

## What is Qì? What is Qìgōng? What is QìgōngDharma?

### What is Qì (氣)?

Imagine the breath filling your lungs, the warmth flowing through your body, and the invisible force that animates all living things. In the Chinese language, this is called Qì (pronounced "chee")—the vital energy that powers not only our bodies but also the entire universe.

Qì is the life force that flows like an invisible river through every living being. When this energy moves freely and in balance, we experience health, vitality, and clarity of mind. When it becomes blocked or depleted, we may feel tired, unwell, or emotionally unsettled.

Consider Qì as similar to the electricity in your home—you can't see it directly, but you can feel its effects all around you. In our bodies, it energizes our physical movements, enhances our emotional resilience, stimulates our mental activity, and nourishes our spiritual awareness.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Qì flows through specific pathways known as meridians and carries this vital energy to every part of your body. Practices like acupuncture, herbal treatments, and qigong engage with these energy channels to restore balance and enhance well-being.

What makes Qì special is that it connects everything—bridging body and mind, self and surroundings, the material and the spiritual. Qì is more than just energy in the modern mechanical sense; it represents the presence of being between the tangible and the intangible, the seen and the unseen. It reminds us that we are not isolated beings but part of a living, breathing whole.

氣

## What is Qìgōng (氣功)?

Qìgōng is an ancient Chinese practice that works with the life energy (Qì) flowing through your body and the universe. It is a moving meditation that combines gentle movements, conscious breathing, and focused awareness to enhance your vitality and well-being.

The name itself tells us much about the practice:

- **Qì (氣):** The vital life energy that animates all living things
- **Gōng (功):** Skill developed through dedicated practice and cultivation

Although modern science has only recently begun to study energy medicine, Chinese culture has refined these practices for thousands of years. Originally known as **Daoyin** (導引 – leading and guiding skill), these techniques were developed to promote longevity, prevent illness, enhance athletic ability, and deepen spiritual understanding and awareness. The vast array of styles and approaches range from soft, meditative practices like **Nei Gong** (內功 - **Internal Cultivation**) to more dynamic and physically rigorous exercises that are included in some forms of **Dao Yin** 導引, or **Daoist Yoga** (道教瑜伽), and then again more refined training in various forms of **Spiritual Qìgōng** (精神氣功) that bridge **Daoist** and **Buddhist** traditions.

**Qìgōng** works through three essential elements that anyone can learn:

1. **Body Regulation** (調身, Tiáo Shēn): Using postures, movements, and stillness to align your physical structure
2. **Breath Regulation** (調息, Tiáo Xī): Employing specific breathing patterns to gather and direct energy
3. **Mind Regulation** (調心, Tiáo Xīn): Focusing your attention and intention to guide the Qì

What makes Qìgōng so accessible is its adaptability. From gentle forms practiced by elders to dynamic exercises used by martial artists, there's a style for everyone. Some forms emphasize health benefits, while others focus on spiritual development or martial applications.

With regular practice, Qìgōng helps create harmony between your body, mind, and spirit—connecting you more deeply with yourself and the natural world around you.

## What is QìgōngDharma?

**QìgōngDharma** is a unique and holistic approach to personal transformation that seamlessly blends traditional Qìgōng practices with profound Buddhist wisdom. Developed by Roshi Teja Fudo Myoo Bell, this integrated system offers a path to awakening and well-being that engages the body, energy, and mind.

At its core, QìgōngDharma combines:

1. **Energy Cultivation:** Using time-tested Qìgōng methods to refine and balance your vital life force
2. **Mindful Awareness:** Incorporating Buddhist meditation techniques to deepen your presence and insight
3. **Embodied Awakening:** Recognizing your true nature beyond conceptual thinking
4. **Compassionate Action:** Expressing your inner wisdom through engaged, heartfelt living

What sets **QìgōngDharma** apart is its emphasis on "Radical Wholeness" – the understanding that our essential nature is already complete and perfect, it just needs to be recognized and embodied. The practice helps you uncover and live from this innate wisdom.

QìgōngDharma works through the **Five Regulations** (五調, Wǔ Tiáo):

1. Regulating the body
2. Regulating the breath
3. Regulating the mind
4. Regulating the Qì (energy)
5. Regulating the spirit

By harmonizing these aspects, QìgōngDharma practice provides a holistic approach to well-being that goes beyond simple physical exercise or meditation. It transforms into a way of being – a moment-to-moment practice of presence, wisdom, and compassionate engagement with life.

Whether you're seeking better health, emotional balance, spiritual growth, or a deeper connection to yourself and the world around you, QìgōngDharma offers a pathway to support your journey.

