

## Falun Gong and Health Benefits

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(**Clearwisdom.net**) Falun Gong, also called Falun Dafa, is a high-level cultivation practice guided by the characteristics of the universe – Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance. The practice encompasses the cultivation of mind and body. Cultivating the mind involves improving one's character and morality in daily life based on the principles inherent in Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, while cultivating the body involves doing five sets of gentle exercises to improve one's fitness.

After Master Li Hongzhi first taught Falun Gong to the public in 1992, the number of practitioners increased dramatically. According to an early 1999 Chinese government report, about 70 to 100 million people practiced Falun Gong at that time. Since then, Falun Gong has grown quickly and is currently practiced in more than 90 countries and regions, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, other Asian countries, Europe, North America, South America, and Australia.

Alternative health regimens in Western countries are developing very fast. According to a 1998 survey conducted by David Eisenberg and his colleagues from Harvard Medical School and other medical institutions, nearly 630 million people were using alternative medicine in the United States, exceeding the number of patients who visited primary care physicians. The expenditures for alternative medicine therapies were estimated to be more than 20 billion US dollars, with at least 12 billion paid by the patients themselves. [1]

According to a 2002 survey, up to 60% of cancer patients in Europe chose alternative remedies such as special diets, vitamin supplements, herbal remedies, or acupuncture. In the United States, more than 80% of cancer patients used alternative medicine. It is estimated that, globally, expenditures for alternative therapies and medicine for cancer patients is as high as 18 billion US dollars annually.

Except for modern Western medicine, among all forms of alternative medicine, traditional Chinese medicine is the most prominent. Acupuncture has already been widely acknowledged. Many Western medicine researchers have shown great interest in the "mind and body self-healing systems" of traditional Chinese culture, specifically Qigong practice. Many researchers have traveled to China to study this subject. Many of them investigated the actual healing effects of Qigong and searched for convincing evidence in this area. They wanted to find out that whether Qigong practice was effective in terms of self-healing on a large scale, not only for a few individual cases. The results from the following investigations in Mainland China, North America, and Taiwan provide valuable information on the healing effects of Falun Gong.

### I. 1998 Falun Gong Health Survey in Mainland China

Falun Gong spread the fastest in Mainland China and became the most popular among all the Qigong practices in terms of healing and improving fitness. This elicited great attention from the medical community and the Chinese government. In response to the requirements from the 1998 National Sports Commission investigation of all the Qigong practices popular in China at the time, medical researchers conducted a survey. The results came from Beijing, Wuhan City, Dalian City, Guangdong Province, and other areas, including Nanchang City, Guangxi Province, and Anhui

Province. The study involved a primary health survey of Falun Gong practitioners at local practice sites. The researchers sent out survey forms to more than ten thousand Falun Gong practitioners from five districts in Beijing; 12.5 thousand practitioners from ten cities in Guangdong Province; 2,005 practitioners from more than 50 practice sites in Wuhan; and more than 6,000 practitioners in Dalian. These areas had the highest population densities and the most Falun Gong practitioners, so it was a relatively comprehensive representation of the overall situation of Falun Gong practitioners in Mainland China. Nearly 35 thousand practitioners filled out the survey, which resulted in the most systematic and complete large-scale investigation of the healing effects of Qigong practices. [3]

The survey included general information from the practitioners such as gender, age, and the length of time practicing Falun Gong. A survey from Wuhan and the practice site at Zizhuyuan Park in Beijing also listed practitioners' education level. These surveys were considered a census among the practitioners.

The results revealed that a wide variety of socio-economic classes and those with different levels of education practiced Falun Gong. 72.9% were female, 62.1% were over 50 years old, and more than 90% had multiple health problems before practicing Falun Gong. This suggests that most practitioners started practicing Falun Gong to heal illnesses and improve fitness.

This survey also collected information regarding changes in health, comparing health conditions before and after practicing Falun Gong. Of the up to 31,030 people (about 90.3% of the participants) who had various illnesses before the practice—ranging from digestive problems, bone and joint problems, and cardiovascular diseases—the researchers divided the results into three categories: full recovery, alleviation of disease symptoms, and no change. In Guangdong Province, Beijing, and Dalian, 23,619 out of 28,517 (82.7%) practitioners had full recovery of all illnesses; 4,616 (16.2%) had some improvement; and 336 (1.2%) practitioners experienced no changes. The overall effectiveness of Falun Gong practice in healing illnesses in those areas was 98.8%.

