Qigong is available as a daily practice to keep the vessels full of vitality. This vitality provides regulation between the organs, glands, mind, and heart. As we achieve balance in our bodies and minds, we align with the greater Spirit of life.

Dr. Gayl Hubatch, OMD is Doctor of Chinese Medicine and the author of Fabric of the Soul: Eight Extraordinary Vessels, available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and her website. She is a licensed acupuncturist and diplomat through NCCAOM, a certified yoga instructor, and a Qigong/TaiChi Senior Trainer through Integral Institute of Qigong and Tai Chi (IIQTC). Dr. Gayl is also a Heartmath Trainer and Coach at her holistic studio in Lakeway, TX.



Dr. Gayl Hubatch, OMD
Blue Heron Center
<https://blueheroncenter.com>

I was having a most vivid, lucid, luscious dream but fully awake, aware, integrating the experience with my consciousness as it was happening.

GAYL HUBATCH



Research and Education Committee

Effects of Qigong and Taiji on Cancer Patients

Kevin Siddons, Research and Education Committee

Current (2022) research shows that practicing Qigong and Taiji helps cancer patients. The summary of the research shows practicing Qigong and/or Taiji:

- Improved the survivors' ability to use their limbs
- Improved cognitive functioning (thinking and decision making) of survivors
- Improved survivors' sleep quality and reduced fatigue
- Reduced survivors' stress hormones (cortisol)
- Showed survivors decreased anxiety, stress, depressive symptoms

These are great improvements in cancer survivors' quality of life.

Research into the use of Qigong and/or Taiji with this population is ongoing.

Full details on this research and references are on the NQA web site under Education/Research Updates:

<https://www.nqa.org/news>

This section of the NQA site has other great research articles on the benefits of practicing Qigong and Taiji for health, and Tools for Teachers too!



Kevin Siddons, Ed. D.

Research and Education Chair

Gentle Qigong for Health

溫和健身氣功

www.gentleqigong.net

research.chair@nqa.org



These are great
improvements in
cancer survivors'
quality of life.