

GRANDMASTER WONG KIEW KIT'S HOME PAGE  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## QUESTIONS ON CLEANSING, BUILDING AND NOURISHING



## QUESTION 1

*In the last Saint Valentines Course, I had really vigorous Chi Flows. Through the years, I have seen that they keep growing and being even more vigorous. In order to get the best benefits and development, is it better to let them being vigorous whenever I feel it or to keep some of them still?*

— Santiago

A short answer is that you can either let the chi flows to be vigorous or you can keep some of them still.

Generally, to get the best benefits it is best to follow wu-wei, i.e. let the chi flows be whatever ways they naturally flow. But in special situations, it would be better to get them still. If you are not sure which to choose, then follow wu-wei.

A longer answer is as follows.

Whether your chi flows are vigorous, still or anywhere in between depends on a few factors, like the type of exercise you do, the needs of your body for good health, and your thoughts.

Presuming other factors being equal, if you perform Abdominal Breathing, for example, you chi flow will be still or gentle, and if you perform Fish Flip, you chi flow will be vigorous.

If you have much blockage all over your body or if you have deep emotional blockage, you chi flow will be vigorous. If you have little or no blockage, your chi flow movement will be gentle though the chi flow inside your body may be powerful.

Your thoughts, when you are in a chi kung state of mind, can influence your chi flow. If you think of your chi flow to be vigorous, it will be vigorous. If you think of your chi flow to be gentle, it will be gentle.

With this background knowledge you can manage your chi flow to attain the best development. If you know you have some deep emotional blockage to be cleared, you should let your chi flow to be vigorous. If you have little blockage and want to build internal force or increase your mental clarity, you should let your chi flow movement to be still.

If you are not sure, you should follow wu-wei, i.e. let the chi flow be vigorous if it is vigorous, and let the bodily movement of the chi flow be still if it is still. This is because chi will always flow in a way for your best benefits.

You will enhance the result by choosing the appropriate exercise and skill to generate the type of chi flow you want, and have the right mind-set. For example, if you want to clear deep emotional or karmic blockage, you would choose exercises like Bone Marrow Cleansing at the organ level, have a strong and vigorous chi flow, and a gentle thought that you are cleansing deep emotional or karmic blockage.

If you wish to develop mental clarity, you would choose exercise and skill like

Carrying the Moon and Cosmic Shower, have a gentle chi flow (though the chi flowing inside you may be powerful), and gently realize that your mind is clear like crystal.

## QUESTION 2

*There are many stages of development. At any point during his development, how can a practitioner know when or whether to cleanse, build and/or nourish?*

*The effects of cleansing can sometimes be quite strong. How can a practitioner know that such effects are caused by cleansing rather than deviation in his practice, and thus avoid worrying unnecessarily?*

— Sifu Andrew Barnett

There are numerous ways to classify one's progress in chi kung training.

One helpful way is to classify the progress as cleansing, building and nourishing. The cleansing process clears blockage, overcoming pain and illness. The building process increases the volume and flow of energy, giving a practitioner vitality and longevity. The nourishing process enhances the quality of energy, giving a practitioner mental freshness and spiritual joys.

While the progress is in ascending order from cleansing to building to nourishing, all the three aspects also operate at the same time. In other words, when a practitioner cleanses, he also builds and nourishes, and vice versa.

Another way to classify the progress is medical and health, peak performance, and spiritual cultivation. This classification corresponds to the former classification of cleansing, and nourishing, except that the former focuses on the operation of chi flow whereas the latter focuses on its result.

As a result of cleansing, one overcomes illness and has good health. As a result of building, he attains peak performance. As a result of nourishing, he accomplishes spiritual fulfillment.

These processes operate spontaneously, i.e. wu-wei, and in this order of development unless a practitioner directs it otherwise.

In other words, if a practitioner is sick but at the same time he wants to do well in his work, his chi kung practice will naturally enable him to overcome his illness first before enabling him to attain peak performance, i.e. it naturally cleanses before it builds.

He may, if he has the necessary skills, direct his chi to build instead of to cleanse, i.e. for peak performance instead of for overcoming illness, but unless there is a good reason for this ad hoc purpose, is unwise to do so.

So, it is best to let chi do its work on its own, conceptualized as wu-wei or spontaneity, as it will always work for our best benefit.

We can also know whether chi is cleansing, building or nourishing from direct experience, just as when we drink water we know from direct experience that it is flowing down our throat, collected at our stomach or quenching our thirst. Someone who had no experience of chi, just as no experience of drinking water, would not know the difference.

There are also signs to indicate the processes. When chi is cleansing, we may

feel it flowing inside us and we may sometimes feel some pain, which we call good pain as we know it is doing us good. When chi is building, we feel it charging up every part of our body, and we feel stronger and full of vitality. When chi is nourishing us, we feel it is soothing and sometimes expanding, and we become peaceful and happy.

However, if for some particular reasons he wishes to cleanse, build or nourish, he can tell the need as well as the result from direct experience. If he accidentally sustains a muscular sprain, for example, he knows from direct experience his need to direct chi to cleanse his blockage that causes the sprain. He also knows from direct experience that as a result of the cleansing he feels he has recovered from his injury.

The effects of cleansing can sometimes be too strong for comfort, in which case we refer to it as over-cleansing. While cleansing causes good pain, over-cleansing causes bad pain, which may be harmful. Again we depend on direct experience to tell whether a pain is good or bad, just as we depend on our experience to tell whether the sour taste of an orange is the result of its being delicious or rotten.

There is a thin line of difference between over-cleansing and deviation. Indeed, over-cleansing may be regarded as deviation, as the practice has deviated from being good to bringing harm.

Nevertheless, we can often tell whether a deviation is due to over-training even when the training is correct, or wrong training even when a practitioner has trained for a short time.

If he follows the instructions of the exercise carefully, like relaxing and not thinking of anything, but the effect is too strong for comfort relative to the time he has put into his training, it is over-training. If he ignores instructions, like keeping his mouth close and thinking of various thoughts, the effect is unpleasant even when he has put in a short time in his training, it is wrong training.

He may also tell the difference between over-training or over-cleansing from wrong training by examining the result of the training. If he has been feeling good all the way, then feels miserable as if with no reasons, it is likely to be over-training or over-cleansing. Toxic waste is coming too fast than his body can dispose it. He should slow down his training. If he feels miserable right at the start or whenever he trains, and the pain is often sharp, it is likely to be wrong practice. He should correct his techniques and skills.

Despite the explanation here, most students may not have the knowledge and experience to tell the difference between over-cleansing or wrong practice, or whether his chi flow is deep rooted problem that he himself many not know. It is best to personally let a competent teacher see his practice and its result.

### QUESTION 3

*At the Cosmic Shower course two years ago in Bern you went deeply into explaining that physical, emotional, mental and spiritual cleansing as a result of a good circulation of energy should in general have more importance or priority than the building of energy.*

*Interestingly and to many students' surprise you would mention that the better a student cleanses or is being cleansed the more or better he/she also nourishes and builds up energy/internal force.*

*Could Sifu please elaborate more on the relation between cleansing and building the energy?*

— Sifu Roland Mastel

Cleansing and building are two important processes in any chi kung training. These two processes correspond to the two dimensions in chi kung training, namely circulating energy or "yun qi" in Chinese, and nurturing energy or "yang qi". (Please note that "yang" here is different from "Yang" in "yin-yang".)

In other words, when a person practices chi kung, as long as it is genuine and even if it is low-level, he circulates his energy flow and increases his energy volume. Naturally, if the chi kung is of a low level, it will take a long time to have some result. If it is of a high level, it can give a lot of result in a short time. If it is not genuine, like practicing external chi kung forms as gentle exercise, it will not circulate or increase energy, it merely works on the physical body.

The circulating and the nurturing processes occur at the same time, though one process may be more pronounced than the other. Whether circulating or nurturing is more pronounced usually depends on the type of chi kung exercise a practitioner performs. But we in Shaolin Wahnam can influence it with our mind.

Exercises with dynamic movements, like Lifting the Sky and Carrying the Moon, induce more circulating than nurturing. As a rough estimate, Lifting the Sky would induce 70% cleansing and 30% nurturing. Exercise with very vigorous movement, like self-manifested chi movement, will have 90% cleansing and 10% nurturing.

On the other hand, quiescent exercises like Abdominal Breathing and Golden Dragon Tapping on Earth (Flicking Fingers) induce more nurturing than circulating. As a rough estimate, there is 70% nurturing and 30% circulating in Abdominal Breathing. In very quiescent exercise like Golden Bridge, there is 90% nurturing and 10% circulating.

As mentioned earlier, because we are skillful, we can use our mind to change the proportion between circulating and nurturing in any exercise. When performing Lifting the Sky, for example, we can have 10% cleansing and 90% nurturing, or 10% nurturing and 90% cleansing, or anything in between. However, unless there is a good reason for this modification, it is generally wise

not to alter the natural proportion. In other words, we let the exercise to perform its natural processes to give us the best benefits.

If we classify chi kung training into two categories: circulating which corresponds to cleansing, and nurturing which corresponds to building, then what about nourishing? Whether we classify into two categories "circulating and nurturing", or into three categories "cleansing, building and nourishing" it is for convenience and better understanding. If we use two categories, nurturing will include nourishing. In other words, the two categories are circulating (cleansing), and building (nurturing and nourishing).

When a practitioner circulates his energy, he cleanses. When he nurtures his energy, he builds (and nourishes). Thus, if he wishes to overcome illness, which means he has much blockage, he should choose exercises that focuses on cleansing, like Lifting the Sky and Carrying the Moon. If he wishes to become stronger, he should choose exercises like Abdominal Breathing and Golden Dragon Taps on Ground.

It is a common misconception that if one wishes to progress in chi kung, he should add more energy, i.e. building. This is unwise, as it not only slow down progress but also may bring harm.

For example, if a person practices Abdominal Breathing straight away, he may need one year to attain a reasonable amount of internal force. If he cleanses himself first, he may need only nine months, including the time for cleansing. If he is sick, and practices Golden Dragon Taps on Ground to become stronger, he will harm himself. He should cleanses first to become healthy, then proceed to strengthen himself.

The above examples apply to people who practice chi kung correctly, which is less than 20% of chi kung practitioners all over the world. More than 80% practice chi kung forms as gentle physical exercise.

The examples do not apply to us. Our students would be able to have a reasonable amount of internal force by practicing Abdominal Breathing in three months. Even if they practice Golden Dragon Taps on Ground when they are sick, they will not harm themselves. In both cases it is because of chi flow.

Cleansing as well as building occurs at all the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels, and can be effected by any genuine chi kung exercise. In other words, you don't have to choose a particular exercise for physical cleansing, and another for emotional cleansing etc., though certain techniques and certain skills are more effective for cleansing or building certain levels.

If a practitioner performs Lifting the Sky, for example, he can cleanse and build at the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. But if he is sick and wishes to focus on cleansing at the physical level to overcome his sickness, employing self-manifested chi movement will be most cost-effective. If he wishes to focus on emotional cleansing, using Bone Marrow Cleansing at the Organ Level is a good choice. Abdominal Breathing and Cosmic Shower are excellent for mental and spiritual cleansing respectively.

If he wishes to build at the physical level, Separating Water is very cost-effective. For emotional building, Dancing Butterfly is excellent. Three-Circle Stance and Cosmic Breathing are very effective for spiritual building.

Besides being cost-effective in the above examples, these exercises also bring other wonderful benefits.

Why is it that the better a person is cleansed, the better he can build up his energy or internal force?

There are three main reasons:

1. If a person is sick, which means he has much blockage, building which means adding more energy is harmful.
2. If a person is weak, which means he has not enough energy, adding energy is also harmful.
3. If a person has some blockage but is not sick and not weak, adding more energy is not cost-effective for building.

Adding more energy when a person has a lot blockage may cause the added energy to be blocked, thus aggravating the sickness. He should, therefore, recover from his sickness first by clearing the blockage with cleansing before adding more energy.

If a person does not have enough energy, how would adding energy be harmful. This is because his bodily condition is not strong enough to accept the extra energy. An understanding of yin-yang harmony will make this clear. Here, yin represents his bodily condition and yang represents the amount of energy he has. His lack of energy is due not to insufficient energy entering his body but due to his body being unable to accept more energy. He now has yin-yang harmony that is why he is not sick but weak. Because his bodily condition is weak, it can only accommodate little energy.

If he builds energy, i.e. adding more energy to his body, it will cause a situation of excessive yang resulting in yin-yang disharmony which will make him sick. It is a case of a weak body containing too much energy, and can be dangerous.

This is a very important concept to know. When a person is weak he is often given stimulants to increase his physiological functioning. If his internal organs are not strong enough to accept the increased functioning, it may cause serious damage.

What should he do. He should focus on cleansing. In other words he should practice chi kung exercises that focus on circulating chi, like dynamic patterns, not on building chi, like stance training. His internal organs are blocked which result in their functioning below optimum level.

Suppose his organs are blocked to 70%, which means they function at only 30%, and is able to hold only 30% of potential energy. Hence, he is weak although he may not be sick. This is the usual condition of most people.

If he cleanses off 20% of the blockage, he will be able to function at 50% and hold 50% of energy. Compared with most people, he will have much vitality although he is only functioning at half his potential. If he cleanses off another 20% of



blockage, and functions at 70% he will be radiant with vitality.

It is worthy of note that his increase of energy and subsequent increase of vitality is not due to building but to cleansing. In other words, without purposely adding energy by practicing chi kung exercises that build, but by cleansing away blockage by practicing chi kung exercises that circulate, a practitioner can substantially increase his energy and vitality.

The same principle is frequently employed in traditional Chinese medicine. When a person is infected with a contagious disease, for example, there are three therapeutic approaches that can help him recover, namely restoring good, removing evil, and restoring good cum removing evil. Removing evil is considered third-class treatment, restoring good cum removing evil second class, and restoring good first class.

Removing evil is prescribing drastic medicine, sometimes called poison, to kill the invading agents. This approach is used only when the other approaches are ineffective. Restoring good is restoring the natural defense and immune systems of the patient so that they will naturally overcome the invading agents.

The third situation where cleansing first before building is better than just building is when a practitioner is not sick and not weak, but has some blockage in his body. It may not be harmful if he just build, but it is more cost-effective if he cleanses first. He will have better result in less time.

The blockage, though not substantial enough to cause sickness or weakness, stills takes up space and reduces flow. If he cleanses away the blockage, not only he will have more space to hold more energy, he will also remove hindrance to flow, resulting in a bigger volume of energy and a more vigorous flow.

Energy flow is like cash flow. The bigger and more vigorous you cash flow is, the more cash will be attracted to you. Similarly, the bigger and the more vigorous your energy flow is, the more energy will be attracted to you. And like cash, we must use our energy wisely.

## QUESTION 4A

*How do the different stages affect each other, especially in the reverse direction to our normal development. For example, does a lot of built up force enhance cleansing. Does a strong spirit enhance the development of internal force. How does a cleansed body improve the nourishment of the spirit?*

— Sifu Leonard

Yes, cleansing, building and nourishing affect one another mutually.

All the three processes of cleansing, building and nourishing occur at the same time, but at any one time one process may be more prominent than the others.

Hence, when a practitioner focuses on cleansing by practicing a suitable exercise like self-manifested chi movement, he also builds and nourishes. Alternatively, when he practices Three-Circle Stance to build, he also cleanses and nourishes, and when he practices Cosmic Shower to nourish, he also cleanses and builds.

When a practitioner has a larger energy flow, he cleanses better than when his energy flow is smaller. However, if his blockage is thick, and his energy flow cannot clear it, a larger flow will cause more pain than a smaller one.