For Wuhan City and at the Zizhuyuan Park practice site in Beijing, the researchers classified their results based on illness categories. Among the 2,483 practitioners who had more than one illness before the practice, the researchers tallied a total of 6,772 symptoms, 4,926 (72.7%) of which completely disappeared after the practice; 1,712 (25.3%) were alleviated, 133 (1.96%) remained unchanged, and only 1 (0.04%) got worse. The overall effectiveness of the practice's health benefits recorded in Wuhan and at Beijing's Zizhuyuan Park was 98.0%. In summary, the total effectiveness of Falun Gong in healing illnesses across Mainland China exceeded 98%.

This health survey also indicated that the participants' mental condition improved significantly after practicing Falun Gong. 86.5% of the practitioners in Beijing and Guangdong Province saw remarkable improvement in their character and level of morality. In a special survey conducted among more than 10 thousand practitioners in Beijing, the researchers concentrated on practitioners who were in good health before the practice. Their results indicated that 57.9% of the practitioners had further improvements, and 88.4% of the practitioners' mental health became notably more positive. Another important finding was that after practicing Falun Gong, most of the practitioners quit their bad habits. For example, 99.5% of the practitioners in Wuhan quit smoking, drinking, and gambling. Modern medicine still lacks successful treatment for addiction, which emphasizes why these results are quite remarkable. The survey also indicated that on average, every practitioner saved more than 2,600 [yuan](#) on medical expenses annually, suggesting evident financial benefits for society.

## II. 1999 Falun Gong Health Survey in North America

Inspired by the results of Falun Gong health surveys conducted in China, several medical researchers conducted a small-scale health survey of Falun Gong practitioners in North America in 1999. In consideration of the more complex nature of the make-up of the people in North America, and that fact that most of the practitioners in North America have advanced education, the researchers added “level of education” to the questionnaire and also added “smoking history” to estimate the percentage of people who gave up smoking after practicing Falun Gong. As for the general improvement of health conditions, the researchers made use of some of the questions the US National Health Bureau used in its "National Health Survey" of adults. The researchers e-mailed their questionnaire to Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and Canada. 235 practitioners responded and participated in the survey, of which 202 were from the United States, 32 from Canada, and one from another country. The statistics showed that the practitioners in North America were relatively younger, with an average age of 38.9 (the standard error is 13.6, and the ages ranged from 4 to 78); 97% were Asian and 3% were Caucasian; the distribution of gender was relatively even, with 58.3% female and 41.7% male. Over 80% had advanced degrees in education, and almost 50% had a Master's or PhD degree. 18 practitioners were smokers before beginning the practice; all of whom quit smoking after beginning the practice, with an average time to quit of 4.58 days. 103 practitioners consumed alcohol before the practice; 100 of them quit drinking after taking up the practice; two cases drank less than three drinks per week, and one person did not reply to the question.

Table 1 shows changes in health before and after practicing Falun Gong, with 224 practitioners experiencing remarkable improvement. The questionnaire also asked the practitioners to fill out their diagnosed health problems before practice and improvements after practice (Table 2). The statistical results were consistent with the 1998 Beijing results. After practicing Falun Gong, many severe illnesses such as cancer or heart ailments were cured or showed great improvement. Some chronic diseases such as diabetes, hepatitis, or allergic diseases were also cured or improved. As indicated by Table 3, even the non-physician-diagnosed pain symptoms and conditions of discomfort saw distinct improvements.

**Table 1. Comparison of Health Conditions Before and After Practice**

(Number of practitioners)		After practice					Total
		Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	
Before practice	Excellent	4	0	0	0	0	4
	Very good	23	8	0	0	0	31
	Good	31	27	3	0	0	61
	Fair	23	28	10	0	0	61
	Poor	35	28	3	1	0	67
Total		116	91	16	1	0	224

**Table 2. Statistics on Improvement of Diseases After Practice**

	Total Number of Disease Cases					
Type of Disease	Total Recovery	Marked Improvement	Improved	No Change	Getting Worse	Total
High Blood Pressure	7	5	1	1	0	14
Heart Disease	14	5	0	0	0	19
Stroke	1	2	0	0	0	3
Emphysema or Asthma	10	2	0	0	0	12
Alimentary Canal Ulcer	35	9	1	0	0	45
Cancer	4	2	0	0	0	6
Diabetes & High cholesterol	2	2	1	0	0	5
Pollenosis (Hay Fever)	23	2	0	0	0	25
Sinusitis	13	2	1	0	0	16
Chronic Bronchitis	8	2	0	0	0	10
Kidney Failure	13	3	1	0	0	17
Hepatitis & Other Liver Related Diseases	11	3	0	0	0	14
Other Diseases	40	18	2	1	0	61