## Deepening Understanding: Qì, Lǐ, and Jí in Qìgōng Practice

To fully appreciate the depth of Qìgōng, we must understand how three fundamental concepts collaborate to create a complete system of practice and understanding.

### The Triad of Universal Principles

While **Qì** represents the vital energy that animates all existence, two other principles are equally essential to Qìgōng practice:

**Lǐ (理)** is the underlying pattern or organizing principle of the cosmos. Originally referring to the natural patterns in jade, Lǐ evolved to represent the inherent structure that gives form to the flow of Qì. In neo-Confucian thought, Lǐ is understood as "the underlying reason and order of nature as reflected in its organic forms." When we practice Qìgōng, we don't just move energy randomly—we align with these natural patterns.

**Jí (极)** represents the cosmic poles or extremes where transformation takes place. The term literally means "ridgepole" or "utmost point" and signifies the boundaries where one state changes into another. In the **Taiji (太极, Supreme Ultimate)**, Jí indicates the point where yin transforms into yang and vice versa. This principle illustrates how change occurs within the seemingly static patterns of Lǐ.

### How These Principles Work Together in Practice

In Qìgōng practice, these three principles operate as an integrated system:

- **Qì** provides the dynamic energy that flows through all things
- **Lǐ** offers the patterns and structures that guide Qì's manifestation
- **Jí** represents the balance points where transformation occurs

When practicing Qìgōng, we learn to sense the flow of Qì, align with the patterns of Lǐ, and work with the transformative points of Jí. For example, in a simple movement like "Pushing the Mountain," we:

1. Cultivate and direct **Qì** through intention and breath
2. Follow the natural patterns (**Lǐ**) of the body's structure and movement, reflected in the natural patterns everywhere in nature
3. Work with the transformative points (**Jí**) where inhalation becomes exhalation, where expansion becomes contraction

## Beyond Theory: Embodied Understanding

QìgōngDharma emphasizes that these principles are not merely theoretical concepts but lived experiences. Through regular practice, practitioners develop an embodied understanding of how Qì, Lǐ, and Jí operate within their own being and in relationship to the world around them.

This integrated understanding transforms Qìgōng from a mere exercise into a profound way of engaging with life itself—a path that leads to harmony with the Dao and the realization of our inherent wholeness.

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## Realizing Qì and Lǐ through Jí (极): The Ultimate Balance

To truly grasp the depth of Qìgong practice, we must understand Jí (极), a concept that brings Qì and Lǐ into dynamic harmony. Jí, often translated as "ultimate" or "extreme," represents the delicate balance point where opposites meet and transform.

### The Dance of Duality

Imagine a pendulum swinging back and forth. Jí is the moment at each end of the swing when the motion pauses before reversing. In Qìgong, this principle applies to every aspect of the practice:

- The pause between inhalation and exhalation
- The transition from movement to stillness
- The shift from effort to relaxation

These moments of transition are where the magic of transformation occurs.

### The Taijí Symbol: A Visual Guide

The familiar Yin-Yang symbol beautifully illustrates Jí. Notice how:

- Black (Yin) flows into white (Yang) in a continuous circle
- Each side contains a dot of its opposite
- The boundary between them is an S-curve, not a straight line

This symbol reminds us that opposites are not truly separate but part of a greater whole. Jí represents those points where one quality transforms into another.

## Lǐ (理) ~ THE PATTERN



Jí (极) ~ THE BALANCE POINT

## Qì (氣) ~ THE FLOW

### Practical Application in Qìgong

When practicing Qìgong, we cultivate awareness of Jí in several ways:

1. **Physical:** Finding the balance between strength and softness in each movement
2. **Energetic:** Sensing the subtle shift as Qì flows from one meridian to another
3. **Mental:** Observing the space between thoughts in meditation

By attuning to these transition points, we develop greater control over our energy and a deeper sense of harmony.

### Beyond Duality: Glimpsing Wholeness

Ultimately, working with Jí gives us a glimpse of what Daoist sages refer to as **WuJí** (無極) – a state of undifferentiated wholeness that goes beyond all distinctions. While this may seem abstract, regular Qìgong practice makes it feel tangible experience.

As we become more skilled at navigating the extremes (Jí) in our practice, we naturally cultivate balance in all aspects of life. This is the practical wisdom at the heart of Qìgong—not merely an exercise routine but a path to embodied harmony and deeper realization.