If he clears his blockage faster than his body can dispose of its toxic waste, a larger flow having cleared more toxic waste will result in more over-cleansing than a smaller flow.

Cleansing is better in a person with a strong spirit than in a person with a weaker spirit. The spirit is the real being, the energy and the body are possessions of the spirit, and they are constantly changing in quality and quantity though the change is usually too small to be noticed by the naked eye.

A stronger spirit will have better and more energy than a weaker spirit, and thus will have better cleansing. If over-cleansing occurs, a stronger spirit will handle it more efficiently than a weaker one.

A person with meridians that are well cleansed will build more internal force than one whose meridians are blocked. This operates in two dimensions. His cleansed meridians hold more energy, and the energy flow is also smoother. As internal force is a function of amount of energy and its smoothness of flow, the increase of internal force is multiple.

Blocked meridians hold less energy as well as hinder energy flow. Not only his internal force is less powerful, a practitioner with blocked meridians is also more prone to over-training and over-cleansing.

A person in high spirit builds more internal force than a person in low spirit. He is also able to apply his internal force more effectively.

The energy in a person with blocked meridians will be focused on clearing the meridians first. Only when the energy is flowing smooth, does it focus on building and nourishing. Hence, it is easier to nourish the spirit of a person with

cleansed meridians than one with blocked meridians.

When a person has much blockage, his energy is weak. When the energy is weak, his spirit will be weak too. Chi kung training will clear his blockage and strengthen his energy, and then strengthen his spirit. Thus, a cleansed body improves the nourishment of the spirit. A person with stronger energy will nourish his spirit more effectively than one with less energy.

## QUESTION 4B

*Would you please elaborate on the extremes of training, namely over-cleansing and over-training. How can a practitioner know which of the extremes he might have reached and how can they be overcome?*

*As we are training high level arts, a lot of practitioners reach those points at some time of their development, so your answer will be highly appreciated.*

— Sifu Leonard

Over-cleansing is a result of over-training. Other results include feeling tired, feeling compressed, and in serious cases vomiting blood.

A practitioner can tell that he has over-trained from direct experience. In principle it is the same as a person knowing from direct experience that he has over-eaten. Initially he may not be very sure whether he has over-trained, or over-eaten, but with increased experience he will know.

He can also confirm his over-training with results. Usually there is pain. Initially the pain feels good as energy flow clears his blockage. But as he over-trains the pain turns bad as the excess energy tries to push through the blockage but has not succeed yet.

Understanding that over-cleansing is a result of over-training enables him to differentiate between the two. When he slows down or temporarily stop his training, the over-cleansing will slow down too and eventually cease, though this may take some time.

Over-cleansing may also be caused by other activities besides over-training. Initially his breathing was weak, but as a result of his training he improves his breathing. Improved breathing leads to better energy flow. But if his blockage is huge, increased energy flow results in it forcing on the blockage causing over-cleansing.

Good food which produces good energy flow may also cause over-cleansing or aggravate over-cleansing when it has started due to over-training. Even when a practitioner may not be consciously eating better food, his training has improved his digestive system and thus produces more energy even when his food intact remains the same.

The effects of these three causes, namely better breathing, better food and better digestion, are not crucial for us, though it is useful to take note of them. But they may cause much discomfort and even harm to others, especially those who are old and weak.

What should a practitioner do about over-cleansing.

He should slow down his practice on force training. We have become so effective that we can attain remarkable internal force in a few days when others, even masters, take months. It is a fact, though other people may think we are boasting - that, of course, is their business.

Our students now can develop the amount of internal force in just a few days when I myself would take a few months in the past. This is a great advantage to our instructors and students in our school, but they must remember to go slow.

Many of our students and some of our instructors must make this paradigm shift - a shift from the age-old tradition that Kungfu and chi kung training takes years of hard work to our almost ridiculous privilege that our Kungfu and chi kung training is fun and needs only a little time.

Secondly, a practitioner who has over-trained, and therefore experienced over-cleansing, should focus on performing his exercises on a more physical level, instead of on an energy or mind level. In other words, he should perform at a lower level instead of a higher level.

If he (or she) practices Kungfu, he should focus on combat sequences and solo form practice. If he practices only "chi kung", he should focus on dynamic patterns at a physical level. This will use up his excess energy and loosen his muscles and joints, facilitating better energy flow.

Interestingly, although he uses up his excess energy, which attempted to push through his blockage but not successful yet and thus caused over-cleansing, he will still end his exercise with more energy than before the exercise because he was relaxed during the exercise, resulting in energy flow instead of energy drain. This energy flow (in other parts of his body) will ease his over-cleansing (unlike the other energy due to force training which accumulated at the blockage).

Thirdly, instead of staying indoors and moan over the over-cleansing, he should go out and have fun. This has the same effects of practicing combat sequences, solo form performance and dynamic exercises at a physical level, i.e. using up excess energy and loosening joints and muscles to ease over-cleansing. Aren't our arts wonderful?

## QUESTION 5

*My limited understanding of cleansing, nourishing and building is that these processes are non-linear, dependent on many factors such as the individual, training practices and so on, and that as one develops they may experience cycles or spirals of these three stages, not necessarily in order.*

*Sigung, could you please illustrate the nature, cyclical or otherwise, of these processes as one develops with an example of how one possible path might unfold?*

— Matt

Your understanding is profound. It is modest of you to say your understanding is limited.

Not many practitioners, including masters, understand these processes of cleansing, nourishing and building. Less people understand that the development of these processes is not linear, but cyclic or spiral. Even fewer people realize that the cyclic or spiral development depends on variables like different individuals, training practices and other factors.

Understanding the nature of these processes and its influencing factors not only gives us insight to what is happening to our practice but also helps us to avoid mistakes as well as increase the amount of benefits and speed up our development remarkably. This is one of many reasons that make us ridiculously cost-effect whereby others take years but we take only weeks to attain similar results!

If all other things were equal, a presumption that is never true in real life but is useful for philosophical understanding, our training will result in cleansing, followed by building and climaxed with nourishing in that order.

For example if a person is sick, by practicing chi kung his energy flow will clear the energy blockage that causes his sickness with the result that he restores his health. This is the process of cleansing.

As he continues to practice, he builds up more energy with the result that he has vitality to enjoy his work and play. This is the process of building.

His further practice enables the quality of his energy improves with the result that he becomes peaceful and happy. This is the process of nourishing.

If these were the only processes chi kung training would bring, then the development was linear. But this is not so in real life. After nourishing, cleansing may begin again, and the development continues in a cyclic manner. The amount and quality of cleansing, building and nourishing increase subsequently, making the development spiral.

Before we examine the cyclic and spiral developments in chi kung training with examples, it is helpful to know the following two important points.

While cleansing is going on, building and nourishing also occur, and vice versa. In the example above, while the sick practitioner is undergoing cleansing to

restore his health, the same energy flow that operates the cleansing also builds and nourishes him so that even before he has completely recovered from his sickness, he has more vitality and is more peaceful and happier than before he started chi kung training.

Similarly, when his energy flow is building his vitality, the same energy flow also clears blockage (which may, if accumulated cause him illness in future) and nourishes his spirit (making him even more at peace and happy). Later, while his energy flow is nourishing his spirit, the same energy flow also cleanses his blockage and builds his vitality and longevity. For convenience, let us call this simultaneous developments - at all their linear, cyclic and spiral levels.

The second point to note is that cleaning, building and nourishing in linear, cyclic or spiral developments occur in all chi kung, but if a particular chi kung type is of a low level, these developments may take a very long time. In practical terms, when one practices low-level chi kung he may not have the opportunity to experience cyclic or spiral developments.

Many practitioners, if they practice genuine chi kung but of a low level, only experience the processes in a linear manner. Most practitioners, because they perform chi kung techniques as gentle exercise, do not experience any of these processes.

This understanding alone makes us realize the big difference in benefit between practicing high-level chi kung and low-level chi kung. It also enables us to tell what is high-level chi kung from low-level chi kung. Development in high-level chi kung is cyclic and spiral, whereas that in low-level chi kung is only linear (though in theory the development is also cyclic and spiral but over a very long time).

We also can tell the difference between genuine chi kung and gentle physical exercise. The external forms performed may be the same, but there is cleansing, building and nourishing in genuine chi kung, but none in gentle physical exercise.

Let us now examine cyclic development.

After the linear development of cleansing, building and nourishing, cleansing occurs again, followed by building and nourishing, etc, thus making the development cyclic.

Why does cleansing occur again after the initial processes of cleansing, building and nourishing? This is because there are various stages of cleansing. For convenience, we may divide cleansing into two main categories:

1. Mundane Cleansing.
2. Supra-Mundane Cleansing.

Mundane cleansing may be further divided into three stages:

1. Cleansing for Overcoming Pain and Illness.
2. Cleansing for Vitality.
3. Cleansing for Longevity.

Our organs are very resilient. There may be blockage, which affects their

performance, yet the organs are not diseased. Suppose 30% performance is the threshold. In other words, a person's organs may be performing at 30% of their potential, i.e. they are blocked to 70%, yet he is not sick.

If the blockage increases to 75%, which means the organs are performing at 25%, he becomes sick. So the first stage of cleansing is to clear off 5% of the blockage so that the organs are now blocked to 70%, which enables him to have the threshold of 30% performance, thus restoring him to health.

Although he is not sick, he is still weak. So the next two processes are building and nourishing, which give him extra energy to carry on his daily activities and make him relaxed, while his organs remain blocked to 70%. Why are the organs still blocked to 70% if there is extra energy. It is because the extra energy is now used for daily activities instead of clearing blockage.

The same procedure applies to building and nourishing. To corresponding to the classification of cleansing, we may divide the building processes into two broad categories:

1. Mundane
2. Supra-Mundane

The mundane category can be further divided into three stages:

1. Building to restore well-being
2. Building to attain daily efficiency
3. Building to attain peak performance

Similarly, nourishing processes can be classified into two broad categories:

1. Mundane
2. Supra-Mundane

The mundane category can be sub-classified into three stages:

1. Nourishing to restore emotional, mental and spiritual balance
2. Nourishing to attain mental clarity
3. Nourishing to attain cosmic wisdom

The correspondence may not be exact. In other words while the first stage of cleansing usually corresponds to the first stage of building, i.e. overcoming illness is usually followed by building to restore daily efficiency, sometimes it may not be so because of various factors. If the illness is not serious and does not affect a person's daily activities much, he may progress to attaining above-average vitality.

These various factors that affect the nature of a practitioner's development include individual differences, training methods, philosophical understanding and quality of teaching.

Let us now examine the nature of these processes as a practitioner progresses in his chi kung training with reference to how these factors can affect his development. If he is sick or in pain, his first developmental stage is cleansing that clears his blockage, restoring him to health and being pain-free.



If he is already healthy, hence he has not much physical blockage, this first stage of cleansing will focus on restoring his emotional, mental and spiritual balance. His benefit, though important, will not be as noticeable as overcoming physical pain and illness. He may mistakenly think that he is not progressing much compared with classmates who overcome pain and illness.

This cleansing process will move gradually to building, which the practitioner may not consciously differentiate. But if he pays attention he will find himself more amiable to others as well as less complaining about his conditions as he general well-being improves.

This completes the first round of cleansing, building and nourishing. The time taken to complete this round varies much depending on various factors. If a practitioner is sick to start with and practices low-level chi kung, this first round may take a year or two, and subsequent development may not be obvious. He may acknowledge that his chi kung training helps him to overcome his illness, but the other benefits like improved well-being and emotional, mental and spiritual balance little and spread over a long period that he may not realize them.

If he practices high-level chi kung like ours, his progress is remarkable. Depending on the type of his illness, he will regain good health within a few months. If he suffers from insomnia or pain, though he may have suffered for years, he can overcome it in a few days. If he suffers from heart problems or cancer, he can regain good health in about six to nine months.

His benefits as a result of building and nourishing will also be noticeable, and are likely to overlap onto the next round. After recovering from pain and illness, and attaining general well-being, which are benefits classified as results of cleansing, and building in the first round, he will find himself more efficient in his daily activities and have more mental clarity, which are benefits classified as result of building and nourishing in the second round. In other words, the benefit of building to restore well-being in the first round, and cleansing for vitality in the second round have merged or overlap with building to attain daily efficiency and nourishing to attain mental clarity in the second round.

His training methods play an important role in deciding the speed of progress as well as the type of benefits he gets. Even when he practices high-level chi kung but continues to practice dynamic patterns at the "generating energy flow" level, his progress will take a relatively longer time and he is likely to remain mostly at the cleansing for vitality level.

If he uses methods like Cosmic Shower and Reverse Hanging of Double Hooks to build internal force, his progress will be faster and he will more readily realizes his attainment in daily efficiency and mental clarity.

A good understanding of chi kung philosophy is necessary. He will be able to access his needs and aspirations, and choose the most appropriate methods for his purpose. Another practitioner lacking in this understanding may rush into such advanced methods as Cosmic Shower and Sinew Metamorphosis and harm himself.

The quality of teaching has a great impact on a practitioner's development - a fact that practitioners of other schools may not appreciate or even understand. Even when a practitioner has the knowledge and the methods, he still has to practice correctly and often doggedly for a long time to acquire the skills to derive the desired results. But if he has a competent teacher to transmit the skills to him, he can derive the results in a ridiculously short time, and usually have fun along the way.

Without the help of a competent teacher, if a practitioner practices wrongly and derives adverse effects, he will be in trouble. Even when he practices correctly (in terms of techniques and skills) but over-trains, resulting in over-cleansing or over-building, he will be at a loss. Wrong practice and over-training are great hindrance to progress for many practitioners. Indeed, many people, especially in Chinese societies, are afraid to practice high-level chi kung because of their fear of deviation.

We in Shaolin Wahnam do not have this big problem. Our philosophical understanding enables us to practice with confidence and insight. Our chi flow will erase whatever harmful effects that may result due to wrong training. If students still have problems, they can solve them by consulting their teachers.

Understanding the nature of chi kung development is particularly useful at this stage of third round cleansing, which often occurs in advanced practitioners. A practitioner overcame his pain and illness in the early stages, and has been enjoying good health, vitality and efficiency in daily work and play for some time. Then suddenly cleansing occurs again, sometimes with pain and discomfort.

Without the understanding explained here, he may think a new illness is about to appear, or an old illness relapses, or he may think he has practiced wrongly. But the truth is a third round of cleansing for longevity.

Before he practiced chi kung, his organs were blocked to 75%, with his organs performing below the health threshold at 25%, resulting in illness. In the first round of cleansing, energy flow cleared away 5% of his blockage, restoring him to health. Energy flow in the second round of cleansing cleared off another 30% of his blockage. Together with building and nourishing, his chi kung training has given him vitality, daily efficiency and mental clarity. This is the stage when his third round of cleansing begins.

Compared with most other people who function at about 30% of their potential, this practitioner functioning at 60% has a lot of vitality. But his organs are still blocked to 40%. With 40% blockage, his organs are unlikely to last their full life span, though he may be healthy and full of vitality. But if cleansing continues so that his organs are pristine clean, he will live beyond a hundred years (especially if he also practices the Small Universe).

The building process at the third level, following the cleansing process, will give him a lot of energy and mental clarity, which will enable him to attain peak performance in whatever he does. His training methods, the quality of his teacher and his own philosophical understanding of chi kung have a great impact on his progress or otherwise. Although in theory any chi kung will follow

this kind of development, if his methods are of a low-level, his teacher mediocre, and he thinks that chi kung at best gives him only some well-being, he will not have such results in practice.