**Table 3. Statistics on the Improvement of Discomfort and Pain**

	Total Number of Cases					
Symptoms of Upset	Total Recovery	Marked Improvement	Improved	No Change	Getting Worse	Total
Joints and the Surrounding Areas Discomfort Such As Pain, Stiffness & Swelling	43	12	2	1	0	48
Pain Such As Backache, Muscle Ache, Headaches and Migraine Headaches	74	14	4	7	0	99
Insomnia, Hearing Impairments	2	0	0	1	0	3
Chronic Fatigue	40	8	3	0	0	51
Other Symptoms Not Diagnosed by Doctors	40	18	2	1	0	61

This health survey report reveals that practicing Falun Gong is beneficial to health. After practicing, many chronic illnesses which practitioners had previously suffered from completely disappeared, some experienced reduced symptoms, and smokers quit smoking. By analyzing this data using a statistical model, the results indicate that the longer the participants practiced Falun Gong, the more health improvement they experienced.

### **III. 2002 Survey of Falun Gong's Healing Effects in Taiwan**

In view of increasing national health care expenditures and the government taking on an additional load, improving health while minimizing public expenditures has become an important issue.

During the last few decades, Qigong as part of China's traditional culture has been shown to have an important, positive impact, and is indeed an inexpensive way to enhance health. Falun Gong is becoming increasingly popular.

How effective is Falun Gong?

Dr. Hu Yuhui, from the Department of Economics at National Taiwan University, has researched medical economics for many years. She is also a Falun Gong practitioner. Drawing on her personal experiences and professional prestige, and with support from the Taiwan Falun Dafa Association, Dr. Hu completed a joint survey with other medical personnel on how the practice of Qigong improves the quality of health. This academic research targeted case histories of Falun Gong practitioners.

By way of a stratified sampling, Dr. Hu selected 20% of towns and cities for her research. Of the questionnaires she distributed, 1,210 (75%) were answered and returned. Conclusions were based on statistical analysis. The report emphasized that after people started practicing Falun Gong, 72% used their medical card only once per year, down almost 50% from the past. The survey also showed that Falun Gong had a significant effect in helping people quit bad habits. 81% of the respondents quit smoking, 77% quit drinking, 85% quit gambling, and 85% also completely stopped their habit of chewing betel nuts. This data validates the positive and significant role of Falun Gong in everyday society.

Dr. Hu emphasized further that the research also shows that Falun Gong offers great psychological and mental benefits. The satisfaction rate regarding personal health increased from 24% in the past to 78%, and the satisfaction rate concerning carrying out daily activities increased from 36% to 81%. In addition, 33% of respondents had a tendency to be nervous and depressed before practicing Falun Gong, but the rate dropped to 3% after they started practicing.

The survey in Taiwan has, for the first time, reported the positive effects of Falun Gong practice on women who experience menopause. In the U.S. in 2002, a long-term follow-up survey found that hormonal replacement therapy (HRT) that was widely used over the previous few decades resulted in more side effects than benefits [6]. The follow-up survey found that in the U.S. alone, of the approximately 20 million menopausal women, 6 million were using HRT, which was later stopped. Helping menopausal women remains an important issue. A common phenomenon of Falun Gong practice is that many older women start to menstruate again, although only moderately, and they become younger-looking. The survey found that among the 723 women who participated in the survey, 345 were menopausal, accounting for 47.72%. Of the menopausal women, 68 are confirmed to have resumed their menstrual cycle, and their symptoms showed obvious improvement.

Dr. Hu believes that in the economy where health care budgets are curtailed, Falun Gong practice not only effectively reduces health care expenditures but brings immeasurable benefits to people's health in general. She believes that the government and the academic sector should work together to further understand the health benefits of Falun Gong. She hopes that she can get support from the

Healthcare Bureau so that she can do additional in-depth research on the health of Falun Gong practitioners.

#### **IV. The Healing Characteristics of Falun Gong Practice**

To summarize the healing characteristics of Falun Gong practice based on the above-cited statistics:

First, the effectiveness of Falun Gong practice is demonstrated by the 70% complete and partial recovery rate among Falun Gong practitioners who previously suffered from illnesses, with the overall effective rate reaching over 98.0%.

