

## **INTERVIEW**

### **Meridian therapy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Interview with Chok Hiew**

*Having reviewed your scholarly books, video, training manuals and attended your workshop on meridian therapy many of the questions I am asking you have been answered therein. However, CPQ readers who are not familiar with your works would, I think, be interested in your responses.*

*1. Qigong or meridian therapy is an accepted part of your cultural heritage but as a respected professor of health psychology- a man of science- did you think twice before going public about your deep involvement in Qigong?*

*Necessity and conviction gradually overruled my lack of courage and initial distrust of indigenous (read "superstitious") ways of treating human problems. Globalisation of psychological interventions based on a Western (and especially North American) perspective has reached epidemic proportions. The historic wisdom of the East evident in its wealth of indigenous psychological health practices is fast disappearing and may not survive for long. My hope is that the world will benefit from a more multicultural or universally representative psychological paradigm that integrates the experiences of all humankind.*

*As an academic, I belonged to various professional and psychological international associations concerned with the basic rights and well being of children and families traumatised by global human trafficking, poverty, HIV and disease, sexual exploitation, and armed conflict. In such tragic circumstances, I was confronted with young child victims with abject emotional suffering and agony and felt moved to do something.*

*But all that I knew about trauma psychology was inadequate to alleviate their misery, or their despair and recurrent PTSD. It was futile to attempt to work at removing surface symptoms without attending to the poor prognosis of long term negative consequences that will overwhelm these helpless victims. What these maimed and severely traumatised victims needed was a way to heal their consciousness to return to emotional stability and the long road back to health.*

*But something heartening was also evident. Those who recovered from their trauma—the resilient children or their characteristics could readily be observed. They looked more energetic and vibrant. They walked with a lightness undimmed by their tragic past. They had an optimistic outlook and were quick to smile. They were busy too, enthusiastically moving around helping their peers.*

*So an inkling of the solution presented itself—effective techniques that could restore resilience and harmony in one’s consciousness to become whole again. But I knew that I had to reach beyond the current science of psychology and tap more ancient traditions and healing practices to study the art of resilience and harmony. Then synchronicity unfolded—I returned to my native Penang in Malaysia, meeting an old friend who practised traditional energy medicine—Sifu Yap, the founder of a contemporary form of ancient Qigong that he called CFQ.*

*Over the years, besides questioning him about Qigong methods and energy healing, I sought out and interviewed and followed up many of his patients (of all ages) and students who had benefited from his Qigong therapy. He also taught them meridian exercises and meditation as methods for self care. They recovered from disorders and diseases ranging from depression to diabetes, from stress to strokes, from Down’s syndrome to chronic fatigue syndrome. I learned and practised the recommended meridian exercises and meditation and empirically observed the health*

*benefits. After publishing a couple of books on my newly discovered Eastern mind–body techniques, I conducted public and professional training seminars and was elated by its impact. Finally, my scientific scepticism lifted, and I became convinced of its veracity and the efficacy of the CFQ energy paradigm in clearing traumatic energies and promoting resilience and the self–repair response.*

*2. Many people who are into complementary and alternative medicine have some familiarity with Qigong as an energy medicine but you are promoting a specific form Cosmic Freedom or CFQ Qigong, isn't one form of Qigong as good as another? What's so special about CFQ Qigong?*

*CFQ (Chaoyi Fanhuan translated as Cosmic Freedom Qigong) while rooted in Eastern Buddhist and Taoist philosophy and consciousness training claims no ancient lineage as other forms of Qigong do. CFQ practise does not make claims of its efficacy based on irrefutable beliefs or unquestionable tradition. What's unique about CFQ is its “good science” or empirical approach grounded on solid theoretical underpinnings and testable assumptions. The clearly stated rationale is concretely operationalized as strategic principles and clear, easy–to–learn, procedures. That means that certain principles and practices that were traditionally “guarded secrets” in Qigong lore are demystified and transparent in CFQ.*

*Essentially CFQ is a consciousness shifting and mind–body technique aimed at developing what health psychologists call “self regulation skill” to bring about cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological equilibrium. In Qigong, regulating the mind, the breathing, and the body are the keys. In practice, balance, naturalness (take things as it is) and harmony with Nature is essential.*