The nourishing process will give him Cosmic wisdom, if the art he practices is of a high-level, he trusts and respect his teacher, and his teacher is competent. If he practices a low-level art, thinks he is smarter than his teacher, or his teacher is mediocre, he will not have this high-level result. Indeed, much of chi kung practiced today is of a low-level, and most practitioners, including their masters, do not even believe such wonderful result is possible.

Even if a practitioner is fortunate to practice a high-level art and has a competent teacher, if he is disrespectful or does not believe that the spirit is real, his mental blockage shuts himself off from the result.

Cosmic wisdom includes both philosophical knowledge and practical experience. Philosophically, a practitioner knows that by appropriate cultivation he can strengthen and purify his spirit, and expand his spirit beyond his physical body. Experientially, after appropriate cultivation he feels confident and peaceful, finds himself merged with the Cosmos.

Merging with the Cosmos spans the mundane and the supra-mundane categories. Ours is a chi kung and Kungfu school, not a temple of spiritual cultivation where aspirants have renounced the mundane world for the highest spiritual attainment. While we pay much attention to spiritual cultivation, our priority is to enrich our life and the lives of other people in the mundane world. Hence, we shall only briefly describe the supra-mundane category.

The quantification used in the examples above is meant for the mundane category, and is different in the supra-mundane category. For example, when a practitioner has cleansed 95% of his blockage and thus attained longevity, it does not mean that he has 5% of blockage to be cleansed in the supra-mundane category.

As people have countless lifetimes before their present lives, and countless lifetimes ahead, 100% in the mundane category is only a minute fraction in the supra-mundane category, probably less than 1%, though the percentage of highly developed individuals like Zhang San Feng would be significantly higher.

The processes of cleansing, building and nourishing in the supra-mundane category, I believe, are similar to those in the mundane. Indeed, the cleansing experienced by our advanced practitioners is probably supra-mundane, in which case they would have much work to do. They have to cleanse themselves so thoroughly that not a spec of defilement is left, so that eventually their energy merges with Cosmic energy.

All spiritual traditions use this approach which takes many, many lifetimes, and is called the gradual approach. Zhang San Feng achieved this most noble attainment in his last lifetime on Wudang Mountain.

The exception is Zen which uses the sudden approach. Instead of cleansing away layers and layers of defilement over countless lifetimes, as the

phenomenal realm is a function of thought, Zen practitioners aim at no-thought. When no thought is attained, the phenomenal realm naturally dissolves into the transcendental, and the personal mind of the cultivator merges with the Universe Mind, as taught by Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch.

## QUESTION 6A

*If we follow (or don't follow) instructions, and if we trust the Master (or think that we know better than the Master), how will this affect the processes of cleansing, nourishing and building?*

— Sifu Mark Blohm

If students follow instructions and trust their master, the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing will be smooth and they will get the best benefits.

The master may sometimes make mistakes in his judgment, but the chances of his making mistakes are much lower than those of the students themselves. It is more likely that he will realize the mistakes faster, and recommend remedial exercises for the students.

On the other hand, if students don't follow instructions or think they are smarter than their masters, at best they do not obtain as good a result as they should get, and worse, they may harm themselves due to deviated practice.

This is true if the master is genuine. If he is a great master, the benefit or harm applies not just to the arts the students practice but to life in general too. Some students, often without their conscious knowing, think themselves smarter and act against the master's sincere advice, resulting in harming themselves.

Let us look at some examples.

When cleansing occurs, some students do not realize it and stop practicing. Hence, they deny themselves the chance of overcoming their pain and illness, and obtaining subsequent benefits. If it is over-cleansing, the master will realize it and recommend slowing down or remedial exercise.

When building occurs, the students are pleased, and in their desire to want more benefit, may over-practice resulting in over-building. The master will recommend less powerful exercise. If the students ignore the advice, they may head for serious trouble.

When nourishing occurs, especially in high-level arts where the students' spirit may expand beyond their physical body, some students may become afraid which may harm them psychically. The master would lead them step by step so that their progress will be safe and pleasant.

## QUESTION 6B

*Is it correct to say that both non-practitioners and chi kung practitioners experience cleansing, building and nourishing throughout their lives but randomly haphazardly in the former and progressively systematically in the latter?*

— Dr Damian

No, non-practitioners as well practitioners of chi kung experience cleansing, building and nourishing in the same order. This is natural. The difference is in degree, not in kind.

The processes of cleansing, building and nourishing of non-practitioners are little and take a long time. The benefits are often negated by other activities in their daily life.

If we presume that there were no counter-activities, a non-practitioner would naturally overcome his illness (without taking any medication), attain general well-being, and attain emotional, mental and spiritual balance. But in real life, disease-causing agents will attack him again, stress will affect his well-being, and other activities will affect his emotional, mental and spiritual balance.

Where does a non-practitioner obtain his chi flow for his natural cleansing, building and nourishing. Chi flow is natural. But practicing chi kung enhances it.

## QUESTION 6C

*What is the method for and nature of cleansing, building and nourishing in sentient beings like immortals, arahants and bodhisattvas?*

— Dr Damian

I believe the method and nature of cleansing, building and nourishing in sentient beings like immortals, arahants and bodhisattvas are the same as those for mortals, except that the former operates at the supra-mundane level, whereas the latter operates at the mundane.

I believe supra-mundane beings practice chi kung and meditation like mortals do. At the supreme level of cleansing, building and nourishing, they merge into the Cosmos, described variously as attaining Buddhahood, attaining the Tao and returning to God the holy Spirit. Mortals, too, may attain this highest and most noble achievement.

## QUESTION 6D

*What are the similarities and differences between building and nourishing?*

— Sifu Adam Bailey

Semantically, building enables a practitioner to become stronger, whereas nourishing enables him to become richer (in the sense of spiritually purer).

The similarity between building and nourishing is that both add on to what a practitioner already has, in contrast to cleansing which takes away unwanted things from him. All the three processes make him better. Over-doing any one of the processes may be harmful.

The difference is that building relates to quantity, whereas nourishing relates to quality. In building the amount of energy increases though the quality may be the same. In nourishing the amount remains the same but the quality increases.



## QUESTION 6E

*When we face fierce, intense (but upright) emotions through cleansing; should we embrace our fire or find the middle path (cool down) in these extremes?*

— Tim Hoorens

When you have not reached the optimum point of cleansing, you can embrace your fire, i.e. continue your fierce, intense and upright emotions. For example, when a timid person finds that he is becoming confident and have zest for life, he should continue and make good use of benefit.

If you find that you have reached or passed the optimum point, you should find the middle path or cool down. For example, if a robust person finds that his confidence and zest are overwhelming, he should slow down or stop his training, and spend his energy on wholesome activities like performing Kungfu sets or spending time with good friends.

It may not be easy to know what exactly the optimum point is. Hence, under-training is always better than over-training.

## QUESTION 6F

*How does one judge whether to keep practicing through a cleansing period, or to stop practicing for a while?*

— Sifu Andy Cusick

In theory, one should keep practicing through a cleansing period when he has not reached the optimum point of cleansing, and stop practicing for a while when he has reached or passed it.

In practice, he knows the difference from direct experience. A general guideline is that when he feels pleasant, including feeling good pain, he should continue. When he feels unpleasant, like feeling sharp pain and being nauseous, he should stop practicing.

Experience will improve his judgment. To be safe and comfortable, he should follow the principle that under-training is always better than over-training.

## QUESTION 6G

*Several times when I began cleansing, I incorrectly guessed that the symptoms were the beginning of a cold or flu. I assume (perhaps incorrectly) that we should treat cleansing differently. How do we tell the difference when the symptoms are similar. Should we treat cleansing differently than a minor sickness?*

*I should add that I have rarely been sick in the six years I've been practicing Chi Kung. When I have been sick, the symptoms are so much milder and the progress of healing is so much faster, that I cannot use my older references for how healing happens.*

— Zach

Cleansing and the beginning of a cold or any minor sickness are different descriptions of the same reality. The symptoms are, therefore, the same. You can treat them similarly though you can describe them differently.

When a cold or any minor sickness is about to surface, cleansing occurs as a result of chi kung training to clear out the disease-causing agent so that the sickness is overcome before it happens. The same operation applies to serious sickness like heart problems and cancer.

Cleansing may occur at different points of time. For convenience we may classify the occurrence into three points of time, the initial point when disease-causing agents have entered the body but have not caused any trouble, the intermediate stage when the illness is surfacing, and the established stage where it has surfaced as a clinical disease.

For many of us cleansing occurs at the initial stage. That is the reason why you have rarely been sick since practicing chi kung. It is not that disease-causing agents do not attack us - they do to all people all the time - but we overcome them before they have a chance to create trouble.

To some it occurs when the illness is coming out. Here is where practitioners find it hard to distinguish between cleansing and illness, which are actually the same process but described differently from different perspectives with different emphasis.

For others the cleansing process occurs when the illness has established itself as a clinical disease. Here practitioners may not call it cleansing, but overcoming their illness.

## QUESTION 7

*How do the stages of cleansing, building and nourishing differ between the arts practiced in our school?*

*Suppose you had three people who were identical in every way possible. The first person practices the 18 Lohan Hands Chi Kung exclusively. The second person practices Wahnam Taijiquan exclusively. The third person practices Shaolin Kung Fu exclusively.*

*How would their respective journeys through cleansing, building and nourishing be similar. How would they differ?*

— Kevin

This is an interesting question that will contribute to the philosophy of chi kung, Taijiquan and Shaolin Kungfu in future. Despite a lot of knowledge recorded in chi kung, Taijiquan and Shaolin philosophy at present, there is not much about cleansing, building and nourishing the way we are looking at these processes, though these are actually very important developments in any person practicing these arts.

There are two main reasons why classical literature on cleansing, building and nourishing as a genre is lacking. In fact, the terms "cleansing", "building" and "nourishing" were coined by me, or at least popularized by us if these terms already existed elsewhere in English literature of chi kung and Kungfu, to describe processes that our students undergo in their training.

The first reason is because of the linguistic as well as cultural difference between English and Chinese. It is worthwhile to note that a great language not only enables its speaker to communicate ideas and emotions effectively, but also influences what and how they think - an important fact that those who do not have the opportunity to use more than one language, or the opportunity to use a great language even when they use a few languages, may not realize.

Both English and Chinese are great languages, but they are vastly different. Hence, what English speakers think of as cleansing, building and nourishing will be quite different from what Chinese speakers do. In chi kung, Taijiquan and Shaolin classics, which are written in Chinese, there are no descriptions of cleansing, building and nourishing the way we look at these processes, but this does not mean that the concepts of cleansing, building and nourishing, in different context, are not there.

The equivalent terms for cleansing, building and nourishing in Chinese classics are "da tong jing mai" which can be effected by "yun qi", and "yang qi". ("Yang" here is different from that in yin-yang). "Da tong jing mai" means "clear meridians so that energy can flow smoothly". "Yun qi" means "circulate energy" and "yang qi" means "nurture energy". The Chinese classics do not make a distinction between "building" which is increasing the quantity, and "nourishing", which is increasing the quality, and refer to both as "yang qi" which is nurturing energy.

The second reason, which transcends the linguistic and cultural difference between English and Chinese, is that phenomena of cleansing, building and nourishing were not prominent in the past like in our situation. They are also not prominent in other schools in the present.

Past practitioners and present practitioners of other schools (if they practice genuine chi kung, Taijiquan and Shaolin Kungfu) also underwent and undergo the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing, but the effects were and are spread over many years. Hence the effects of cleansing, building and nourishing were and are not drastic. For us, because of our cost-effectiveness which was unprecedented, we have better results in shorter time. What past masters took years to cleanse, build and nourish, we take months, sometimes even days. Hence, the issues of cleansing, building and nourishing are immediate to us.

With this background let us now have some fun as well as benefit examining how each practitioner practicing Eighteen Lohan Hands chi kung, Wahnam Taijiquan and Shaolin Kungfu exclusively differs from the others in cleansing, building and nourishing, presuming all other things being equal.

Of the three arts, if the practitioners use the same level of skills, Eighteen Lohan Hands chi kung is the least powerful, Taijiquan is in between, and Shaolin Kungfu the most powerful. As I have often mentioned, "least powerful" does not mean "least useful".

Eighteen Lohan Hands chi kung is also the least demanding, Taijiquan is in between, and Shaolin Kungfu is the most demanding. "Most demanding" does not mean "least fun".

Compared to the other two practitioners, the chi kung practitioner will go through cleansing, building and nourishing in a breeze. Unless he uses high-level skills, which will be explained later, he is unlikely to over-train, and his progression from cleansing to building to nourishing is gradual. He may not realize each process, or the transition from one process to another. But he will know that he has become healthier, have more vitality and is more peaceful and happy.

But he will take more time to attain results than the other two practitioners. As a rough estimate, if he is sick he may need 9 months of cleansing to recover, whereas the Taijiquan practitioner may need 6 months, and the Shaolin practitioner only 3. If he is already healthy but wants to build enough energy to run round a football field without panting and without feeling tired, he may need to practice for 6 months, whereas the Taijiquan practitioner will need 3 months, and the Shaolin practitioner only 1 month.

If he wishes to nourish his energy so that he may expand into the Cosmos, he will need to practice for more than 10 years. Both the Taijiquan practitioner and the Shaolin practitioner will need about 3 years.

Then, why is it that many chi kung, Taijiquan and Shaolin students can run round the size of a football field without panting and without feeling tired, and

expand into the Cosmos after just a few days of an Intensive Chi Kung Course, an Intensive Taijiquan Course or an Intensive Shaolin Kungfu Course. This is because they use high-level skills even when the techniques remain the same.

For example, if the chi kung practitioner has attended an Intensive Chi Kung Course or a regional course on Cosmic Shower, for example, he can use Lifting the Sky or Carrying the Moon not just to generate an energy flow, which is the main skill of Eighteen Lohan Hands, but to generate a cosmic shower. He can then run round the size of a football field or expand into the Cosmos after a few days of the course. The Taijiquan practitioner and the Shaolin practitioner who do not have the skill will have to practice for 3 months and 1 month respectively.

If he has the skills to expand into the Cosmos which he can acquire at an Intensive Chi Kung Course or a regional course on Cosmic Breathing, he can do so after a few days of the course. The Taijiquan practitioner and the Shaolin practitioner without the skills will need to practice for 3 years.

He must, however, guard against over-training, especially if he uses high-level skills to perform the Eighteen Lohan Hands. If he just performs the Eighteen Lohan Hands to generate an energy flow or self-manifested chi movement, he is very unlikely to over-train. But if he uses high-level skills like cosmic shower, building internal force, bone marrow cleansing or merging with the cosmos, his chance of over-training will be higher than those practicing Taijiquan or Shaolin Kungfu.

The result of over-training is over-cleansing, over-building or over-nourishing. Adverse effects are pain and discomfort, feeling tired and sleepy, and feeling agitated and restless respectively. He should slow down his progress and spend more time on out-door activities.

The energy derived from Taijiquan and Shaolin training is more powerful than that from the Eighteen Lohan Hands. Yet, the recommended time for a training session for a Taijiquan practitioner or a Shaolin practitioner is 1 hour, whereas that for a chi kung practitioner is 15 minutes. Why is this so. Isn't practicing more powerful exercises for an hour more likely to cause over-training than practicing less powerful exercise for 15 minutes?

No, it is not so in this case because the nature of training is different. There is more movement in Taijiquan and Shaolin training than in Eighteen Lohan Hands training. Initially, the force training in Taijiquan and Shaolin Kungfu takes only about 5 to 10 minutes, and the rest of the time is spent in set practice and combat application where there is a lot of movement to spread the internal force all over the body. In Eighteen Lohan Hands, although the energy developed is less, it is accumulated. Hence the chance of over-training is more.