Professor Hu Mingqin, from the pathology research department at the No. 1 Military Medicine University, who participated in the survey in Guangdong Province, China, stated, “Some Falun Gong practitioners previously suffered from illnesses considered difficult and/or terminal; some of them had been given a ‘death sentence’ in hospitals, considered ‘incurable’ by medical professionals, yet they have miraculously regained their health through practicing Falun Gong. Medical checkups showed that their cancerous cells disappeared, and the symptoms of terminal illnesses and difficult cases vanished. They regained their health.”

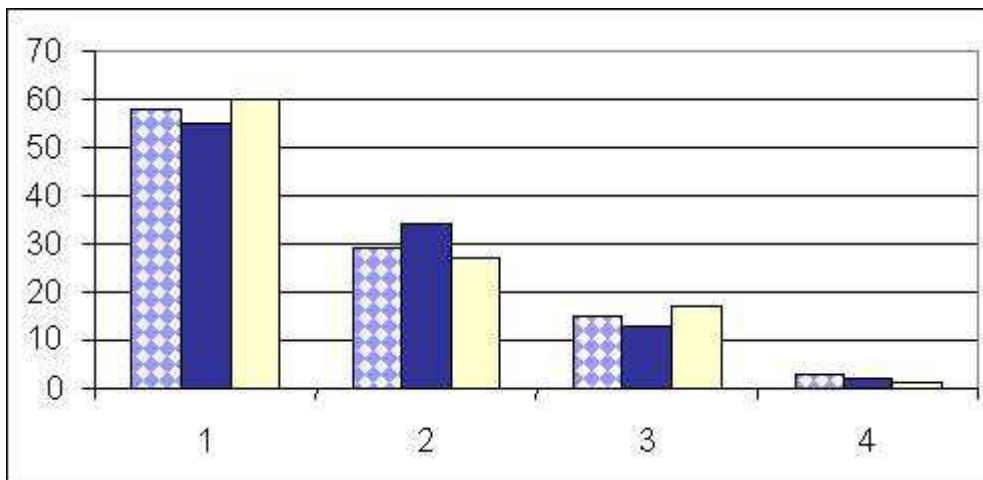
The healing power of Falun Gong is also demonstrated by the fact that they recover without the help of other medical treatments. Professor Hu Mingqin continued, “Many Falun Gong practitioners were well-known ‘chronic invalids’ or ‘regular visitors to hospitals,’ but while they were practicing Falun Gong, they stopped medications and injections. Their conditions did not get worse, but instead got better and better. Some of them were cancer sufferers in the middle of chemotherapy, and some were diabetics who had been warned by doctors that they ‘must not stop taking medication.’ Their recoveries were unconceivable from a medical point of view.” He also stated, “Among Falun Dafa practitioners, not only did illnesses disappear, the patients also commonly became physically rejuvenated, to that of their youth. Senior practitioners have fewer wrinkles, their hair turns black, and their complexion is rosy and smooth, showing signs of rejuvenation. It is especially difficult to explain what I mentioned earlier—that older women resumed their menstrual cycle and were rejuvenating.”

The healing power of Falun Gong is also shown in the “anti-placebo effect.” This will be discussed in a different section.

Second, the holistic healing power of Falun Gong is shown from several aspects. The survey results indicate that the average complete and partial recovery rate from different types of illnesses exceeds 70%, and the recovery rate for “incurable diseases,” such as cancer, lupus, and Parkinson disease, is 66%. For other difficult and complex cases such as anasarca, the complete and partial recovery rate is 58%.

The survey in Dalian shows that illness-disappearance rates among Falun Gong practitioners who previously suffered one illness, and those who suffered multiple illnesses were 89.72% and 88.83%, respectively. There is no obvious discrepancy from a statistical point of view. The holistic healing power of Falun Gong is also reflected in the great improvement in practitioners’ psychological and mental wellbeing. A survey in Beijing shows a connection between psychological change, physical change, and the change in illness (see Figure 1). The above indicates that Falun Gong's healing effects impacts the body and mind in a holistic manner. But it also demonstrates that the

effectiveness of the practice is determined by each individual practitioner rather than the type of illness or the number of illnesses a practitioner has.