*CFQ Qigong, unlike many forms of Qigong, avoids the pitfall of over emphasising any single dimension and causing harm rather than benefits. Emphasising the body implies that one should physically strengthen the body, but strength and hard muscles contradicts loosening and relaxation necessary for smooth energy flow. An emphasis on breathing suggests special, rigorous breathing techniques to absorb more air (or qi) and its “nourishing essence” but that contradicts a natural function and being harmonious with Nature. Emphasis on the mind implies overworking the mind’s basic functions such as concentration, heavy-duty thinking and visualisation and such practice would not lead to a peaceful consciousness.*

*The CFQ self-regulation training manuals spell out the healing methodology that is also designed to be self-evaluative. Complete adherence ensures replicability of desired results.*

*A measure of its efficacy is the experience of wellbeing and the relaxation state within one practice session (the recommended 45–60 minutes of meridian exercising).*

*Let me read an excerpt from a recent letter by a respected and experienced psychologist and family therapist. I have to hold her name back since this is impromptu:*

*“I personally am continuing to benefit from CFQ, and it is becoming evident that I can help others heal by doing CFQ on their behalf. I consider this one of the most important methodologies in the world today, and I want to support you in spreading it throughout the world. Many thanks for what you are doing, on behalf of all those who benefit.”*

*3. It is admirable that in your books you have given detailed accounts of the process of how you arrived at becoming the*

*founder trainer of CFQ Qigong and shared with your readers freely and frankly your experiences with your teacher Master Yap from Malaysia, of which we are both natives. You speak of him with great respect but apart from his obvious charisma, what in particular about him impressed you?*

*A decade ago, I met Master Yap in Penang when I presented a psychology seminar. Before long, I saw first-hand how he used radiant energy guided by his hands to heal patients coming to his popular clinic and documented his remarkable healing record. I read later that internationally known Qigong Master Wong Kiew Kit had declared him as a rare, genuinely gifted healer and the youngest among living masters.*

*As I got to know Master Yap, I told him of my high regard for him, but felt that there were plenty of amazing healers in the world but they really didn't understand or couldn't explain how to heal. I suggested that to be a world healer he could teach others how so that they too can learn to be healers and multitudes of suffering humanity will benefit, well beyond what he personally can do even measured in a life-time. So what particularly impressed and touched me was his generous and compassionate heart. He became a healing and meditation teacher and I soon became the founding trainer of the CFQ Qigong system.*

*Sifu Yap is what he teaches. He exudes radiance and a joyous countenance. He has a genuine transparency in outlook and in relating with others. He is unpretentious in manner, and speaks from the heart. He has the ability to teach others to experience and purify their energy field.*

*In several global workshop tours, I work closely, travel and lived with him. He needs little sleep (much less than five hours), he does continuous marathon energy treatments (14 patients over 10 hours a day). Other than a lunch break and a brief walk outdoors in*

*between treatments at times. At the end of the day he is still radiant and fully in the present. This is his normal professional work routine in his clinic, and he has been at it since 1989.*

*4. Presumably meridian therapy does not require a belief in God. It works for the young and the old. It has specific and global effects. It's so simple and gentle in its exercises yet it is so profound in its effects. For example, I was astonished at the drop in my blood pressure (some 20mm of mercury) after a mere 45 minute practise of CFQ Qigong. What would you say to those who may exclaim that it is the closest we have to a panacea and sounds just simply too good to be true?*

*Right, there is no panacea and CFQ healing has lasting effects only with continued effort and perseverance to help oneself.*

*Psychological and medical science has established the mind-body connection and the dynamics of health. Psychopathology and pain arises from emotional turmoil and disturbed thinking that provokes the stress response. Fundamentally, psychological disability perpetuates physiological dysfunction, a breakdown of the self-repair response, and eventual poor health.*

*Qigong is an integral part of TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) with a very contemporary disease etiology, paraphrased as the link between the seven emotions that creates disharmony and weakens a person to become vulnerable to attack by external noxious agents of disease.*

*The emotional tension is trapped as coiled-in dense energy forces that block energy flow in the body's network of meridians. The physical (blood) and non-physical(bioenergy) exists in a yin-yang balance, Energy blockages lead to blood flow blockages and hardens tissue and muscles, misaligns posture and inhibits self-regulatory mechanisms.*