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## **Fundamentals of Qìgōng: Understanding & Practicing with Qì, Lǐ, and Jí**

To embody these principles in practice, the Qìgōng practitioner works with five essential regulations that transform theory into lived experience:

### **The Five Regulations: A Path to Integration**

1. **Regulating the Body** (調身, Tiáo Shēn) – Aligning with Lǐ by adopting postures and movements that adhere to natural structural principles. Just as a tree grows according to the inherent patterns of the seed from which it originated, while responding to its environment, our bodies move most efficiently when aligned with their intrinsic design and innate potential intelligence.
2. **Regulating the Breath** (調息, Tiáo Xī) – Using breath as the link between conscious intention and Qì circulation. The breath naturally embodies Jí—each inhalation peaks before transitioning into exhalation, forming a continuous cycle of change and balance.
3. **Regulating the Mind** (調心, Tiáo Xīn) – Cultivating clear awareness that neither grasps nor rejects experience. A settled mind allows us to perceive the subtle patterns (Lǐ) within energy (Qì) and recognize the transition points (Jí) where transformation occurs.
4. **Regulating the Qì** (調氣, Tiáo Qì) – Harmonizing internal energy involves working with the body's natural energy pathways. This regulation arises naturally from the previous three concepts, as energy follows attention within the body's structural framework.
5. **Regulating the Spirit** (調神, Tiáo Shén) – Integrating all aspects into a unified experience of presence. At this level, the practitioner embodies the perfect balance (Jí) between form (Lǐ) and energy (Qì).



## From Exercise to Way of Life

When practiced with an understanding of Qì, Lǐ, and Jí Qìgōng becomes much more than just physical exercise. The pendulum model illustrates how these principles apply to all aspects of life—every experience contains moments of transition where awareness can change our relationship with reality.

In daily life, we constantly navigate between activity and rest, engagement and withdrawal, expression and receptivity. By recognizing the Ji points in these natural cycles, we enhance our ability to move through life with greater balance and harmony.

QìgōngDharma takes this understanding even deeper, recognizing that these principles are not merely conceptual but direct expressions of our awakened nature. Through consistent practice, we discover that the dance of Qì, Lǐ, and Jí reveals the fundamental nature of reality itself—dynamic, patterned, and perfectly balanced in its continuous transformation.

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## The Embodiment of Qì, Lǐ, and Jí in QigongDharma

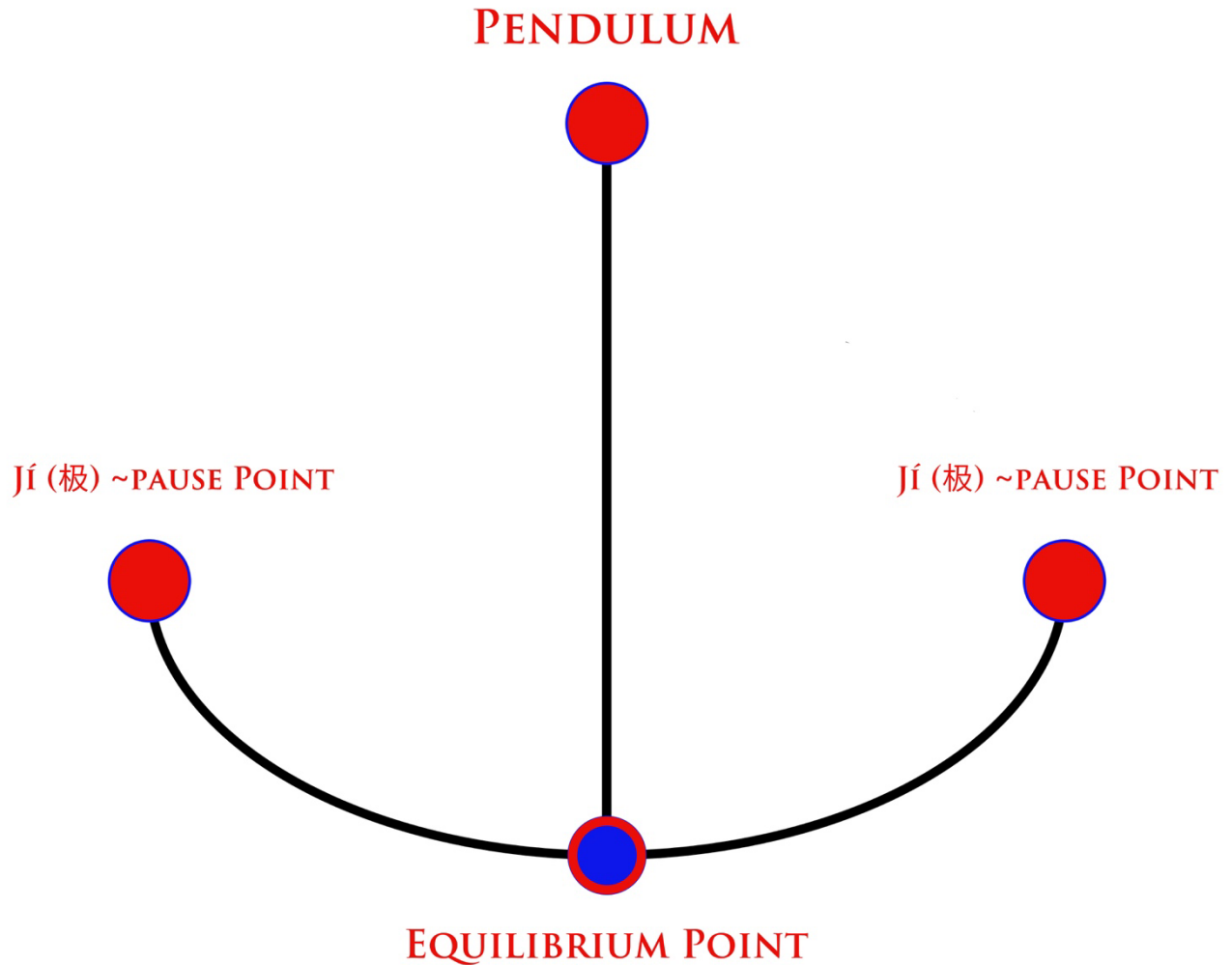
QigongDharma, as transmitted by Roshi Teja Fudo Myoo Bell, transforms the principles of Qì, Lǐ, and Jí from abstract concepts into lived experiences of awakening. This practice goes beyond mere energy cultivation, offering a path to profound realization and harmony with the Dao.