**Figure 1: Beijing survey of more than 10,000 people, with corresponding relationships between recovery of mental, physical, and health status**

**Vertical axis:** Percentage of people investigated

**Horizontal axis:** Status groups

Group 1: Happy and optimistic, physically energetic, complete recovery

Group 2: Significant improvement, can work normally, basic recovery

Group 3: Some improvement, can engage in average manual work

Group 4: No change, unable to work

**Bars represent:** Mental status; Physical status; Health recovery status (respectively)

Third, Falun Gong practice has been shown to exert a positive impact on behavior and lifestyle. In China, a great majority of practitioners participate in daily group exercises for a half-hour or longer. They live normal lives and most have let go of unhealthy habits such as drinking, smoking, and gambling. Most Falun Gong practitioners believe they have improved their character and morals, their mental wellbeing has experienced complete self-regulation and improvement, they have enhanced their capacity to endure, and their moods have stabilized. They have improved their health, and their improvement in character has been a positive influence on their families, as well as their social life and work.

Fourth, most Falun Gong practitioners experienced rapid health improvement after they started cultivation. The speed and effectiveness are commonly described as "amazing." Some people's symptoms disappeared within three to five days after listening to Mr. Li's lectures or reading the book [Zhuan Falun](#), and their bodies felt light. Most people experienced a complete recovery or obvious improvement within a few months or a year or two. The Dalian area survey reported a healing rate of 99% among people within a year of beginning Falun Gong practice, while the Guangdong report shows that among the people surveyed, 72% practiced Falun Gong for less than two years at the time. 98% became healthy within one or two years. The summary result of this

survey shows that 61.5% of people had practiced Falun Gong for less than two years at the time of the survey. The survey in North America shows that the average time for a smoker to quit smoking is 4.58 days (standard error is 9.72 days). The Dalian survey shows that as people continued practicing Falun Gong, the basic recovery rate also increased. The surveys in North America and in Taiwan both indicate that the longer people practiced Falun Gong, the better their health index became.

Lastly, Falun Gong practice is economical. Promotion of Falun Gong practice happens on a volunteer basis, without charge. Falun Gong books can be downloaded free of charge from the Internet. There is no cost to learn Falun Gong. On the other hand, Falun Gong's healing power has saved practitioners, their employers, and the government large amounts in medical expenses. As per the surveys in Guangdong, Beijing, and Dalian, each Falun Gong practitioner saved over 2,600 [yuan](#) per year in medical expenses. The economic benefits are significant. The Taiwan survey also showed that people reduced their medical expenditures by half after they started Falun Gong practice, excluding the work time saved from sick leave and the invisible cost of time and energy in family care for the sick.

## **V. The Initial Study of Falun Gong Cultivation's Possible Mechanism of Healing and Fitness**

The improvement of physical health among Falun Gong practitioners is merely one advantage of practicing Falun Gong. In fact, people can benefit in other aspects as well by practicing Falun Gong. Following are some examples:

Practicing Falun Gong makes one more relaxed, clear-minded, and less stressed. Practitioners are energetic and they are able to quit bad habits such as smoking. After learning to handle conflicts with sincerity and compassion, practitioners improve their relationships with those around them. They have also gained more understanding of what one's "true self" means. In addition, practitioners come to understand many fundamental principles. They understand the cause of different tribulations in life and learn to use them to cultivate themselves. With a better understanding of the spirit-matter relationship, practitioners focus more on self-improvement and tend to spend more time with people with similar interests.

Apparently Falun Gong practitioners have discarded many bad habits that impair health. Through cultivation, they also gradually reduced the stress in their daily lives. Hence, they have become healthier both physically and mentally.

However, if you ask practitioners if becoming healthier is the motivation for their cultivation, the answer will probably be surprising: "No, becoming healthy is merely a by-product of our practice."

How do practitioners gain the health benefits as a by-product? After all, even with the best treatment provided by modern technology, such a goal would take a lifetime, with significant monetary investment and an enormous amount of effort. Will we be able to explain this from the standpoint of Western medicine or even traditional Chinese medicine?

Although Qigong, similar to acupuncture, is effective in healing and fitness, it is still not fully understood or accepted by modern Western medicine. The basis of acupuncture lies in the meridian system, which has not been fully studied by Western medicine. Plus, the concept of "Qi" and "Gong" cannot be easily understood by modern medical science, which is built on morphology. Qigong



practice emphasizes the unification of spirit and matter, mind and body, as well as the human being with the surrounding world. These are areas that have not been well understood by modern science, which mainly focuses on the study of material existence. Nonetheless, although its progress is very slow, modern science has accumulated some understanding of the relationships between spirit-matter and mind-body. Plus Qigong's health effect on its practitioners is reflected on various levels recognized by modern medical science from the genes to cells to organs. Let us look at how cultivation affects healing and fitness, from the point of view of both modern Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine.