*Another TCM assumption (from the "Huangti Nei Ching" Book, the most ancient Classic on Internal Medicine): "When the bioenergy flushes down, hundreds of disease disappears."*

*As you have experienced, 45 minutes of meridian exercising is effective to flush out and unblocked the meridians and harmonise your blood pressure.*

*Ironically, we know that some of the best healing techniques are also the simplest. Remember another research based relaxation technique—biofeedback—and its mind-less simplicity. It works because the procedure enables the mind to detach, disengage and become free from its distressing thoughts.*

*5. I admit I was sceptical (but open-minded) when I attended your workshop at the International Council of Psychologists Conference in Toronto this year. I had had a very late night and was tired at the early start, at risk of falling asleep on my feet! I was afraid the short simple exercise we were about to do was going to leave me breathless, showing how unfit I was. However, I was amazed at the profound and rapid effects of something as simple as the lotus walk. For me, the doing - the experiencing - is believing. I felt uplifted, energised and I suppose you would describe me as being on the road to becoming radiant. I also noticed that my breathing had become rhythmic and effortless. This experiential transformation was like a peak experience for me and I was sold on CFQ Qigong and decided then and there that I should interview you and invite you to the UK so that others could also experience for themselves the powerful effects. Is this the sort of experiences your workshop participants have?*

*In a typical two-day workshop, the first day is spent on understanding and experiencing the meridian exercises. By the end of the day, participants would have practised the Hexagram dance. And many would feel energised and a good sense of well being and lightness (rather than fatigue) going home. They have unplugged their meridians and enhanced their energy flow.*

*The full impact becomes evident when participants return on the second day. I would begin with doing with them two sets of the Hexagram dance. No sooner than having sat down, people would share their stories of their experiences and their collective wonderment: a clinically depressed client announcing a deep refreshing sleep for the first time in 17 years); constipation or bladder infection cleared out; a chronic knee pain evaporates; people with chronic illnesses waking up feeling energetic and a more hopeful outlook, and so forth.*

*CFQ practitioners who was therapists describe teaching their clients a single meridian exercise (e.g., Movement I called "Flying Cloud Hands") repeated for 25–30 minutes. and reported their clients felt relaxed and more motivated to talk about their problems. One trauma patient (auto accident) became so energised that their depression and apathy lifted and became motivated to seek legal counsel for insurance claims.*

*There are also stand alone meridian exercises such as the "butterfly shake" and the "lotus walk." These are energy tools that clears out blocked meridians, smoothen energy flow and expands consciousness. One feels more alive sensing the radiant energy coursing through one's entire being beyond the routine consciousness confined to the brain.*

*And this was just the beginning. For those who persevere and took the time to let go and relax with meridian exercising daily, the genuine well being continued as deeper psychological issues and problems were resolve and cleared away.*

*6. I understand you have a book in press which details the remarkable and positive experiences of other professionals and people in general of CFQ Qigong which sceptical people may assess for themselves. Whilst particular CFQ Qigong exercises have specific effects on certain conditions but as a totality they have an unblocking effect on the meridian channels and facilitating the free*

*flow of chi and therefore on the mind-body-spirit as a whole. Now a question that the hard nosed scientists amongst us would like answered. Could it be that the remarkable effects you have reported in your books are nothing more than either placebo effects or just due to the charismatic effects of the teacher, in energy medicine terms the golden radiance of the therapist's personality?*

*Placebo or the power of positive thoughts and the credibility of the therapist certainly can be a source to facilitate healing in all forms of therapy. For healing actions to have their intended effects, co-operation between physician/therapist is needed. But we know that this is short-lived and soon disappears as stressful thoughts and emotional pain resume and take over.*

*I know placebo effects cannot produce or demonstrate lasting cures (at least three years) for hypertension, diabetes, frozen shoulders, sciatica, PTSD, to name a few. I have documented these and multiple other cases with CFQ healing actions(see Energy Medicine in CFQ Healing (2002)). Similarly, with childhood diseases and animals such as race horses with damaged knees (see Tao of healing (2000)).*

*In the forthcoming new book you alluded to (True Stories of Qigong Healing, In Press, Published by Paul H. Crompton, Ltd., London), several chapters are contributed by health professionals documenting how their clients benefited after they introduced CFQ therapy in their treatment. These professionals saw how the new interventions made a powerful difference, whereas previous treatment modalities were found wanting.*