As a Taijiquan practitioner or a Shaolin practitioner progresses, he increases his time for force training. The increase is gradual, giving his body sufficient time to adjust.

Comparing Taijiquan and Shaolin Kungfu, the processes of cleansing and building are both stronger in Shaolin Kungfu than in Taijiquan, but the process

of nourishing is about the same. Hence, if both are sick, the Shaolin practitioner will recover faster than the Taijiquan practitioner. If both practice to attain vitality, the Shaolin practitioner will achieve his aim faster.

On the other hand, if they practice wrongly, the Shaolin practitioner will have faster as well as worse adverse effects. Hence, over-cleansing, over-building and over-nourishing will be more acute and happen sooner in the Shaolin practitioner than the Taijiquan practitioner.

As mentioned earlier, we in Shaolin Wahnam have improved our training methods in a ridiculous manner. While past practitioners took years to acquire certain force or skills, we take only months or even days. We are able to do so because of three main factors: we understand the underlying philosophy, appropriate skills are transmitted from heart to heart, and we have the magic of chi flow.

Knowing the underlying philosophy enables us to aim straight at our goal instead of progressing haphazardly as other practitioners do. Transmission of skills enable us to work straight at the result, instead of spending much time practicing techniques with the skills being developed often unknown to the practitioners. Chi flow erases adverse effects unwittingly sustained and speed up result remarkably.

While this is a great advantage and privilege, it can also easily lead to over-training with the result of over-cleansing, over-building and over-nourishing, especially for students who think that our school is like any other school (despite the obvious and vast difference), and, worse, who think they are smarter than their teachers, though they do not consciously mean to be disrespectful.

It is difficult for many people, including some of our students, to appreciate the fact that our school is vastly different from other chi kung, Taijiquan or Shaolin schools. They may acknowledge that our school produces better result, perhaps even two or three times better. But they will not be able to comprehend, or even imagine, that it is a hundred times better, which will make our school totally different from other schools!

Let us take an example, a very meaningful example directly related to the topic we are discussing, that of chi flow. It is chi flow that operates cleansing, building and nourishing. In other words, if there is no chi flow, there will be no cleansing, no building and no nourishing. Not many practitioners in other schools know this fact.

If practitioners of other schools can generate a chi flow in a hundred days, it would be a remarkable achievement. Most practitioners, even at masters' level, cannot generate a chi flow on purpose even having practiced for many years. Some of them do have chi flow, but it was not generated purposefully, and usually they are unaware of it.

But in our school, any student can generate a chi flow the very first day they learn from us. Some students attending regular classes may take a longer time.

This is not because their teachers cannot help them to generate a chi flow in one day. It is because their teachers purposely take more time to instill the skill in them for their benefit.

Hence, if these students do not realize that our school is vastly different from other schools, and take our teaching like the teachings of other schools, they are likely to over-train and suffer the adverse effects of over-cleansing, over-building and over-nourishing.

The other group of students who are likely to over-train are those who think they are smarter than their teachers, even when they do not mean to be disrespectful. For example, when their teachers ask them to practice certain exercises in a certain way, they practice them in other ways, thinking that their way is better. When their teachers ask them not to think of anything, they start thinking how not to think of anything. When their teachers ask them not to worry about unnecessary details, they particularly worry about such unnecessary details like must their fingers be close or open, or should they breathe out exactly when they lower their hands.

Comparing the three groups of students in our school, chi kung students are most likely to have these two problems of not appreciating that our school is vastly different from other schools, and that they try to be smarter than their teachers. Taijiquan students are less likely, and Shaolin students are the least likely. The good thing is that the actual number of such students is small.

Regardless of whether they practice Eighteen Lohan hands chi kung, Wahnam Taijiquan or Shaolin Kungfu in our school, the journeys of cleansing, building and nourishing of the three practitioner are generally similar. First they go through cleansing, next building, and then nourishing.

If they are sick or in pain, they overcome their illness and pain. Next, they have good health, vitality and longevity. Then they enjoy mental clarity and spiritual joys. They may go through the various processes cyclically or spirally.

However, depending on the respective arts they practice, there are differences in intensity and speed of cleansing, building and nourishing. The processes of cleansing, building and nourishing are the most powerful in Shaolin Kungfu, less in Taijiquan and the least in Eighteen Lohan Hands chi kung.

If they use higher-level skills, even when the techniques remain the same, they will achieve more powerful results. However, if they practice wrongly or over-train, they will have the adverse effects of over-cleansing, over-building and over-nourishing, the seriousness of which depends on the art they practice and the level of skills they operate on.

To avoid adverse effects as well as to attain the best benefits, it is highly recommended to follow the three golden rules of practice, which are don't worry, don't intellectualize and enjoy the practice.



## QUESTION 8

*Since practicing I have had many benefits of practice like overcoming asthma, haven't been sick/had a cold for at least 8 years, much happier than before and having a lot of energy.*

*Despite that, there are still some physical blockages which I wish to overcome.*

*My practice in general is as follows. Sometimes I miss morning or night.*

*Morning: Chi kung and chi flow 1 out of 2 times. Iron wire + chi flow 1 in 2 or 3 times.*

*Evening: Chi kung chi flow, Stance training 20-30 mins (All stances but I end when I start to feel more than minor discomfort and do some short chi flow in between), Chi flow, leg stretching, Sequences and sets 30 mins, end with chi kung chi flow.*

*Night: 5-10 min of small universe and end with chi flow.*

*I am training so I can use my Kungfu for fighting and intend to enter competitions. I go to MMA class once a week to get used to sparring with and understand how the MMA people fight. I do feel that I need to increase my internal force/ presence of mind/ solidness and agility of stances/ stamina in order to win against good fighters.*

*Can you shed some light to improve my practice. Should I practice less. Would I get more result from practicing more. What type of practices/ skills should I focus on. To get more result in breaking through blockages and also sparring.*

*Is training for fighting (especially force training) contradictory to breaking through blockages?*

*I understand that past masters practiced 8 hours a day including 2 hours stance training without chi flow. How can they manage such a thing.*

*I understand there is gradual progress. But in the past I tried to increase my stance training for example by increasing by 1 minute per 2 weeks in order to stand in Golden Bridge for 20 -30 minutes. It seemed to aggravate blockages, getting angry, tensed and negative thoughts occasionally in daily life. Is it positive or negative. I discontinued that type of training just in case.*

—Jas

Although yours are personal questions, the answers also apply and are very beneficial to many people. I shall address your questions point by point.

"Jas: Since practicing I have had many benefits of practice like overcoming asthma, haven't been sick/had a cold for at least 8 years, much happier than before and having a lot of energy."

Congratulations. Considering that nowadays many people are sick, depressed and lacking of energy, you achievement is remarkable.

This shows not only you have been practicing correctly but also smartly. Thousands of chi kung and Kungfu practitioners have been practicing correctly

according to what they have been taught for much longer time than you, but they remain sick, depressed and weak. They have not been smart.

They are not smart enough to realize that their practice does not give them the benefits it is supposed to give. They are also not smart enough to learn from the best available teachers, whose fees may be higher but eventually they will get better returns for the money and time spent.

"Jas: Despite that, there are still some physical blockages which I wish to overcome."

This is natural. There are also emotional, mental and spiritual blockages which may be more important but which you may not be so aware presently. The cleansing which clears blockages, as well as building and nourishing which will make you stronger and better, are cyclic.

You need not do anything extra or special. Just carry on with what you have been practicing, which has brought you remarkable results, then let the benefits come naturally. In chi kung terms, this is yu-wei followed by wu-wei.

"Jas: My practice in general is as follows. Sometimes I miss morning or night."

Don't worry or intellectualize on it if you occasionally miss a session or two. So long as your practice is regular, it is very good.

"Jas: Morning: Chi kung and chi flow 1 out of 2 times. Iron wire + chi flow 1 in 2 or 3 times."

Your practice routine here in the morning, and the other two in the evening and at night are good even without any changes. But I make some suggestions to make them even better.

You can skip the "chi kung" exercises at the start but go into a chi kung state of mind, have a brief and gentle flow, then proceed with Iron Wire. Follow with chi flow. If practicing Iron Wire every day is too powerful, you can interspace with exercises of a similar genre, like One-Finger Shooting Zen and Triple Stretch. The whole session takes about 15 minutes.

"Jas: Evening: Chi kung chi flow, Stance training 20-30 mins (All stances but I end when I start to feel more than minor discomfort and do some short chi flow in between), Chi flow, leg stretching, Sequences and sets 30 mins, end with chi kung chi flow."

Reduce your training time from about an hour to about 30 minutes. Instead of performing all the stances, just perform Horse-Riding Stance or Golden Bridge for about 10 minutes. Once a while you can go over all the stances as well for a review. Follow with leg stretching and subsequent chi flow for about 5 minutes. Then practice a set and some sequences followed by chi flow, which will take about 15 minutes. You can rotate the other sets and sequences around the ones you choose as your specialties.

"Jas: Night: 5-10 min of small universe and end with chi flow."

This will ensure you have good health and vitality beyond a hundred years.

"Jas: I am training so I can use my Kungfu for fighting and intend to enter competitions. I go to MMA class once a week to get used to sparring with and understand how the MMA people fight. I do feel that I need to increase my internal force/ presence of mind/ solidness and agility of stances/ stamina in order to win against good fighters."

While training to win free sparring competitions and restore the glory of Kungfu is a noble aim, the first priority is to enrich your life and the lives of other people. Having good health, vitality, longevity, mental freshness and spiritual joys, as you have mentioned at the start, is evidence that you are progressing in the right direction.

I am sure you will win free sparring competitions if you follow, not just read about or listen to, the strategy I have explained. If you still haven't got access to the secret web pages I have specially posted for those interested in winning free sparring competitions, please request the access particulars from any member of the Free Sparring Competitions Committee.

Joining a MMA class is a supplement, not a necessity. Your objective should not be to learn how MMA practitioners fight or how you fight using MMA. Your objective is to have opportunities to spar with them using your Shaolin Kungfu, not using MMA techniques. This would be difficult in a MMA class because you would be obliged to use MMA techniques.

If you have opportunities to spar with martial artists of other styles, you don't have to join a MMA class or any class of other martial arts. In fact, joining such classes will be detrimental to your aim of winning free sparring competitions. You will be learning and applying techniques which you are not good at, against opponents who are already expert in these techniques. You need at least a few years to catch up, when you already have a superior art to use against them. In my free sparring analogy, you are using knives and sticks against expert fighters of knives and sticks when you already have guns.

We are very lucky. We have an amazing opportunity in your siheng, Kai. Request him to conduct more workshops with opportunities to spar with martial artists of other styles, and encourage more people to take part in the workshops. But you must use Kungfu skills and techniques in your sparring against these other martial artists.

Many people in our school, including some instructors, still do not realize this though they honestly think they do. They know, in theory, that they should use combat sequences, but when they spar they use individual techniques. But at least they don't bounce about and use kick-boxing. The next essential step in the path to win free sparring competitions is to progress from technique fighting to sequence fighting.

Let me share with you a secret of masters. It actually does not matter what martial arts your opponents are trained in when fighting in a competition. Once you apply your combat sequence effectively and relentlessly on them, they have no chance to use their MMA, Muay Thai, Kick-Boxing or whatever fighting techniques they may be good at!

Of course, you must be very well trained in your chosen combat sequence, including covering yourself very safely and bridging the gap effectively when your opponents retreat. Shaolin combat Sequence 10, White Horse Presents Hoof, and Taijiquan Combat Sequence 5, White Crane Flaps Wings, are excellent choice. If it is not allow to kick an opponent's groin, Taijiquan practitioners can use a thrust kick instead of an organ-seeking kick.

If you just repeat and repeat your combat sequence effectively and relentlessly on your opponents, they will be unable to defend against your pressing attack, simply because they are not used to this type of fighting. This situation will last for at least 2 or 3 years. But when our practitioners keep winning competitions using this strategy, others will be used to it and will be ready with effective counters. If you use the same sequence but attack them with individual patterns, instead of continuously as a sequence, they will whack you like a punch-bag.

Right now you have sufficient internal force, presence of mind, solidness as well as agility of stances, and stamina to win free sparring competitions. You don't have to train for another six months to prepare. Enter competitions now at a local level, and as you gain confidence and experience progress to international levels in six months.

"Jas: Can you shed some light to improve my practice. Should I practice less. Would I get more result from practicing more. What type of practices/ skills should I focus on to get more result in breaking through blockages and also sparring?"

Choose Shaolin Combat Sequence 10, or any combat sequence you like, placing importance on safety first and chasing after opponents effectively. Enter a free sparring competition, and just apply the sequence. It is simple, direct and effective.

You don't have to add more time to your daily practice to prepare for free sparring competitions. Just incorporate the sequence into your daily routines.

Focus on quality, which includes wise use of strategies like the one I have advocated, and you will achieve more results in breaking through blockages and sparring as well as other benefits in less time. Cost-effective is a hallmark of our school.

If you attend the Xingyiquan at UK Summer Camp 2013, you will learn a Xingyiquan sequence that is so bafflingly simple yet exceptionally effective in today's free sparring competitions. It employs the same principles as I have been emphasizing all this while, but the Xingyiquan techniques and footwork are even more simple, direct and effective. In fact I had an aha experience discovering this fact when preparing myself to teach Xingyiquan.

"Jas: Is training for fighting (especially force training) contradictory to breaking through blockages?"

It depends on how a practitioner trains. For most people, training for fighting, including force training, is contradictory to breaking through blockages. The

injuries sustained in sparring as well as tensing their muscles in their force training and sparring practice increase their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual blockages.

In our case, training for fighting, including force training, promotes breaking through blockages. In sparring we emphasize safety first. While other practitioners exchange blows generously, we do not want to be hit even once. But even if we are hit many times, our chi flow clears away the blockage and damage.

Our training, for force as well as sparring, increases both the amount of energy and the vigorousness of flow. This promotes breaking through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual blockages.

"Jas: I understand that past masters practiced 8 hours a day including 2 hours stance training without chi flow. How could they manage such a thing?"

They could do so through sheer dedication. The term "ku lian" which literally means "bitter training" is widely heard in Kungfu circles. It is so different from our slogan of "making our training fun". It is no surprise, therefore, some people think that our training is a joke, if not a big lie. Their loss is that they never bother to find out our results.

When Robin was in China looking for genuine masters to learn from, he found a school where students spent 8 hours daily on zhan zhaung. They had a lot of internal force, but obviously little time for anything else.

I asked Robin how did our school compared to that school in terms of benefits and efficiency of internal force training. Robin told me it was incomparable. Robin did not elaborate which school was better, but the fact that he learned from us (and is now an excellent Taijiquan master) instead of from that school was a sufficient answer.

"Jas: I understand there is gradual progress. But in the past I tried to increase my stance training for example by increasing by 1 minute per 2 weeks in order to stand in Golden Bridge for 20 -30 minutes. It seemed to aggravate blockages, getting angry, tensed and negative thoughts occasionally in daily life. Is it positive or negative. I discontinued that type of training just in case."

Gradual progress is very important in any force training. The other very important principle is consistent perseverance. I learned these two essentials in any force training years ago when I trained Iron Palm.

Suppose a practitioner has 100 bricks with thickness ranging progressively from 0.1 of an inch to 2 inches. Every day he hits a sand-bag to increase his strength, and every 3 days he breaks a brick starting with the first one of 0.1 inch. Anyone with average strength should have no difficulty breaking a 0.1 inch brick though he may not be able to break a 2-inch brick.