### **(1) Modern Medical Science's Understanding of the Relationship between Body and Spirit - Psychosomatic Medicine**

Modern medical science believes in the model of physiology, psychology, and sociology. After six years of studying 170 sudden death cases, in 1971, George Engel observed that severe diseases or death might be related to psychological stress or trauma. Mental stress can lead to many health issues, such as heart disease, asthma, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, and acute viral infection. Mental distress is also a possible cause of mononucleosis, cancer, AIDS, and even Alzheimer's. The diseases caused by poor lifestyle account for 70% to 80% of all diseases. For example, in the United States, about 10% of women and 20% of men require treatment for alcoholism. Each year, about 200,000 deaths are directly related to alcohol-related physical and mental disorders, including suicide, cancer, heart disease, and liver disease. Alcoholism reduces a person's life span by approximately ten years. The direct or indirect financial losses to society brought by these physical and mental disorders are estimated to be more than \$150 billion, that is, about \$600 per person. In the United States, there were an estimated 61 million smokers in 1995, 4.5 million of them young people. Every year, there is an increase of 170,000 new lung cancer patients, and 150,000 deaths are due to lung cancer. About 80% to 90% of lung cancer patients are smokers. Today there are 300 million smokers in China. Poor diet, lack of exercise, and depression also lead to an increased risk of heart disease. Despite modern technology and health education, each year 400,000 to 500,000 people die of coronary disease. [15]

The theme of Science magazine on April 26, 2002 was "The Puzzle of Complex Diseases, It's Not Just the Genes." The main article states: "The most common diseases are the toughest to crack. Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, psychiatric illness: All of these are 'complex' or 'multifactorial' diseases, meaning that they cannot be ascribed to mutations in a single gene or to a single environmental factor. Rather, they arise from the combined action of many genes, environmental factors, and risk-conferring behaviors." In his article titled "Balancing Life-Style and Genomics Research for Disease Prevention," Walter C. Willett from the Harvard School of Public Health wrote, "We have been able to identify modifiable behavioral factors, including specific aspects of diet, excess weight, inactivity, and smoking that account for over 70% of stroke and colon cancer, over 80% of coronary heart disease, and over 90% of adult-onset diabetes." "Findings from modern molecular research have helped to clarify the genetic contribution to many diseases. Highly penetrant mutations, which account for conspicuous clustering of diseases within families, are rare and appear to account for less than 5% of major cancers and coronary heart disease." "...the majority—probably the large majority—of important cancers in Western populations are due to environmental rather than genetic factors." [16, 17]

Researchers have found that, compared to 20 years ago, more patients had benefited from the use of a placebo. This indicates that the stress in modern life and environment may contribute to more

psychological diseases. In their book *The Invisible Plague: the Rise of Mental Illness from 1750 to the Present*, Dr. Torrey and Dr. Miller stated that, in recent decades, at least in some industrialized countries, strong evidence has shown that depression-caused human illnesses are epidemic diseases, even including the most serious mental disorder—schizophrenia. [18] In a survey of psychological stress reactions to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, “The Effect Post 9.11,” such a trend was further confirmed: people, even away from the scene, have shown substantial stress symptoms. [19] Out of the respondents living in the vicinity of the “Twin Towers,” 20% of them showed “significant post-traumatic stress” (or post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD). [20] Another study involving 988 Manhattan residents showed that smoking, drinking, and marijuana use has increased significantly, which may be related to various psychological conditions. [21] According to a study from the Department of Education, in a survey of 1.1 million public school students, about 75,000 children showed more than six symptoms of PTSD, which is sufficient to be diagnosed with mental disorders. [22, 23]

The above studies have clearly shown that these psychological factors, lifestyle, environmental factors, and social conditions have significant impact on physiological conditions. Modern medical treatment in these areas is relatively ineffectual. From the benefits Falun Gong practitioners have experienced from their practice, it is obvious that this practice leads to positive outcomes in all the above areas.

## **(2) From Traditional Chinese Medical Science to the Elevation of Cultivation [25]**

It is easier to understand the role of Qigong practice in longevity and health from the perspective of traditional Chinese medical science, because these are the reflections of one system at different levels.