*You can also look at the published research on other Qigong therapies (accessed by "Pub Med" web link) reported in numerous scientific reports and peer reviewed journals.*

*In our Energy Medicine (2002) book, we documented cases of patients in deep coma for weeks who were revived after one*

*session of CFQ treatment and subsequent stay awake. I doubt a placebo or therapist's charisma can operate in patients who are physiologically in an unconscious state!*

*Clients learn the meridian exercises and energy meditation as self-care tools once personal therapy is completed. When they practice daily on their own, they reap the benefits such as sounder sleep, pain reduction, more energy, a strengthened immune system, and better coping with stress. But if they stop for a week, problems creep back. It's one's perseverance to take healing actions to flush out trapped tension energies that works, not placebo.*

*7. You also teach meditation in CFQ Qigong. How does this differ for example from mindfulness meditation?*

*Yes, most Qigong have both meridian movement exercises and healing meditation modalities. In meditation traditions such as insight meditation and Zen meditation, the meditator learns to be relaxed, to let go, and be at peace. But not healing per se. CFQ meditation rooted in Buddhist lore, has all these features including the healing effect. Healing comes from its special feature of using the meridian channels as outlets to flush out negative energy forces.*

*In Buddhist meditation, the purpose is to cleanse past karma (thoughts, emotions, actions and memories of all experiences) held in one's entire being (mind, body and spirit. With complete letting go, mind and body is liberated, peace and harmony is revealed and experienced. However, this is a difficult task and there are no guarantees even after a lifetime of practice.*

*Besides, meditators over time do age also suffer age-related diseases or arthritic pain so that they may be unable to physically sit in a traditional meditative posture or stay relaxed and continue their meditation practice. The more their meridians are plugged up*

*the less likely they are able to sit mentally relaxation or remain in stillness. Without relaxation, there is no peace and their meditation cannot advance.*

*In CFQ meditation, the process of cleansing karmic forces is operationalized as flushing out energy forces. Karmic energy or trauma is released in the unwinding process as spontaneous movements and discharged by grounded predominantly through the meridians in the legs. With sufficient purification, the dense obstacles become more transparent, energy flows harmoniously, and the primal ocean of healing energy (Metta) radiates out from within activating the self-repair response.*

*8. With your academic credentials and oriental background you are uniquely placed to promote CFQ Qigong. You have given an ancient practice scientific respectability and demonstrated that it is not simply a placebo effect or merely due to the charisma of the therapist. Your books and website give details of some of humanitarian efforts you have assisted with worldwide both for the war traumatized and for health care professionals in particular. If you had all the resources you needed, how would you further promote CFQ Qigong?*

*What I wish to say is not just to promote CFQ Qigong to your readers. It is to promote understanding of an age-old resilience or wisdom paradigm based on the consciousness-energy factor. This is not about mind-body therapies based on positive psychology, or the power of the mind over body in whatever form. In Eastern health practices, the correct interpretation is mind-in-body or mind freed or detached from thinking. It allows restoration of the primal consciousness and brilliance (the health protective life energy) to the body. In the presence of a harmonious energy flow, each heartbeat and breath radiates life and rejuvenates mind, heart, and body.*

*A psychotherapy based on the consciousness-energy factor would truly complement the dominant Western cognitive, behavioral and*

*insight therapies toward a more universal or generic modality to help suffering humanity.*

*I hope also to see the scientific community take CFQ seriously and invite them to conduct the necessary research about the nature of radiant consciousness–energy and physiology relationship and to evaluate its efficacy to reduce human suffering and save lives.*

*I am appreciative of the small successes after a few years of dissemination. In the process, we have written several books manuals and training videos to systematise the CFQ consciousness–energy modality. To meet practitioner demands, a training and certification program has evolved and begun to be implemented.*

*Interest about CFQ Qigong will grow as more people embrace it as a self-care tool, together with professionals who teach or incorporated it in their treatment practice. I expect that the new year will bring strong interest that will extend to more continents and hopefully a great leap forward in UK and Europe.*

## **Bibliography**

### **Books on Cosmic Qigong (CFQ)**

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