

In the previous issue of NMHM we started telling how a Chi Kung class led by Grand Master Gin Foon Mark takes place. Here we go on: beyond giving some more details about peculiarities of Six Healing Sounds Chi Kung, we will focus mainly on sounds associated to heart and liver.

As known, Chi Kung has been practiced in China since thousands of years ago, and there are many different typologies and classifications: one of the most reliable distinguishes between medical, martial and healthy Chi Kung.

To the last group belongs Chi Kung from the *lineage* of Master Mark, developed specifically to bring healing to the organs of heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, stomach and triple Heater¹.

Analyzing the two terms – Chi (or Qi) and Kung (or Gong)² – that make up this fascinating ideogram, it soon comes up the complexity of the expressed concept. This obstacle shows up every time, actually, while translating eastern languages: ideograms often describe an idea, an abstraction.

The first character, *Chi*, besides having a complex etymology that evolved through the centuries, represents a basic concept in the philosophical, medical, religious and spiritual Chinese universe. In extreme synthesis it can be described as breath, breathing or energy or, even better, as “invisible life energy”. Its ideogram is made up by a rice grain and steam, by essence or fragrance released during its cooking. It is evident here the alternation between the earthly element yang and the heavenly yin.

Same thing for *Kung* which is made up by two elements, that point respectively to work and to the idea of power/strength.

The first symbol represents heaven and earth, in this case united by man, while the second represents a plough – and for extension the idea of force – and the human participation to the interconnection between heaven and earth. For this reason it is about, as a whole, a “meritorious work”, made with commitment and perseverance, and the exercises produce a series of enjoyable sensations: agility, clarity, readiness, serenity and balance.

The full name Chi Kung (QiGong), referred to practicing techniques, points actually to the work that can be done to affect Chi: both on a physical plane – body, breathing and internal organs – and on a spiritual plane, that is on ourselves, internally, and towards the outer world. The final result is that of a harmonization of man with heaven and earth.

After this brief but essential premise, we start to unveil in detail the single sounds and the according associated internal organs.

During class, Master Mark begins always from the exercises linked to heart: he says often “Love your Heart” during the massage.

While breathing out, make the sound “Caw”³: before pronouncing it, the mouth has to be opened wide enough (the Master mimics putting index and middle finger together towards the open mouth, repeating “two fingers” as a self-check method) and the tongue has to be put down, behind the lower teeth, after having ingested saliva.

The sound is made tensing the abdomen: it is slow and even and comes from diaphragm. Mind and concentration must be used to control air emission.

The Master also recommends – in expiration phase – to push and keep both thumbs and first toes downwards. Body must be relaxed and never contracted or tensed. Precise movements are to be made too, always slowly and naturally, that can be executed both standing or sitting to work on *Chi*; the heart is so stimulated by the combination between sound and movement while exceeding heat and toxins are expelled.

“This is *hapku*”, says Master Mark while he links his hands in the space between thumb and index, and starts massaging the part: pushing a little on the *hapku* points helps improving circulation and breathing, relaxes the nerves and dims headache.

At the end of every exercise, the Master wants to know if it was correctly understood and asks the students if they have any questions. During class he wants the practitioners to be ok and to feel always comfortable; for this reason he even makes jokes and tells some anecdote to improve the mood of the class. Before moving to the next organ to work on, he reminds that it's better to do some transition movements during the pause between all of the exercises.

“*Shhh*”: the sound linked to liver has to be given off like if trying to calm down a baby or to shut up someone. If correctly executed, this sound affects the *Renzhong* point, placed below the nose. The tongue is down, teeth match but lips are kept separate, shoulders are relaxed while hands lie on the

Dan Tian area (men should have the right hand above the left, the opposite for women), and buttocks have to be tightened while breathing out.

The class ends with a series of basic movements that involve some body parts: rubbing against the scalp, “playing the heavenly drums”, stroking face, eyes, nose, ears and neck, exercises for kidneys, shoulders and knees, and finally a light massage to *Dan Tian*.

Lastly, the Master stays focused, removes his glasses, stops for a moment and asks to the class: “Good?” or “Ok?”... but looking at the faces of his students, he already knows the answer to this rhetorical question.

Chi Kung brings only psycho-physical benefits and has not any negative effect nor contraindication, however there are some precautions, set to improve the effects of practice. For example, it is better to practice in early morning or in late night, because some hours grant more effectiveness to corresponding organs. In both cases it is better to have not a heavy stomach because of a plentiful and caloric meal. It is also discouraged to take in substances like alcoholics, drugs and medicines: but this recommendation is typical of the Chinese medical/philosophical conception, of which Chi Kung practice is part, in so much as it is disliked to ingest adverse and non-natural substances in the organism, so this can be considered a general concept. Lastly, it is better not to practice sexual activity in the 24 hours before and after practice.

The last advise is probably the most important one, and it belongs to mental attitude: it is fundamental to drop negative thoughts, fears and worries. “Focused mind”, says the Master: so it is mandatory to do one’s best to eliminate distractions and focus instead on the sensations generated by body movements and sounds. To the least, mind should follow and lead the path of the breath to improve the energy flow.

All of that, we say again, to get the best possible results!

It is worth reminding, lastly, that the Six Healing Sounds Chi Kung of Master Mark’s *lineage* is of the healthy kind, however it can also be martial: this peculiar trait will be analyzed in the next issues of NMHM.

(NOTES)

Note 1: The *Sanjiao* (Triple Heater) is considered one of the six bowels, however it has unique traits: it is a bowel/function, in relation with all of the other organs and bowels, that are under its direction/protection.

Note 2: In Wade-Giles or in PinYin translation (the latter between brackets).

Note 3: The phonetic spelling, pronounced according to English phonetics, can also be *Cau*, *Cauh*, or *Cawh*.

TABLE

	Heart	Liver
Sound (pronounced according to English phonetics)	<i>"Caw"</i> (or <i>"Cau"</i>)	<i>"Shhh"</i>
Function	Controls all of the other organs, because it rules blood circulation.	Contains blood and rules its circulating amount.
Function for TCM	Contains and keeps the spirit; controls mental and emotive activities and spirituality. Spirit, memory, thought and sleep are all ruled by heart.	Contains soul and rules the flow of life energy.
Associated Organ	Large intestine	Gall-bladder
Element	Fire	Wood
Season	Summer	Spring
Planet	Mars	Jupiter
Taste	Bitter	Acid
Color	Red	Green
Body part	Tongue	Eyes
Sense	Taste	Sight
Positive emotion	Joy	Kindness
Negative emotion	Violence	Rage