As the practitioner gradually and progressively increases his strength with his daily hitting of the sand-bag, he would have no difficulty breaking the second brick slightly more than 0.1 inch thick on the 6th day. As he progresses gradually

and progressively with his consistent practice he should be able to break the 2-inch brick after 303 days.

But after breaking the 25th brick, after 3 days he jumps to the 35th brick instead of attempting the 26th brick, he may not be able to break it. He has not followed the principle of gradual progress.

Or after breaking the 25th brick he stops practicing for a week. When he resume his practice and attempt breaking the 26th brick, he may not be able to do so. He has not followed the principle of consistent perseverance. The longer the lapse of training, the more he loses the force he has earlier acquired.

If the lapse is long, he may lose all the force or benefit that he has acquired in his previous training. This is known in Chinese (Cantonese as "chien kung jun fai", which means "previous force is all lost", a situation all informed practitioners would avoid.

If one can stand in Golden Bridge correctly for 5 minutes, it will be good result. He will have sufficient internal force for today's situation where the standard of martial arts is low. Many people may be angry at this statement, but it is true. Being hit and kicked is regarded as normal and many martial artists are out of breath after 10 minutes of free sparring.

Instead of aiming for 20-30 minutes in Golden Bridge, it is better to aim for 5 minutes performing Golden Bridge perfectly, with total relaxation and mental clarity. In our school, "less is often more". Don't force yourself to increase by 1 minute after every 2 weeks. Let the increase be gradual and spontaneous.

First, yu-wei. Then, wu-wei. The yu-wei part is performing Golden Bridge perfectly, even for just a few seconds. The wu-wei part is to enjoy the practice, instead of worrying about your result. You may start with just a few seconds, but with gradual progress and consistent perseverance after a few months you will find yourself enjoying internal force and mental clarity in your Golden Bridge. And when you spar, regardless of whether your opponents use MMA, Muay Thai or any art, you will be surprised that their attacks lack force and you can see their movements clearly.

Your blockages being aggravated, you're getting angry, tensed and with negative thoughts occasionally arising were probably due to your wrong Golden Bridge training. The wrong training was due to your worrying about increasing the time by a minute every two weeks, which probably caused you to tense your muscles to endure longer stance as well as be mentally stressed

As these effects are harmful, they are negative. It was wise of you to discontinue. On the other hand, thousands of martial artists are not wise enough to discontinue training where they submit themselves to be punched and kicked by their classmates or teachers.

## QUESTION 9

*My experiences with cleansing lead me to understand that the pattern (Lifting the Sky) and the skill (generating a chi flow) are used to start the process, but the real "work" of cleansing takes place during the self-manifested chi flow. At the end, the standing meditation seems to help the healing set in and take hold.*

*My experiences with building, however, are a bit different. With Iron Wire, my experience tells me that the "work" of building takes place during the patterns (Iron Wire) with the skill (Force or Flow method). Self-manifested chi flow, in this case, seems to be used as a safety valve to counter any blockages. Again, standing meditation seems to help the building set in and take hold.*

*I do not have much direct experience of nourishing, so I cannot comment on that.*

*Can you please elaborate on the roles of pattern, skill, self-manifested chi flow, and standing meditation during cleansing, building, and nourishing?*

— Sifu Matt Fenton

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you for your sharp and accurate observation.

What you have described is true for your experience. It is also true for many people in our school, but it may not be so for other practitioners outside our school. This will become clear as the answer unfolds.

Before addressing your questions in some detail, it is helpful to examine the concepts of experience and philosophy from the Eastern perspective and from the Western perspective.

In Eastern culture, experience comes before philosophy.

For example, when the Buddha said that the phenomenal world is composed of four greats, namely fire, water, earth and air, he experienced the reality first, then described his experience for the benefit of posterity which eventually constitutes the philosophy.

In other words, the Buddha did not sit down in a lotus position and start thinking, "What actually is the phenomenal world made of?". Well, it is made of earth, fire, water and air. Rather, in his deep meditation he saw the phenomenal world reduced to its finest aspects, and he used the symbols of fire, water, earth and air to describe these aspects with their different characteristics. A modern scientist using very sophisticated instruments may describe the same reality as matter being composed of quarks with up-spin, down-spin, top-spin and bottom-spin.

In Western culture, philosophy comes before experience.

For example, when Plato said that the perfect form is the sphere, first he philosophized on the perfect form and rationalized that it was the sphere. Only then he or his students went into the real world and found examples to justify the philosophy.

The lucky or unfortunate thing, depending on one's perspective, is that the

world is so large that one can always find enough evidence to justify whatever philosophy he has formulated. For example, if you were to say that a cone or an irregular stone were the perfect form, you could also find enough evidence and arguments to justify your claim.

In our school as we practice traditional arts first developed in the East, we use the Eastern approach from experience to philosophy. We also find this approach very useful.

What you have said describes your experience. And when a lot of people have similar experiences with similar descriptions, which is the case in our school, the explanation becomes the philosophy.

This, indeed, is how our philosophy of cleansing, building and nourishing evolved. At present it is a philosophy peculiar to our school because other schools without our advantages and benefits do not have our experiences, and therefore our explanation.

Just as you have excellently described, when our students practice chi kung patterns like "Lifting the Sky" and "Carrying the Moon", they succeed in generating a chi flow. If this chi flow becomes vigorous we call this experience self-manifested chi movement.

At first we called this chi flow a result, as it is a result of performing chi kung techniques like "Lifting the Sky" and "Carrying the Moon". Now, having various experiences and deeper understanding, we call this chi flow a skill, reserving results for other experiences like overcoming pain and illness, and attaining good health and vitality.

Whether we call the experience of generating chi flow a technique, a skill or a result is a matter of semantics. And in line with the Eastern perspective, we use language, irrespective of whether it is a Western language like English or an Eastern language like Chinese, for convenience and benefit, and not for limiting ourselves into compartmentalization. In the same way, we can use the term, "Black Tiger Steals Heart" or "Fierce Tiger Speeds through Valley", to refer to a pattern, a sequence or a set.

Here we refer to generating chi flow as a skill because it is convenient and gives us a lot of benefits. We know, for example, why thousands of other practitioners using the same techniques like "Lifting the Sky" and "Carrying the Moon" but do not get the results of overcoming pain and illness or attaining good health and vitality because they lack this skill.

We also know that a lot of people practice the same techniques in Iron Wire but do not have the result of internal force because they too lack this skill. Further we know that a few masters using the same techniques of Iron Wire and have internal force but only after many months or even years because they are unaware that unknown to them, they have generated chi flow which eventually consolidate into internal force. For us, knowing the philosophy and being able to apply it every time we practice, we can have similar results after a few days.

Let us have fun, as well as insight, examining what most other practitioners



experience in their chi kung and force training, and how they describe their experiences which constitute their philosophy, which is an explanation of what happened, and what is likely to happen when the same procedure is followed.

Most of other practitioners today perform chi kung patterns but they do not have any chi flow. They may loosen their joints and muscles, and enjoy a sense of well-being. But if they are sick, they would be unable to overcome their sick. So their philosophy, usually verbal but sometimes may be written on the internet, is that chi kung cannot overcome illness. At best it gives a sense of well-being.

If they have the opportunity to read chi kung classics that clearly recorded that chi kung could overcome illness, they would be puzzled. If they are smart as well as honest and courageous, they will examine their own practice and seek other masters for help. If they lack honesty and courage, they will overlook the classics, tell themselves that such chi kung benefits are no longer true today, and continue with their classes for socialization if they don't have more worthy things to do.

A few of these other practitioners may have chi flow though they may not realize it. If they practice long enough, they can overcome their illness if they were sick, and attain good health and vitality, though it is nothing like the good health and vitality we enjoy in our school.

They will attribute the benefits they get to the techniques they practice. In fact this is also the idea commonly expressed in chi kung literature, i.e. practice and practice for years and results will eventually appear. Sometimes it is also mentioned that only a very few will succeed in their practice.

Although the term "chi flow", which is "xing qi" in Chinese, is mentioned in chi kung classics, it is never explained explicitly that it is a skill, in contrast to techniques, and that without this skill, practitioners will not succeed in obtaining the desired results even when they perform the techniques correctly.

These students have no concept of chi flow even when it has occurred in them haphazardly, because they were unaware of it. They will not understand if we tell them that it was the chi flow, not the techniques they performed, that helped them overcome illness, and attain good health and vitality. Some of them may ridicule us when our students become instructors after practicing for just a few years. To them, just to be a chi kung student will take years.

Your description of how you developed internal force in Iron Wire training is clear and correct, but it applies only in our school. It does not apply to most other practitioners even when they have developed internal force using Iron Wire training. The philosophy, which is an explanation of what happened, and what will happen if the same procedure is followed correct, is new and revolutionary.

It is new and revolutionary even when it is correct because it applies only to a small, elite group of people. The great majority will use the orthodox philosophy which will be explained below.

Let us see how the training of Iron Wire will be when practitioners practice it the orthodox way. Internal force is developed when practitioners work on the patterns of the Iron Wire Set, where flowing energy is consolidated. Their process is similar to ours except that theirs is not as pronounced. Their process is spread over many years, whereas ours take only months.

Chi inside their arms must be fluid, or else the practitioners cannot convert it into internal force. If they tense their muscles, they will lock up their chi, resulting in building muscles instead. This is what many practitioners do. They practice Iron Wire as isometric exercise and build up big muscles. They have much muscular strength which they mistake for internal force.

A big difference between the orthodox method and our method is that we have a chi flow after performing the patterns, which may sometimes progress to self-manifested chi movement, but they don't.

The chi flow achieves two important functions. If we have caused some blockage due to incorrect practice, our chi flow will clear it away. Hence, with our chi flow, we will not practice it wrongly as isometric exercise. If we do so unknowingly, our chi flow will clear the muscles and convert it to flowing energy.

The second important function is that the chi flow greatly speed up our progress. Not only the chi flow process enable the energy to be fluid, it also substantially increases its volume. This makes it easier and faster to consolidate the energy into internal force.

Just like the case of practicing "Lifting the Sky", those practicing Iron Wire correctly and succeed in building internal force may not realize the actual processes going on inside them. The concepts of cleansing, building and nourishing do not occur to them, though they happen without their conscious knowing. Hence, their explanation or philosophy is that by practicing the patterns of Iron Wire they develop internal force.

Of those who use this orthodox philosophy, only a very small proportion will succeed. But in our school, the proportion that will succeed is much higher, though the actual number of persons practicing the art will be much smaller.

Let us estimate that in the whole world there are 10,000 persons who have the rare opportunity to practice Iron Wire. Of these 10,000, only about 50, or 0.5%, will succeed in developing internal force from their Iron Wire training, not muscular strength from isometric exercise. These 50 rare persons with internal force derived from Iron Wire, will have practiced Iron Wire for more than 10 years, and are rightly regarded and respected as masters of Iron Wire.

In our school when we have 100 persons practicing Iron Wire, about 60 persons, or 60%, will succeed in developing internal force from their Iron Wire training. But they need not train for more than 10 years, they may train for only 10 months.

Orthodox practitioners would not believe us. Some of them would ridicule us, arguing how could we attain in 10 months what masters need more than 10 years. That is their problem and their loss. It is their loss because they never

bother to find out whether what we say is true, and if so how we can achieve such results.

These 60 students of our school will not be regarded as Iron Wire masters although they have similar internal force that the recognized 50 world Iron Wire masters have, mainly because our students have not trained for more than 10 years, which is the very minimum time what most people would conceptualize a master should have trained. Further, our students do not belong to a school where most people would expect Iron Wire to be practiced as an advanced art.

What justification do we have to claim that our 60 students have similar internal force that these 50 world Iron Wire masters have. We do not seek justification from the number of years in training or the reputation of the school where the art is learnt from. Our justification lies in the fact that what these masters can do with the internal force derived from their Iron Wire training, our students can do too with the internal force derived from our Iron Wire training.

For example, if these masters can break the bottom of two bricks without breaking the top one, our students can do that too. If these masters can spar for a few hours without feeling tired or being out of breath, our students can do that too.

Frankly, some of these genuine masters may not be able to perform these two feats. This does not mean they do not have sufficient internal force for the feats. More importantly, this does not reduce our respect for them as masters.

How is it that when they have the required force, they still could not break the bottom brick or spar for hours without tiring. It is because they lack the particular technique or skill for these feats. This particular technique or skill can be picked up quite easily. It is like you have sufficient money to buy a particular fountain pen, but you do not know how, or where, to buy it.

More significantly is that these masters have radiant health and bouncing vitality due to the internal force from their Iron Wire training. Our Iron Wire students also have radiant health and bouncing vitality. A difference, perhaps, is that our students are younger than the masters.

But this setback can be compensated by the fact that many young people the age of our students do not have the radiant health and bouncing vitality the masters and our students have. In internal arts, one can only get better. I have no doubt that when our students reach the age of these masters, if the students maintain their training, their radiant health and bouncing vitality will even be better.

Nourishing comes after building, which in turn comes after cleansing. Usually, but not necessarily always, the processes are from cleansing to building to nourishing. The processes are cyclic or spiral, not linear. Hence, after nourishing, cleansing may occur again.

Cleansing, building and nourishing are phenomena peculiar to our school. Although these processes also occur to other practitioners in other schools, they are spread over a long time and are not obvious. Hence other practitioners

do not normally explain these phenomena. In other words they do not have the philosophy of cleansing, building and nourishing that we have.

As Iron Wire is a more powerful art that "Lifting the Sky" and other chi kung dynamic techniques, the results of cleansing, building and nourishing in these different arts are quite different.

In "Lifting the Sky", cleansing clears blockage, resulting in overcoming pain and illness. Building increases energy volume, resulting in vitality. Nourishing enriches the quality of energy, resulting in being peaceful and happy.

In Iron Wire, where practitioners are already healthy, cleansing ensures smooth energy flow, preparing the stage for consolidating energy into internal force. Building increases the amount of energy so that more internal force can be developed. Nourishing enhances the quality of energy, resulting in mental clarity and spiritual joys.

For convenience and better understanding of the roles of pattern, skill, self-manifested chi flow, and standing meditation during cleansing, building, and nourishing, let us classify them into methods and processes.

Patterns, skills and standing meditation are methods to operate the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing.

We shall change the term "self-manifested chi flow" as mentioned by you to "self-manifested chi movement" so as not to be confused with other types of chi flow. It is included in the category of skills. Self-manifested chi movement is one of many skills. Another skill is generating energy flow.

In the classification above, we have placed "standing meditation" as one of the three methods listed, the other two being patterns and skills. Here "standing meditation" is allotted a category by itself to reflect the importance you have given it in the question.

In other context, it may be grouped under patterns or skills, depending on the situation. Thus, it is obvious that the classification is for convenience. It is not a rigid compartmentalization as in science.

The classification is also for better understanding. It will enable us to think about the question, describe the happenings, ponder on the expected results, and draw general conclusions more easily, clearly and systematically.

In line with the approach from experience to philosophy, we shall first examine how chi kung and Kungfu are practiced in the orthodox way, and the roles these methods of patterns, skills and standing meditation play in the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing. Then we compare the orthodox way with our Shaolin Wahnam way. We can then draw general conclusions from the experience to formulate a philosophy for the benefit of posterity.

A pattern constitutes a technique. Depending on the type of chi kung practiced, practitioners may perform one or more patterns a number of times, after which they complete the training session. This is a typical session. The patterns may be different, and the numbers of repetitions vary, but the structure of the

session is the same.

