

countries and were able to take root there.

The Qi practices of the West are a mixture of Daoist, Buddhist, Hinduist and Western-Esoteric thoughts.

Criticism

- The concept of Qi power is of a magical-spiritual kind and purely speculative. It is thus a religious idea. There does not exist any factual proof for either the real existence of a Qi power, or for the energy meridians within the body, nor for so-called chakras.
- The spread of this practice is actively linked to the New Age Movement, which encourages everything, that serves a mixture of cultures and religions and clearly prefers eastern ideas.
- Therapeutic results of all Qi oriented therapies, like acupuncture, acupressure, shiatsu, qi gong, tai chi etc, can also be explained without accepting a cosmic all encompassing life force named Qi. Mostly they have to do with simple relaxation and breathing exercises, sometimes linked to various forms of touch.

- From a Christian viewpoint, it must be considered negative, that while using such treatments a religious concept is also transmitted at the same time, which is irreconcilable with the Christian Faith.

Sources (selection):

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On the subject of New Age, there is an informative document issued by the Church:

“Jesus Christ, the bearer of the waters of life”. Considerations on New Age from a Christian viewpoint. Rome 2003. This document can be downloaded via the following internet address: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html

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Catchword

Qi Gong
Tai Chi and Co...

Practices from China, like Acupuncture, Acupressure, Qigong, Tai Chi, Feng Shui, Tuina or their Japanese forms like Shiatsu, Reiki and an uncountable number of modern derivatives of these therapies are inundating our society.

As different as they may be from each other, they have one thing in common: they are all based upon a manipulable force or power named Qi. What do we know about this Qi, what world view is behind it, has it to do with religion? These are questions which also are important for Christians.

Qi falls within the world view of Daoism, (and the world view of the western esoteric world) and takes up the place where the Christian faith puts its belief in a personal God. In the Christian view, the universe is not upheld and sustained by an impersonal force, but by the creative will of the loving God. The force of life is not an energy, which comes from nature, but an inconceivable, stupefying free gift of God.

The Qi Concept

Qi is a fundamental concept of the Chinese culture and philosophy and forms the basis of the religious thought processes in Daoism. In the thinking of Daoism, Dao is the unrecognisable and unmentionable basic root of all Being. Dao and Qi cannot really be separated. Here the creation of the world is imagined as a intense density, or a nebulous hazy darkening of the Qi. From this uniform state all matter penetrating life originates through a conglomerati-

on of this very matter. Human life too is seen as nothing other than a conglomeration of Qi. Where there is Qi, there is life, if here is no Qi, there is death. Everything alive only lives through Qi. Sometimes in recent years, Qi or Tai Ch'i is translated

Qi is a culturally specific concept, which is totally linked to the Chinese view of the world and cannot be translated into any concept of any western language.

The concept of Qi is the basis of the religious thought processes of Daoism.

with words like: “energy flow”, “air”, or “breath”. Daoism in its ultimate truth does not recognise a Creator God, but only the unmentionable, which enters the power of Qi, into the touchable things.

Qi, the Health Movement and Chinese Medicine

In contrast to Buddhism, the dissolution of the individual within the Dao at the end of its earthly existence, is not deemed something to strive for. A long life and good health is thus a religious goal. The desire for bodily immortality, which at certain times definitely came to the fore, led to a search for the pill of eternal life, for immortality, or for methods as to how man himself can bring forth from within himself an essence or elixir of immortality. Part of this is a striving to “eat” or ingest Qi in its purest form, or rather to keep the life preserving Qi in one’s own body. The many diverse practices and

Qi-Gong

Qi Gong translated means “working with Qi”. It is a Chinese exercise in movement and meditation, which is also an intrinsic part of traditional Chinese medicine. The concept of Qi Gong results from the religious and philosophical union within a Daoist world view. Through these exercises, the power of Qi should be received to strengthen the person and to gain health and well being. There are more than 3600 different forms of Qi Gong. They contain purely bodily exercises, as well as spiritistic-magical practices. Some forms are also considered with a great deal of criticism by Chinese scientists, since it is known that they can cause diverse forms of psychosis.

Tai Chi

Tai Ch'i – also known as shadow boxing – means “highest energy”. Even though it is claimed, that it comes from a century old tradition, in reality Tai Ch'i was only developed within the 19th century. By extremely slow bodily movements – which express a stylised battle with an imaginary foe – the flow of Ch'i is meant to be stimulated.

therapies of the Qi movement are all aimed at receiving within oneself this form of life giving energy, or to use and guide it.

Chinese medicine assumes, that the flow of Qi and its changes are responsible for well being or illnesses. Therapies thus primarily aim at keeping in balance the Qi flow by means of imaginary guidelines, the so-called “meridians”.

Qi and Western Esoteric Thinking.

The diverse Qi practices were forbidden in Mao's Communist China, due to their religious meaning. Within the context of the esoteric boom – from the 1970ies onward - many of those practices were imported into western



Within the western esoteric world the Chinese Qi concept is often mixed with other elements, for instance with the Hinduistic chakra ideas.