In contrast to Western medical science that focuses on physical medicine, traditional Chinese medical science focuses on energy levels. The meridian system in Chinese medicine is the channel for energy flow. All types of matter in Chinese medical science have the concept of energy or “Qi” such as Wei Qi, blood Qi, Ying Qi, Jing Qi, Qi in the inner organs, the meridian Qi, Qi of water and food, etc. According to Chinese medicine, organs are not merely anatomical parts but are, instead, different energy hubs. Through the meridian system, these organs connect the body from inside to outside, from top to bottom. They also connect other organs within the system or outside the system (that is, from other organ systems). This is the basis for the holistic view in Chinese medicine. Acupuncture, chiropractic, and breathing techniques are treatments that adjust one's energy balance. In fact, the critical difference between traditional Chinese and Western medical science is not only in their naturalness and comprehensiveness, but also on their views of the body's energy balance. Chinese medicine studies the four properties and five tastes of herbs, which is then applied to the different meridian systems. Such viewpoints are also seen in the diagnostic method of Chinese medicine, that is, the material and energy flow between the different energy hubs (organs). Some examples are: the syndrome of intermingled phlegm and qi, stagnation of qi transforming into heat, sinking of qi of middle-jiao, and hyperactivity of liver-yang. From these, we can see that Chinese medicine is a complete medical system on the energy level, rather than an alternative and complementary medicine, as it is viewed in the eyes of some Western medicine professionals.

Secondly, Chinese medicine studies the human system at a microscopic level. Many people in modern society are puzzled by the abstract concepts in Chinese medicine. Although modern medical researchers have come to recognize the clinical effects of traditional Chinese medicine,

they do not quite understand its intangible, invisible, theoretical system and its basic concepts. In fact, many researchers have realized that Chinese medicine is a systematic and complete energy system that is also complex and precise. This system exists in a highly microscopic dimension that, albeit serving as an extension of the human senses, is indeed beyond the limits of sophisticated modern instruments. The information that traditional Chinese medical science obtains through “looking,” “listening,” “asking,” and “feeling” is the most superficial reflection of this micro-dimension. In ancient times, through cultivation, people could develop the capabilities of seeing through human bodies and the micro-dimension. In [Zhuan Falun](#), it states, “In ancient China, supernatural capabilities were common to virtually all Chinese medical doctors, such as those great medical scientists: Sun Simiao, Huatuo, Li Shizhen, and Bian Que. They all had supernatural capabilities that were documented in medical texts. Yet now these excellent parts are often criticized. What Chinese medicine has inherited are only those prescriptions or experiences from research. Ancient Chinese medicine was very advanced, and the extent of its progress was beyond present medical science.”

Thirdly, Chinese medical science unifies mind and body. It stresses that “The heart holds the office of monarch.” In Traditional Chinese health studies, being ascetic is the great secret of longevity. Modern Chinese medical science has very limited understanding and recognition of spiritual aspects. Therefore, the most essential parts of traditional Chinese medical science have not been fully inherited and carried forward. Hence, in modern Chinese medical treatment, these most essential parts have often been missing as well. The reasons for this are complex. One important reason is the political and ideological influence. Researches are afraid to deal with the “mysterious” parts of traditional Chinese medical science, which are now often considered “superstition.” Thus they lose the opportunity to explore and study them in detail.

Finally, and most importantly, traditional Chinese medicine is a science of the unification of humanity and nature. The thought of the unification of humanity and nature is one of the basic platforms of traditional Chinese medical science. The human body is a small universe. Heaven has five Qi, and the earth has five elements. Similarly, the human body has five emotions and internal organs. They all correlate to one another. The naming of the acupuncture points and the description of the various energy changes within the human body all reflect this characteristic. This is why some Westerners say that the diagnosis of traditional Chinese medical doctors sounds like a weather forecast.

However, the human body exists not only materially, but it also has a spiritual existence, such as the human disposition, temperament, and ideas. From the perspective of human health, when the human spirit is calm and at ease, then the organs work properly. On the other hand, because Qi is an energy entity in the body that is finite and vulnerable, many factors can lead to blockage of Qi.