Let us take an example of a chi kung style called Eight Pieces of Brocade. Practitioners perform each of the eight patterns about ten to twenty times. Then they complete the session. Sometimes they may select one or a few of the patterns instead of all the eight.

For Kungfu training, let us take an example of a Triple Stretch Set. There are different versions of the Triple Stretch Set, but they have a common structure. Some sets may not be called Triple Stretch but by other names, like Five Animals or Taming the Tiger. Some triple-stretch exercises are performed at the start of the set, followed by combat sequences.

Practitioners usually perform the patterns as routine. Often they use muscular strength. The session ends with completing all the patterns in the set. There is no chi flow or standing meditation after the set.

This is the usual way how chi kung and Kungfu are practiced. Practitioners perform their chi kung or Kungfu patterns at a physical level. A few of them, if they have performed their patterns well, may generate a chi flow during their performance, but they are usually unaware of the chi flow. They also do not allow their internal chi flow to manifest into self-manifested chi movement externally.

They also do not progress to standing meditation after their chi kung or Kungfu performance. Had they stood for a while, those who had performed their techniques well, might have a gentle chi flow manifested as a gentle sway. Because they do not understand what is happening, should this happen they would stop their chi flow by physical means, usually by tensing their muscles unconsciously.

These practitioners, who form the great majority, do not differentiate between techniques and skills. So the rule of skills is marginal. They mistakenly think that if they practice their techniques long enough, they will derive benefits from their arts. They do not realize that skills are necessary.

If they ever think of skills, it is the skills of performing their techniques correctly and beautifully, which have no significant role in cleansing, building and nourishing. In other words, even when they have good skills to perform their techniques correctly and beautifully, their practice will not result in cleansing, building and nourishing, which in turn give them benefits like overcoming pain and illness, attaining good health, vitality, and developing internal force and mental clarity.

This is a crucial fact that most chi kung and Kungfu practitioners do not know. Hence, they may have practice chi kung or Kungfu techniques for many years, yet remain sick, weak and stressful, or have no internal force and mental clarity.

The skills that result in cleansing, building and nourishing which in turn give benefits of good health, vitality, longevity, internal force and mental clarity are generating chi flow, which may become vigorous and result in self-manifested chi movement, or which may be consolidated into internal force. The great

majority of chi kung and Kungfu practitioners have no concept about these skills.

Most practitioners also do not think of standing meditation as part of chi kung and Kungfu training. Hence, they do not have purposeful experiences of entering a chi kung state of mind, entering Zen, entering Tao, building internal force at the dan tian, and enjoying inner peace as part of their chi kung or Kungfu training.

Nevertheless, such experiences sometimes occur haphazardly to a few of these practitioners, but not on purpose of their training. On occasions when a few of them have performed their techniques ideally, they may enter into a meditative state of mind, generate a chi flow, and consolidate chi into internal force, all of which without their conscious knowing.

Because these occur haphazardly without the practitioners consciously and purposefully working on these results, the results take a long time to materialize. It usually take years, and it happens only to a very few, who would then be regarded as masters. With results accumulating haphazardly over many years, in chi kung these rare masters would have radiant health, and the rare Kungfu masters would have internal force.

These rare chi kung and Kungfu masters would not refer to entering into a meditative state of mind, generating a chi flow and consolidating chi into internal force as skills. They cannot actualize these processes on purpose. These processes occur spontaneously when they have performed their techniques in ideal conditions, and they are unaware of these processes going on inside their body. They are only aware of the end-results as radiant health and internal force.

In other words, for the great majority of chi kung and Kungfu practitioners, patterns, skills and standing meditation do not play any significant roles in cleansing, building and nourishing. They are only aware of patterns, and are not aware of all the other factors. To them, their arts are just practicing patterns. Because they do not experience cleansing, building and nourishing, they do not have the benefits of good health, internal force and mental clarity.

However, a very few of these practitioners do attain the skills of chi flow and a meditative state of mind, and experience cleansing, building and nourishing, with the result of good health, internal force and mental clarity. But they are unaware of the skills and the processes, which occur haphazardly and spontaneously without their conscious knowing. They are only aware of the end-results which have taken them a long time to attain. They are regarded as masters for their achievements.

I myself went through the same processes. Because I was (and still am) a fast learner and had excellent teachers, my progress was much faster than most other masters. I also had (and still have) an inquisitive mind and a large collection of chi kung and Kungfu classics, enabling me to investigate into the underlying principles of these processes.

My turn-over of classes I teach is very large - larger than that of most masters by a big margin. Most masters may teach two or three classes a year, I teach more than a hundred. This has enabled me to improve my teaching methodology tremendously.

Chi flow and entering into a meditative state of mind were two of the earliest skills I discovered in my early years of teaching. They are also crucial skills that bring about cleansing, building and nourishing, which result in good health, internal force and mental clarity.

I remember that my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, once told me that entering into a meditative state of mind was very important. If my mind was wandering, he told me, I might as well don't train for there would not be any benefit in the training.

Sometimes I also experienced internal chi flow, like while performing One-Finger Shoot Zen or while standing still after performing some chi kung patterns. But my sifu did not encourage chi flow. I developed chi flow, including self-manifested chi movement, during my teaching.

In my early teaching, there were no special methods to enter into a chi kung state of mind or to generate a chi flow. I just taught students the patterns of Eighteen Lohan Hands, and asked them to be relaxed and not thinking of anything while performing the exercise.

As many students could not relax, I devised a simple routine to help them to relax from head to toes at the beginning of a class. I still use this method in beginners' courses.

Having the mouth gently open is an important step to relaxation. I found that many students had their mouth close. So I asked them to open their mouth, like smiling. Then I told them not just to smile from their lips but from their heart.

"Smile from the Heart" was then introduced into this relaxation routine at the beginning of a class. Many students have since told me that "Smile from the Heart" is the best lesson they have learnt from our school.

My early students took about four to six months before they had their first chi flow. At first their external chi flow movement was gentle, but with encouragement from me the movement became vigorous. The gentle chi flow became self-manifested chi movement. I found out from experience that those who had chi flow had good results.

To help students speed up the time needed to have some vigorous chi flow, I devised some techniques for this purpose. Some of these techniques are now found in the chi kung set called Eighteen Jewels. The resultant vigorous external chi flow was initially called self-induced chi flow, but as other types of chi flow were also self-induced, I changed the term to self-manifested chi movement.

At first the term self-manifested chi movement referred to a particular technique. By performing a set of patterns vigorously, practitioners could generate a vigorous chi flow that manifested as vigorous external chi movement. But as we improved in our teaching methodology, we could use

different techniques to produce self-manifested chi movement. Thus, we now refer to self-manifested chi movement as a skill. This is an example of using classification for convenience and better understanding, and not to limit ourselves.

At first, chi flow was not a part of our standard practice procedure. The standard procedure, like what the great majority of chi kung practitioners have practiced since ancient time, was just performing chi kung patterns. But as more and more students enjoyed their chi flow and obviously derive much benefit from it, chi flow gradually became an established part of the practice session. Later I discovered that this session of chi flow was actually more important in bringing benefits to practitioners than the session on performing techniques, and accordingly told the students so.

Like chi flow, standing meditation was initially not an integral part of the standard practice procedure. At the end of performing patterns, students stood still for a short while, but not long enough to justify calling it standing meditation, to let chi accumulate at the dan tian. With chi flow gradually becoming part of the standard practice, this standing still for a short while became longer for chi to be focused at the dan tian. Eventually it formulated into standing meditation, which also brought more benefits.

Once I remembered reading some good advice from a chi kung classic that at the end of a practice session, practitioners should gently and intuitively think of themselves attaining good health physically and spiritually. I also recalled the triple cultivation of chi kung, namely jing, qi and shen or the physical, the energy and the spirit. Performing techniques would take care of physical cultivation, chi flow would take care of energy cultivation, and standing meditation, together with a gentle noble thought, would take care of spiritual cultivation.

The concepts of cleansing, building and nourishing emerged later in my teaching, though the actual processes were present right at the beginning. At first, like most other practitioners now and in the past, we were not consciously aware of cleansing, building and nourishing. We just practiced patterns, later added skills and standing meditation, and enjoyed desired results. But gradually, various experiences from students focus our attention to these processes of cleansing, building and nourishing, and a philosophy gradually emerged to give us better understanding and more benefits.

Even in my early teaching, students complained of rashes and pimples appearing on their skin, bad breath coming out of their mouth, and passing out gas at their bottom. This reminded us of the process of cleansing going on inside us.

Later, advanced practitioners told me of pain and discomfort after a long period of good health and vitality due to chi kung practice. This gave us the concepts of over-cleansing as well of cleansing, building and nourishing as cyclic, and not just linear, development.

Students reported that their vitality improved remarkably, and Kungfu practitioners could break bricks even without any prior hard conditioning.



These achievements gave us the concept of building.

Our students were peaceful and happy, while other practitioners in other schools remained stressful and agitated. Many of our practitioners even experienced spiritual expansion into the Cosmos. These achievements gave us the concept of nourishing.

With direct experience from our training and invaluable knowledge from chi kung and Kungfu classics, we are able to formulate a philosophy that enables us to be very effective in our practice. Hence, our practice procedure is quite different from that of most other practitioners.

For convenience, our practice session, or a part of a practice session, may be divided into three sections: introduction, body and conclusion.

In chi kung, the introduction consists of entering into a chi kung state of mind. The body is of two parts. The first part is performing patterns, and the second part is chi flow. Standing meditation forms the conclusion.

In Kungfu, the introduction consists of entering Zen or Tao. The body consists of force training or performing sets or combat sequences. Chi flow and standing meditation form the conclusion.

This classification of a practice session, or part of a practice session, is guideline for efficiency and comprehensiveness. It should be modified according to expedient needs.

We can now recapitulate by relating how the methods relate to the processes and what results are produced.

Patterns or techniques are the physical form to operate skills. The resultant process - whether it is cleansing, building or nourishing - depends on a few factors, especially our developmental stage and intention. Standing meditation consolidates the benefits.

Let us have some examples to understand the roles played by the method and process chosen.

Let us choose our most popular pattern, Lifting the Sky.

If we just perform Lifting the Sky without the skills of entering into a chi kung state of mind and chi flow, we would be performing gentle physical exercise. Its role will be to loosen muscles and joints, and provide some relaxation.

If we want chi kung benefits like overcoming pain and illness, and attaining good health, vitality and longevity, the roles played by appropriate skills like entering into a chi kung state of mind and chi flow, including self-manifested chi movement if needed, are crucial.

In normal circumstances, i.e. without using our mind to influence the process, chi flow due to performing Lifting the Sky will result in cleansing. If we have any pain or illness, the cleansing process will remove it. If we are already healthy, cleansing will ensure that we will not be sick or in pain at all.

When we go into standing meditation, chi flow will result in building. This will

give us vitality and longevity. After building, chi flow while in standing meditation will result in nourishing. This will make us peaceful and happy.

Let us now examine the roles played by these factors in Kungfu practice. We shall use One-finger Shooting Zen and Lifting Water as examples for our Shaolin and Taijiquan practitioners.

If we practice One-Finger Shooting Zen or Lifting Water without entering Zen or Tao, and without chi flow, we shall perform them as isometric exercise in the case of One-Finger Shooting Zen, and as gentle relaxation exercise in the case of Lifting Water.

If we enter Zen or Tao, and have chi flow, we shall emphasize the process of building in both One-Finger Shooting Zen and Lifting Water. Cleansing and nourishing are also present, but are secondary.

The building process will develop a lot of internal force, which will give us good health, vitality and longevity. In One-Finger-Shooting Zen, the internal force is consolidated, but still flowing. In Lifting Water, the internal force is flowing. If a practitioner wishes to use this flowing force in combat, he needs to consolidate and explode it, as in Single Whip.

When we enter standing meditation after performing One-Finger Shooting Zen or Lifting Water, we enhance the process of building and progress to nourishing. We attain mental clarity and spiritual joys.

If a practitioner is sick or in pain, and practices One-Finger Shooting Zen or Lifting Water, he can overcome his sickness or pain, but it will take a longer time because cleansing is a secondary process in this exercise. However, if he goes into chi flow after performing the exercise, like going into self-manifested chi flow movement, his recovery will be speeded up.

Understanding the philosophy here makes us extremely cost-effective - often to a ridiculous extent. But if you are not clear with some points, just follow our three golden rules of practice: don't worry, don't intellectualize, enjoy your practice.

## QUESTION 10

*You mentioned that Chi Flow is very important for cleansing and getting rid of blockages. Did many past masters realize the benefit of chi flow in their practice to cleanse blockages. How did past masters go through stages of cleansing, building and nourishing, if they did not have the (conscious) benefit of chi flow?*

— Sifu Roeland Dijkema

Past chi kung masters and medical doctors realized the benefits of chi flow to cleanse blockages. It was established that the two principal dimensions in chi kung training were cleansing and nurturing (which comprises building and nourishing), expressed in Chinese as "xing qi" and "yang qi". (Please note that "yang" in "yang qi" is different from "yang" in "yin-yang".)

The principal aim of all chi kung training was to cleanse blockage to enhance harmonious energy flow to attain good health, and to increase the volume of energy to attain vitality and longevity. Exercises that were dynamic, like dynamic patterns, focused on cleansing, while exercises that were quiescent, like Abdominal Breathing, focused on nurturing.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the concept that energy blockage is the ultimate cause of all diseases was established in ancient times, and this concept forms the basis of all healing. Traditional Chinese doctors might use different therapeutic approaches, like herbalism, acupuncture, massage and chi kung therapy, but the fundamental principles was always to clear energy blockage.

In other words, when herbalists used certain herbs, acupuncturists applied needles on certain points, massage therapists massaged certain muscles, and chi kung therapists prescribed certain exercises, their aim was to clear energy blockage and restore smooth energy flow. When energy flow was harmonious, good health occurred spontaneously.

Kungfu masters too had a good concept of chi flow. In internal force training, it was standard knowledge that practitioners must not tense their muscles, for doing so would block smooth energy flow. As it was energy flow that resulted in internal force, tensing ones muscles would therefore block the development of internal force.

Even in external Kungfu styles, the concept of smooth chi flow was emphasized. Practitioners, for example, should perform a series of patterns in one smooth flow of energy, which is one continuous breath. This series of patterns formed a sequence. Kungfu sets were divided into sequences, with each sequence performed in one smooth flow of chi, known as "yiet hei hor seng" in Cantonese, which literally means "completed in one breath".

Kungfu practitioners, even when they practiced external styles, were generally healthy. It was probably this continuous flow of energy when they performed their Kungfu sets in sequence that cleared blockages which resulted in their good health, though I suspect they might not realize the philosophy behind. This is in direct contrast with many modern martial artists who have become

more unhealthy the longer they train.

Kungfu classics of external styles, like Hoong Ka, Wing Choon, Choy-Li-Fatt, Tantaui, Praying Mantis and Eagle Claw did not normally mention chi flow, but I believe chi flow was present though external style practitioners might not realize it. There was, however, occasional mention of "not forcing strength", or "mg ho guk lek" in Cantonese, which could be translated as "don't grimace your face and don't tense your muscles to produce strength".

There was also mention of "yong lek" and "fatt keng", which mean "use strength" and "explode force". But concepts like "yong yi pat yong lek" or "use intention and don't use strength", and "sui yi hang hei" or "circulate energy according to intention", which were fundamental in internal styles like Taijiquan and Wuzuquan, were not common in external styles.

The concept of "use strength" in Kungfu in the past was very different from how many martial artists use strength today. In the past "use strength" meant letting strength flow without tensing muscles. Today many martial artists tense their muscles when using strength.