### From Theory to Embodied Wisdom

In QigongDharma, practitioners learn to:

1. **Recognize Qì's Natural Flow:** Rather than attempting to control energy, we develop sensitivity to its inherent patterns and rhythms.
2. **Align with Lǐ:** We discover the underlying principles that govern both our inner world and the cosmos, allowing our actions to flow in harmony with natural law.
3. **Balance through Jí:** We cultivate awareness of the transition points of body and environment in all experiences, finding equilibrium amidst constant change.





### The Dance of Duality and Unity

Just as the pendulum swings between extremes, pausing momentarily at each end, QigongDharma teaches us to recognize these pause points (Jí) in our practice and daily life. These moments of stillness offer gateways to deeper awareness, where apparent dualities resolve into greater wholeness.

### Beyond Conceptual Understanding

Through consistent practice, QigongDharma leads us to:

- **Feel Qì:** Developing a tangible sense of energy flowing through the body and environment
- **See Lǐ:** Recognizing the patterns and principles that underlie all phenomena
- **Experience Jí:** Embracing the dynamic balance between opposing forces

## Awakening to Reality

Ultimately, QigongDharma is not merely a set of exercises but a holistic path to awakening. By embodying Qì, Lǐ, and Jí, we learn to move, breathe, and exist in deep harmony with the Dao—the fundamental reality that encompasses and transcends all dualities.

In the ever-unfolding process of awakening, practitioners discover that the boundaries between self and other, inner and outer, begin to dissolve. The flow of Qì is recognized not as something separate from consciousness but as consciousness itself in motion. The patterns of Lǐ reveal themselves as the very structure of awareness, while the balance points of Jí become gateways to timeless presence.

Through dedicated practice, QigongDharma reveals three profound insights:

1. **The Unity of Being:** What once seemed like separate aspects—body, energy, mind, and spirit—are now recognized as expressions of a single, undivided reality. The practitioner no longer "does" QigongDharma but becomes the living embodiment of its principles.
2. **The Present as Gateway:** Each moment holds the fullness of the Dao. When we fully engage with the present through embodied awareness, we realize that what we've been seeking through practice has always been here all along.
3. **Effortless Action** (WúWéi 無為): As practice deepens, effort yields to effortlessness. Movements emerge spontaneously in harmony with circumstances, breath flows naturally, and awareness resides in its own nature without striving.

This practice reveals that the principles we cultivate are not separate from our true nature but rather expressions of it. In this realization, every breath, every movement, and every moment becomes an opportunity to deepen our understanding and embodiment of this fundamental nature reality.

The awakening offered through QigongDharma is not an escape from everyday life, but a profound transformation in how we experience it. The marketplace, the meditation hall, and the morning commute all become fields of practice where Qì flows, Lǐ reveals itself, and Jí provides moments of transformation. This is the living Dao, not as a concept, but as direct experience.