Therefore, all theories of treatment and health involve supplementing the Qi, absorbing the Qi, adjusting the Qi. However, Qi is merely Qi after all. It will ultimately run out and fail. However, the energy of the universe is eternal. Then, since the human body is a small universe, why can't human energy be eternal? If the human body is a small universe, and a human body has a spirit, then doesn't the universe around us have not only the five elements and the five Qi but also a spirit? The answer should be affirmative. If the small universe is assimilated with the spirit of the big universe, shouldn't it also obtain the energy from the big universe? The answer should also be affirmative. Therefore, when traditional Chinese medical science reaches its highest level, it is “cultivating the mind and body, stopping the pursuit of fame and fortune, being ascetic, and reaching the ultimate

realm of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance.” This, in fact, goes beyond medical science and reaches a new realm, that is, cultivation. A cultivation practice that truly cultivates mind and body can help the practitioners reach this realm. At this point, the energy in this small universe of the human body—Qi—has been purified along with the assimilation of the spiritual characteristics of the big universe. It has been transformed into eternal energy – Gong, which makes true health and longevity achievable. Falun Gong is such a cultivation practice method.

Modern Western medicine has acknowledged that there are multiple layers and multiple facets to health. This clearly puts forward a new model of modern medical science: “physiology-psychology-society-spirit” model [25]. When one’s soul is healthy, one’s mental health and social behavior must be healthy, too. Physical health is an inevitable result. In fact, traditional Chinese medical science and true cultivation practice not only cover this model, but also provide a full set of feasible methods, which should be cherished, inherited, and carried forward.

## **VI. Inspiration from a Medical Survey for Future Health Care**

Health care today can be considered primarily a system provided by health care professionals with modern medical technology (mainly medicines, radiation, surgery, etc). Nowadays, public health care has become a heavy and increasingly heavy burden for every government. With the emergence of expensive medical technology, the treatment of diseases has not been fundamentally improved, but the cost of health care has greatly increased. Therefore, reducing the cost of health care and improving the efficacy of treatment have become important goals. Meanwhile, the current high cost of health care inevitably excludes low-income people outside of the health care system. So, how to improve cost-effective medical care and how to provide acceptable and effective health care for all levels of society have become very important for any government. In addition, modern medical science has changed people’s understanding of disease and health. As medical technology becomes more and more advanced, people are becoming more dependent on medical technology, health care professionals, and other external factors, hoping that the developments in science and medicine can help them avoid the suffering of disease. That is, few people are considering how to improve themselves and truly being responsible for their own health. In other words, people have become more self-indulgent.

From the healing and fitness effects of Falun Gong, it’s clear that the practice has provided a self-care system that is low-cost but a highly effective way to good health and mental stability. Through practicing, they have a different viewpoint from everyday people regarding life and health. They are responsible for their own health and lives and are truly changing their behavior.

Very simply, Falun Gong cultivates both mind and body. It consists of two parts: the most important one is cultivating the mind or [xinxing](#). Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance is the guiding principle in practitioners’ daily lives. Cultivating xinxing is the key to achieving the growth of Gong and healing and fitness. Falun Gong also cultivates the body – practicing the exercises to improve the physical body. The five exercises include standing exercises and a sitting meditation.

Falun Gong is a cultivation system with a goal beyond healing and fitness. But, as the survey shows, on the level of healing and fitness, the effects of Falun Gong are miraculous. On this level, Falun Gong practice can be viewed as a self-care or self-improvement system.

More specifically, Falun Gong practice can be viewed as a multi-level self-care system that combines the spiritual and material and has a great effect on the treatment of diseases. Multi-level also refers to individuals, families, and communities. From the individual perspective, it is effective on physical, mental, and spiritual levels. Practitioners are responsible for their own health and life and use the principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance to guide their daily lives and correctly view the gains and losses in their lives to reduce anxiety. They are also able to successfully quit bad habits. Anxiety and bad habits are recognized as high risk factors for many major diseases in modern medical science. What modern medical science has not recognized is the direct impact of mental and spiritual factors on an individual's physical condition. Falun Gong practitioners are able to achieve good psychological and mental states by cultivating xinxing. At the same time, the exercises can also improve and transform the body. When one is ill, practicing the exercises can completely eliminate the disease. When one is not ill, practicing the exercises can greatly enhance resistance to disease. From the traditional Chinese medicine point of view, the exercises not only open up and widen the meridians, but also transform low level energy, "Qi," to a high level of energy, "Gong," which traditional Chinese medicine cannot accomplish.

Reflecting on its own limitations, modern medical science has proposed the new health care model "physiology- psychology-society-spirit." As stated above, modern medicine not only lacks effective, reasonably priced means to cure physiological diseases, but also lacks good methods in other areas. The information gathered from the research regarding the effect of Falun Gong practice on healing and fitness in mainland China, North America, and Taiwan from 1998 to 2002 is therefore worth reflecting on and investigating. There should be further research in this area.

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