How Kungfu practitioners in the past developed strength so that they could have strength to use, was also different. Their principal method was stance training. It was also stated that practitioners should be relaxed when practicing stances.

Today martial artists seldom use stance training. Instead, they lift weights, punch sandbags and perform push-ups where muscles are tensed. Kungfu practitioners of external styles in the past also lifted weights, punched sandbags and performed push-ups, but they did so without tensing their muscles. They let their strength flow.

Besides stance training, students of external Southern Shaolin styles like Hoong Ka, Wing Choon and Choy-Li-Fatt used external methods to develop force, which was sometimes called "keng" in Cantonese, or "jing" in Mandarin. Hoong Ka students gripped jars with their tiger-claws, Wing Choon students struck their wooden-man, and Choy-Li-Fatt students practiced with stone-locks.

The masters, however, had secret methods to develop internal force. Hoong Ka masters practiced Iron Wire, Wing Choon masters practiced Siu Lin Tou, and Choy-Li-Fatt masters practiced Triple Stretch. But students would have no access to such secret methods.

Students of external Northern Shaolin styles also used external methods. Tantai students practiced Iron Palm. Praying Mantis students struck their arms against poles. Eagle Claw students gripped Y-shape branches or pulled poles from the ground.

Eagle Claw masters practiced a short set of internal force training using eagle-claws, similar to Golden Leopard Trains Claws in our 18-Lohan Art. For some time I wondered what Tantai masters and Praying Mantis masters practiced for their internal force. I found the answer when I was preparing to teach Praying Mantis Kungfu in Bern, Switzerland in 2010. They practiced 18-Lohan Art.

With this background, we are able to answer with some insight whether many past masters realized the benefit of chi flow in their practice to cleanse blockages. And if they did not have this conscious benefit, how did they go through the stages of cleansing, building and nourishing.

Chi kung masters realized the benefit of chi flow. However, except for those who practice a genre of chi kung known as Five-Animal Play, their chi flow was mainly internal, and not like ours which can be manifested externally as vigorous chi flow movements.

As past chi kung masters had powerful internal chi flow, they were almost never sick. Their chi kung training was mainly for healing, martial art, scholarship or spiritual cultivation. Hence, their focus was on building and nourishing, not on cleansing.

If they were sick, they could circulate their chi flow to appropriate places in their body to clear blockages and overcome their sickness. Such abilities were considered very high-level.

To heal others, they channeled their chi into patients to clear blockages. They might also prescribe appropriate chi kung exercises for patients to practice to overcome their own blockages.

Lesser chi kung practitioners would not have such abilities. If they were sick, they would have to consult traditional Chinese doctors to overcome their sickness with herbs, acupuncture, massage therapy or chi kung therapy. Not many people in the past, including masters, could generate chi flow like our students do to overcome pain and illness.

Exceptions were those who practiced Five-Animal Play. They could generate chi flow for self-manifested chi movement to clear blockages and overcome illness. Many chi kung therapists used Five-Animal Play to heal patients.

Traditional Chinese medical doctors knew the benefit of chi flow to overcome illness. But they did not practice chi kung. They used herbs, acupuncture and massage therapy to help their patients to have chi flow to overcome their illness. When their patients had recovered, they might use herbs to build and nourish their patients' chi. Acupuncture and massage therapy could build and nourish too, but herbs were preferred, even by acupuncturists and massage therapists.

Internal Kungfu masters knew about the benefit of chi flow in clearing blockages as well as in building and nourishing. As their internal chi flow was powerful, they were almost never sick. But if they were sick or injured, which was more often than being sick, they might be unable to generate a vigorous chi flow resulting in self-manifested chi movement to clear blockages and recover from their illness or injury. They had to consult a traditional Chinese doctor.

As the main reason for their internal training was for combat, they usually focused on building. Their internal force was usually very powerful, and they had much vitality. But they might not be healthy nor have longevity. Some might not be persons you like to have tea with, as they could be hot-tempered and

nasty. This could be due to their energy being channeled for building, and not for cleansing and nourishing.

You may also be surprised that some of them sustained injury from combat for a long time, sometimes even for life. They had not heard about our philosophy that the most important function of internal force is to maintain life, next to enhance life, then to enable us to have better results no matter what we do. Actually, even if they had not known this philosophy, internal force still works the way as described above if they follow wu-wei or spontaneity, but they interfered with wu-wei and channeled their internal force for combat instead of for enriching their life.

Most external Kungfu masters did not know about chi flow and its function in cleansing blockage to overcome pain and illness, though they themselves had the benefit of chi flow in building their internal force. Because they were not consciously aware of their chi flow, they took a long time to develop their internal force, compared to what we attain in Shaolin Wahnam. Their chi flow also nourished them.

Paradoxically, judging from the life histories of Shaolin, Taijiquan, Baguazhang and Xingyiquan masters of the 19th and 20th centuries, masters of external styles who developed internal force were generally more amiable than masters of internal styles. This could be due to the long training of the external style masters in internal force development which nourished their chi, compared to the internal force training of the internal style masters, even when their training was also long but they channeled their internal force for combat right at the start.

If external style masters were sick, though this seldom happened, they would be unable to generate a chi flow for self-manifested chi movement to clear their blockages and overcome their sickness. They would have to consult traditional Chinese doctor. If they were injured, which would be more often than their being sick, they would apply Kungfu medicine, like applying medicated wine, medicated paste and taking medicinal concoction.

My own injury sustained while sparring with my siheng was a good example. My siheng, Pok Kai, gave me a gentle tap with his cup-fist about three inches from target. I was internally injured. Although my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, was a great healer, it still took me about 6 months to recover. I had to apply medicated paste and take medicinal concoction every three days. Today, a Shaolin Wahnam student similarly injured would recover in 30 minutes if he immediately performs self-manifested chi movement.

## QUESTION 11

*How are the stages of cleansing, building and nourishing different when performed individually compared to when done in a group.*

*When an advanced practitioner practices together with a beginner, how would the chi flow of the advanced practitioner affect the stages of cleansing, building and nourishing of the beginner, if at all, and vice versa?*

— Sifu Lee Wei Joo

As cleansing, building and nourishing are found in all aspects of chi kung and all types of chi kung, though there may be difference in intensity and focus, the answer here applies to all chi kung practice.

In other words, it does not matter whether one practices chi kung to overcome illness, for peak performance or for spiritual cultivation, he undergoes processes of cleansing, building and nourishing.

It does not matter whether he practices Eighteen Lohan Hands, stance training or Small Universe, and it does not matter whether he practices Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung, medical chi kung for healing, or low level chi kung that gives little result over a long time, he also undergoes processes of cleansing, building and nourishing.

But if he practices gentle physical exercise, though he thinks it is chi kung, there will be no cleansing, building and nourishing because there is no energy flow.

The intensity and focus, however, are different. If he practices high level chi kung, the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing will be intense. If he practices low level chi kung, the processes may not be noticeable.

If his purpose of chi kung training is to overcome illness, and he chooses a good approach, like self-manifested chi movement, the focus will be on cleansing. If he wants to develop internal force to improve his martial art performance, and practices Golden Bridge, the focus will be on building. If he aspires to have a glimpse of Cosmic Reality, and chooses Merging with the Cosmos for his training, the focus will be on nourishing.

Practicing individually and practicing in a group will give him certain advantages and disadvantages.

When he practices individually, he has the advantage of regulating his practice according to his needs, and sometimes to his fancies. Not only he can choose the most appropriate exercise for his purpose, but also the process of cleansing, building or nourishing to focus on.

For example, if he wants to enhance his mental clarity, he can choose exercises like Cosmic Shower and Standing Meditation. He might not be able to do so if he practices in a group. He can choose to focus on cleansing to clear his mind of irrelevant thoughts, or on building to have a stronger mind.

When he is in an ecstatic state during Standing Meditation, he can remain

longer in the state if he wants to. If he practices in a group, he has to adjust to the others' needs.

The disadvantage is that he lacks group support, including the energy field of the group. If he is not knowledgeable or skillful enough to make wise decisions on his own, group support will be a great help. For some students, practicing in a group helps them to overcome a serious problem, i.e. worrying and intellectualizing on what to practice.

The energy field generated by the group sometimes acts as a catalyst for some students. Seeing other group members enjoying a chi flow may help some students to overcome their initial inhibition. When they are in doubt they can consult other group members. Group practice makes a training session lively.

When an advanced practitioner practices together with a beginner, his chi flow will help the beginner in all the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing. The effect is better if both operate at the same process. For example, if both are cleansing, the chi flow of the advanced practitioner will enhance the cleansing process of the beginner.

If they operate at different processes, the influence of the advanced practitioners on the beginner may be advantageous or disadvantageous depending on the situation.

For example, if the advanced practitioner is cleansing, it will be disadvantageous to the beginner if he is building at the same time as the bad energy of the advanced practitioner may flow into the beginner.

But if the advanced practitioner is building, and the beginner is cleansing, the influence on the beginner will be advantageous as the energy radiated from the advanced practitioner will help the beginner to cleanse better.

There will also be some effect on the advanced practitioner from the beginner when they practice together, but the effect is minimal.

When both are cleansing at the same time, the good energy flow of the beginner is not strong enough to affect the advanced practitioner, but will the bad energy cleansed out by the beginner be disadvantageous to the advanced practitioner?

This depends on various factors. If the difference of level between the two practitioners is not great, and the beginner cleanses out a lot of bad energy, some of the bad energy may be absorbed by the slightly advanced practitioner. But if the difference of level is great, the chi flow of the advanced practitioner will bounce off the bad energy of the beginner.

However, if the advanced practitioner is building, and the beginner is cleansing, the effect on the advanced practitioner can be harmful, especially if the difference of level between them is not great. If the difference is great, the harmful effect is minimal.

However, if the advanced practitioner, who is not knowledgeable in chi kung philosophy, is taking in energy to build, and the beginner is giving out bad



energy while cleansing, the greater the difference of level between them, the more harm it will be for the advanced practitioner.

If the advanced practitioner is knowledgeable, he should not build when another person cleanses. If he has to build, he should let his chi flow to flush out the surrounding bad energy.

## QUESTION 12

*We know the heart is the "emperor" organ, its condition affecting all other organs. My own feeling is that just as cleansing is a lifelong process, so too is opening one's heart.*

*Can Sifu kindly explain the importance of an open heart during the stages of cleansing, building and nourishing.*

*Are there any practical measures students can take to keep their hearts open during phases of difficult or deep cleansing, when they may not be able to smile from the heart as freely as usual. Or while building, to remain humble?*

*Could Sifu also comment on the "heart of confidence", as well as faith, in relation to cleansing, building and nourishing?*

— Sifu Fleur Chapman

Yes, opening one's heart is a lifelong process. This does not necessarily mean that an open heart will be close after some time and needs opening again, and the process goes on indefinitely.

Once we have developed the habit of keeping our heart open, it will remain open without much effort from us, though it may be close again due to some unforeseen circumstances, like being exposed to prolonged grief and disappointment. But when we sense it is close, we can reopen it again, and keep it open irrespective of the circumstances.

An open heart will enable a person to have a positive outlook in life, which in turn will enable him to view all circumstances positively. As perspective is often more important than reality, having a positive outlook will be a very important factor in making his life happy and meaningful.

He may be in a negative situation, but he still can have a positive perspective of it. His positive perspective may not change his present negative situation but it will much affect how the situation will turn out to be. It can also affect his present emotional, mental and spiritual well-being.

Let us examine one or two examples. Suppose he has lost his job and is in a difficult economic situation. Although there may be many different outlooks, all these can be classified into three categories: negative, neutral and positive.

He may feel that his boss and all other people are against him. Or he may not care at all, and wait for another job to present itself. Or he may take this as an opportunity to get a better job or become a boss himself. While one of the outcomes is likely to happen as well as his emotional, mental and spiritual well-being will depend greatly on whether he views his losing his present job negatively, neutrally or positively.

Suppose he is diagnosed with a so-called incurable disease. He may think he is going to die, or he may submit himself to a lifetime of medication, or he may start practicing a high-level chi kung like ours to cure himself and eventually

enjoy good health, vitality and longevity. Indeed, some people ended up being chi kung masters because they initially wanted to overcome their illness.

An open heart will give us a lot of benefits no matter what we do, including undergoing the processes of cleansing, building and nourishing. On the other hand, a close heart not only negate good results but may also turn benefits to harmful effects.

When a student is undergoing cleansing, some symptoms like pimples, rashes and pain may appear. If his heart is close, and despite knowing the philosophy of cleansing, he may stop practicing chi kung and thus miss the wonderful benefits that his continued practice will bring.

It is important to maintain an open heart when undergoing the process of building. If he closes his heart, especially when he practices high-level chi kung like ours, the tremendous energy developed from his training may harm his internal organs. If his heart is open, the tremendous energy will flow, making his organs healthy and strong.

Opening the heart is even more important during the process of nourishing. A close heart, which often results in negative thoughts, may cause him to abuse the high level of mind or spirit that he has attained. The law of karma is inevitable. Abusing his mental or spiritual power, though it may bring him some immediate benefits, will certainly end up with him living a miserable life.

If his heart is open, he will experience much peace and joy. Not only he will make his own life meaningful and rewarding, he will also enrich other people's lives.

Smiling from the heart, which we do every time we practice chi kung or Kungfu, is one of the best ways, if not the best way, to keep our heart open. During periods of difficulty, including deep cleansing, when students may not be able to smile from the heart as freely as usual, there are other ways to open the heart.

Practicing "Dancing Butterfly" is an excellent way. When chi flow opens the heart, which is natural result of this exercise, the student can start smiling from the heart to enhance the good result. Sometimes, students even laugh as if for no apparent reasons.

Another good exercise is "Separating Water", which opens the lungs as well as the heart. But this is a powerful exercise, and must be practiced with care.

Having good thoughts is another excellent way. When a student experiences deep cleansing or over-cleansing, while he may slow down his practice and thus the cleansing, he should also say to himself that despite the discomfort he may have, he is actually getting benefits. This will open his heart.

It is a two-way process. When you have good thoughts you open your heart. On the other hand, when your heart is open, you will have good thoughts.

It is important to remain humble when one is very successful in building. As I have mentioned a few times, becoming vain when one has become very powerful is a common cause of many advanced practitioners to fall.

An effective check-point for those who may become vain and then fall, is to remind themselves of the truth that even when they have become very powerful, they are still very far from the supreme attainment our arts can give, and that is attaining Enlightenment or returning to God the Holy Spirit.

They are not even near to becoming immortals who can roam heavens at will. Realizing these facts can help to check their vanity.

Another effective way to check their vanity is to remind themselves why do they practice the art, which has made them very powerful. Building tremendous force is a mean, not the end. The end is to lead a meaningful, rewarding life for ourselves and other people. Being vain will distract from this noble aim.

We in Shaolin Wahnam are indeed very lucky. Not only we understand the philosophy of cleansing, building and nourishing to attain our noble aims, we also have the techniques and skills to do so, and in a funful way.

## QUESTION 13

1. *Is it possible for chi kung healers of our school to induce such an intense cleansing in a person who is not practicing the Shaolin arts?*
2. *Could they influence the degree of cleansing, so it wouldn't be too much for them, especially for children?*
3. *Is the conscious perception of symptoms during cleansing also part of the cleansing.*
4. *And if not, would taking Western medicine (e.g. antidepressants against symptoms of depression during major cleansing) be counterproductive to the cleansing process?*

— Evelyn, Austria

Yes, it is possible for Shaolin Wahnam chi kung healers to induce an intense cleansing in a person who has not practiced our arts or any art.

How intense the cleansing will be depends on the skills of the healer as well as the co-operation of the patients. The healer must also regulate the intensity according to the nature and needs of the patients, like their age and the types of illness.

Even if a patient is uncooperative or hesitant a first, a skillful healer can overcome the initial hurdles and help the patient to have an intense cleansing. However, if the patient consciously or subconsciously do not want the healing, the healer will be unable to induce a cleansing.

In my early years of teaching when I also gave consultations, many patients had no previous chi kung experience at all. Not only I had to induce a chi flow in them which would start the process of cleansing to help them overcome their health problems, I had to do it fast, as most of them consulted me for only one session.

In some cases, exercises from Eighteen Lohan Hands which I normally used were not fast enough to induce a chi flow, so I had to devise other exercises. These other exercises were later compiled into the Eighteen Therapeutic Exercises for those attending my Chi Kung Healing Course. They are now called the Eighteen Jewels because they also had other benefits besides therapeutic purposes.

There was one occasion in Spain when I returned the healing fee to a patient and asked her to leave because she did not follow my instructions. I had repeatedly asked her to perform the therapeutic exercises faster, but thinking that she was smarter than the healer though she probably did not mean to be disrespectful, she continued to perform the exercises slowly.

More interesting were occasions when patients, especially those with heart problems, moved faster in their chi flow movements than I thought comfortable and safe. I was about to ask them to slow down their chi flow movements when I noticed a smile in their face, indicating that not only they were enjoying themselves but also the cleansing was doing them good. They all recovered from their health problems.

The healer can influence the degree of cleansing in the patients irrespective of their age.

Before the start of the healing session, the healer should decide on the type of therapeutic exercises to use and the level of chi kung movements that brings about cleansing. He may, of course, make modifications or changes when he sees fit.

During the process of chi flow movements, the healer can influence the degree of cleansing. He can do so by advising his patients, which is usually the case, or by applying various methods if the patients fail to slow down themselves.

An effective method is to place his palm a short distance over the patients' dan tian and bring their chi flow to be focused there. A more drastic method is to dot patients' vital points to stop their chi flow.

Once a student's energy flow was very vigorous and he was in a state of panic, and could not stop it. I dotted his vital point behind his back, and the vigorous chi flow stopped immediately. This was dim mark, and must be performed by a master who knew what he was doing. I had to restore his normal chi flow after that, or else he could be in serious trouble.

But for healers who are not trained in dim mark, an effective method, though still drastic, is to ask the patient to fall himself against a safe sofa, or to go onto the ground. This would distort his normal chi flow, but would stop him moving uncontrollably. The healer should then ask the patient to have a gentle chi flow to restore his normal chi flow.

It is obvious that a chi kung healer has great responsibilities and must be properly trained. It is unethical to attempt to heal others when one is not properly trained.

A patient may or may not be conscious of relevant symptoms during cleansing. Hence conscious perception of symptoms during or after cleansing is not part of cleansing though many practitioners are usually conscious of them.

Some common symptoms that many practitioners are conscious of include feeling fresher and more energetic as a result of chi kung practice. They may not be aware that it is the cleansing process of their chi kung practice that gives them these pleasant feelings.

Sometimes they may feel slight pain or some slight negative emotions coming out. These are the result of their chi flow cleansing out their blockage and negative emotions. If it is over-cleansing, they may feel uncomfortable, in which case they should slow down their practice and be involved in more outdoors physical activities.

Sometimes there may be rashes or pimples surfacing at their skin, or they may be passing out gas and their breath may be smelly. These are signs that their chi flow is cleansing out rubbish from their body.

Taking Western medicine to suppress these symptoms, like antidepressants against symptoms of depression by those who feel depressed or

pharmaceutical drugs to subdue these symptoms due to drastic over-cleansing is counterproductive. However, taking pain-killers in reasonable amount to overcome pain is acceptable.

Chi kung practitioners should have some knowledge about cleansing as well building and nourishing to derive the best benefits from their training. When they are in doubt they should ask their sifu.

A general guideline is that if they feel well despite the unpleasant symptoms, they are fine. The unpleasant symptoms are probably due to over-cleansing. If they feel terrible, it is likely that they have practiced wrongly.

Another good guideline is that if they have been feeling well all the while, but suddenly feel uncomfortable, it is likely to be over-cleansing. If they feel painful and nauseous right from the start of their training, it is likely they have practiced wrongly.

## QUESTION 14

*As a result of cleansing blockages at the organ and marrow level (which is deemed to be the "karmic level"), can one's external life and circumstance change?*

*Hypothetically, could a job appear out of nowhere after a thorough cleansing of the stomach. Could a new relationship manifest as a result of cleansing the kidneys. Could a noisy neighbor all of a sudden move in next door to test your patience after you have cleansed your liver. Of course, these examples would be dependent on the individual's karmic standing since not everyone is the same.*

*Interestingly, Vedic astrology correlates each internal organ and body parts to a specific planet and deity. Each planet has its own karmic lesson to teach. These same planets and deities that rule the internal organs also rule other parts of life, including wealth, relationships, spirituality, etc.*

— Stephen

Yes, as a result of cleansing, one's life certainly changes. The cleansing is not just limited to the organ and marrow levels, which are closely related to karmic effects, but applicable at all levels. The changes are not just external and concern circumstances, but can be internal and concern all aspects of his life, like his health and aspirations.

But whether a job would suddenly appear, a new relationship manifest would manifest, or a noisy neighbor would move in next door to test his patience, would depend on other aspects of his karma matrix. If these circumstances really happen, his reaction to them would be different between when he is blocked and when he is cleansed.

If his stomach system is blocked, a person is likely to be anxious. When he is full of anxiety, he is less likely to search for a job he desires. Even if such a job appears, he is less likely to make good use of the opportunity when he is full of anxiety.

On the other hand, if cleansing successfully clear away his anxiety, he is in a better position to find a desirable job, and when it occurs, he is more like to make good use of the opportunity. If the job is not available, he will look for one or create one. Others not understanding the background philosophy of cleansing, may think that the job appears out of nowhere.

If the kidney system of a person is blocked, he is likely to be afraid. Even when other karmic forces are favorable to cause a relationship to happen, he may be afraid to enter into it. But if cleansing clears away his fear, when a relationship occurs, he can enter into it with confidence.

Even when his present karma may not be ready for him to have a relationship, but after cleansing his kidney systems and removing his fear, if he desires a relationship, he will be confident enough to find or create one. Others not knowing the intricate forces of karma, may think that the relationship manifests as a result of his cleansing his kidneys.



When a person's liver is blocked, he is prone to anger and aggression. If a noisy neighbor moves in next door, he is more likely to have a quarrel with the neighbor than had his liver be cleansed. If he does not have a noisy neighbor to quarrel with, he may quarrel with other people.

But if his liver is cleansed, he is more likely to be tolerant of other people, regardless of whether they are his noisy neighbors. Cleansing affects not just his liver but all other parts of his body, including giving him better mental clarity.

Especially if he has taken some courses on the 36 Strategies, with his mental clarity, confidence and other benefits from his chi kung training, he may change a noise neighbor to a helpful one for mutual benefit.

Chi kung is more down to earth, and less concerned with metaphysical affairs as in Vedic astrology. These metaphysical affairs which have direct practical effects on one's life are dealt with in feng shui, which literally means "wind-water", but figuratively means a knowledge and application of how the energy of surrounding space and time affects a person's well being.

Relatively, while feng shui deals with energy of the surrounding, chi kung deals with energy of the individual.

For example, if a person's house is located with a hill as background and open space in front, it is considered to have good feng-shui, as the arrangement of the surrounding is such that good energy can flow freely around his house.

In chi kung, if his meridians are clear he will have good health and vitality, because the arrangement of his body is such that good energy can flow freely in him.

## QUESTION 15

*Did St Francis of Assisi undergo cleansing, building and nourishing in his lifetime through prayer and sincere devotion to God?*

— Kevin

Yes, I believe St Francis of Assisi underwent cleansing, building and nourishing through prayer and sincere devotion to God, though he might not have heard of these terms nor had he practiced chi kung.

In a wide sense, prayer and devotion to God may be considered chi kung, which means art of energy, as both prayer and devotion to God involve management of energy for some noble benefits.

When a person prays, he enters into a heightened level of consciousness, which results in good energy flow, though it may not be manifested as external chi flow movements. In non-religious terms, the same reality can be described as entering into a chi kung state of mind, and remaining to be flowingly still.

When a person is devoted to God, he attains a high level of spirituality, and at very high levels he becomes one with God. In non-religious terms, the same reality can be described as attaining a high level of mindfulness, and at very high levels his personal mind is united with Universal Mind.

At lower levels of prayer and devotion to God, which may be described in non-religious terms as entering a chi kung state of mind that generates an energy flow, St Francis or anyone in a similar religious condition underwent cleansing. The cleansing was gentle and gradual, unlike what some of our Shaolin Wahnam practitioners may experience in vigorous chi flow.

At middle levels of prayer and devotion to God, which may be described in non-religious terms as developing mental clarity and internal force, St Francis or anyone in a similar religious condition underwent building. The building was gentle and gradual, unlike what some of our Shaolin Wahnam practitioners may experience in powerful sets like Flowing Water Floating Clouds and Iron Wire.

At the highest levels of prayer and devotion to God, which may be described in non-religious terms as expanding into the Cosmos, St Francis or anyone in a similar religious condition underwent nourishing. The process may be gradual or sudden, like many of our Shaolin Wahnam practitioners experience when they found themselves everywhere and nowhere in courses like Merging with the Cosmos and the Big Universe.

## QUESTION 16

*My understanding is that in the case of karmic or other long term blockages, (and perhaps all blockages), the root cause of continued persistence of the condition is the mind's subconscious attachment by habit to the disharmonious state. This is why following the instruction to let go during chi flow is of the utmost importance.*

*From my experience, I have found it generally quite easy to be aware of long term blockages, but often very difficult to really let go of them, even in very strong chi flow. Often, in chi flow, the blockage can even be more apparent to the mind than under normal everyday conditions. Sometimes there is even a temptation to become frustrated, which I know is completely counterproductive!*

*So my question is, firstly, is it the skill of chi flow, or the actual skill of letting go that is main to clear the blockage and, secondly, what can we do to get better at letting go and, if we did, would this potentially reduce the time required to clear long term blockages?*

— Omar

Thank you for this profound question which not only has much philosophical value but also many practical benefits.

I am not sure whether it is true that a person's blockage, karmic or otherwise, continues for a long time because subconsciously he has attached himself by habit to a disharmonious state, or because of other reasons.

I am an optimist, hence I believe that it is more likely consciously or subconsciously he would prefer a harmonious state instead of a disharmonious one. But despite his preference he still has a blockage due to some other factors.

One possible factor is that the event that brought about this blockage, which happened in a past life, was so dramatic that the blockage has remained in his unconsciousness though he might have lived many other lives after that, and though he may not consciously realize it in this present life. This blockage is therefore karmic.

Letting go is of course very important, but there are different levels of letting go. In normal chi kung practice, when one lets go, it is at the conscious level of the present life. If the cause of a blockage was a dramatic event in a past life, letting go in the present life may not be powerful enough to clear the blockage in the subconscious caused in a past life. Often the person may not know the blockage or its cause, he only knows the symptoms.

I have helped a few people with these deep problems. A managing director of a successful company was always sad. He knew he should not be sad. There were no obvious reasons why he should not be happy. He was healthy, had a good family life and his business was successful. Still he was sad, often very sad.

He knew he had a blockage but he did not know what it was and what caused it. He wanted to clear the blockage but he did not know what to do. He wanted

very much to let go of his sadness, in fact to let go of anything that blocked his smooth flow of life.

I led him back to one of his past lives. He was a general in a battlefield holding a sword. There were countless dead bodies around him. He was the only survival. He told me he led his army to suicide. He cried. This experience cleared the blockage in his sub-consciousness. After this he could lead a normal happy life.

In another case a housewife always felt cold even in the midst of hot summer. She had seen a lot of doctors, taken a lot of medical tests and undergone a lot of treatments, but she still felt very cold.

I led her back to one of her past lives. She described that it was very dark and she was very cold. She was in a box, and some people were carrying the box. She described her own physical death in a coffin.

That reliving her past life cleared the blockage. After the experience she no longer felt cold, and could lead a normal happy life.

Incidentally these two real-life experiences are excellent illustrations that we never die. We may change our physical bodies, but our soul or consciousness lives on.

It is also a reminder that what a person's life will be depends on his karma. The three factors that shape karma according to the order of importance are thoughts, speech and deeds. Hence, you can ensure a good life in future by having good thoughts, good speech and good deeds.

As in doing other things, don't think of letting go of your blockage and don't intellectualize on how to do it. Just do it. Just let go of your blockage, regardless of whether you have a strong chi flow, a weak chi flow or any chi flow. It may be difficult, but it can be done.

Your chi flow may or may not clear away your blockage. Your chi flow and your letting go of your blockage are two different issues, though they are related.

For example, even when you cling on to your blockage, if your chi flow is powerful enough it can clear the blockage away. On the other hand, even when your chi flow is powerful and you let go of your blockage, your chi flow may not clear it away.

These examples are theoretical. In real life, if your chi flow is powerful, and you let go of your blockage, it is likely that your blockage will be cleared.

But irrespective of whether your blockage is cleared by your chi flow, you should let it go. If you cling onto it, like perceiving it during your chi flow, it is more likely to stay. If you let it go, like not thinking or intellectualizing on it, it is likely to go away, even when there is no chi flow. Even if it still remains, if you do not cling onto it, it will not cause you harm, at least not in your conscious living.

You are right that it is counterproductive to fall into the temptation of being frustrated with your blockage - even to the extent of glamorizing it. It is like a martial art instructor glamorizing the injuries he has sustained in fighting, a

lovelorn glamorizing that the girl he chased after married another man, or a loser glamorizing that he never succeeded in anything he did.

They glamorize their defeat. They think, wrongly of course, that it is great to be injured, to be rejected in love, and to fail in all endeavors. You are smarter than this. Grab your frustration and throw it away. Your blockage, real or imagined, may soon follow suit too.

Chi flow, letting go and clearing blockage are different skills, though they influence one another. When a person experiences a chi flow, it does not necessarily mean that he has let go of past events, or he has cleared his blockage. When he lets go of past events, it does not necessarily mean that he has experienced a chi flow, or he no longer has blockage. When he has cleared his blockage, it does not necessarily mean that he has had a chi flow, or he has let go of past events.

The above are theoretical statements of facts. In practice, when one has a chi flow and has let go, he is more likely to clear his blockage. Whether chi flow or letting go is more instrumental in clearing blockage depends on the relative strength of the three factors involved.

For example, if the chi flow is very powerful, even when a person does not let go, but the blockage is not strong, it can be cleared away. If he lets go, even when there is no chi flow, and the blockage is not strong, it can be cleared away. Even when there is chi flow and he lets go, if the blockage is strong, it may not be cleared away.

Nevertheless, presuming all other factors were equal, letting go is most important in clearing blockage.

Letting go is simple, but may not be easy. Just do it. Don't worry about how to let go, or which is the best way to let go. Don't intellectualize on the mechanics of letting go, or what would happen if you do not let go. Just let go.

An analogy will be useful. Suppose you are holding a hot potato in your hand. Don't worry about how to let go of the hot potato, or which is the best method to let it go. Don't intellectualize on the mechanics of letting go the hot potato, or what would happen if you keep holding it in your hands. Just let go of the hot potato. It is the same as a blockage.

Of course, if you let go of your blockage, you will certainly reduce the time required to clear it, regardless of whether it is long-term or recent. You may even clear it immediately.