

# The Culture of Qi

#### A Chinese Experience—or a Universal One?

#### Marceau CHENAULT

Qi—"breath" or "energy"—lies at the heart of many traditional Asian practices, be they martial or artistic, that rest upon a broader understanding of mind and body. This concept has now become pervasive in Western ideas of health and spirituality. Could this trend be a positive effect of globalization?

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the concept of Qi ( $\exists$ ) has spread through Western society thanks to Chinese and, more generally, Asian arts. Qigong, taijiquan, calligraphy, acupuncture, and martial arts have contributed to the globalization of this "traditional" culture. The term, usually translated as "energy" or "breath," belongs to a discourse that has become common to a number of practices centered on the subjective relationship between mind and body: for example, practices of wellbeing and care, the contemporary dance and martial arts scenes, and spiritual techniques of contemplation. "Breath" can refer to Qi in Chinese arts, *prana* in Indian yoga, *pneuma* in various Greek techniques, and *esprit* ("mind" or "spirit") in French biblical texts. <sup>1</sup>

This generic translation is evidence of the way popular practices have changed over the course of the globalizing process. They have been appropriated by groups that are often motivated by the desire to introduce alternative approaches into the fields of health, spirituality, the environment, and art. They are based on so-called ancestral knowledge, popular or empirical practices that are often closer to esoteric than to scientific understanding, and are often categorized as forms of contemporary post-industrial religiosity. Even so, they have, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, acquired a certain institutional legitimacy in the realm of heath and "self-management," as they have established themselves in, for instance, hospital departments and psychomotor re-adaptation clinics, as health practices covered by some insurance plans, and as a form of leisure and wellbeing regulated by various associations, centers, and organizations.

In this article, we will consider several examples of ethnographical observations of Qigong as it is practiced in China and France to describe the transmission of the Qi experience, in order to shed light on how "Qi culture" becomes meaningful in specific social contexts thanks to technologies of the self that impact bodily images and patterns.<sup>3</sup>

#### Qi: From Cosmological Principle to Bodily Experience

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Sophany Chhin Eap's thesis, *Le souffle dans la pratique soignante*, defended in 2006 at the University of Marne la Vallée.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Raphaël Lioger, "L'individuo-globalisme: nouvelle culture croyante des sociétés industrielles avancées," *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 2009/1, 16:135-154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Similar approaches have been used for the study of acupuncture: Feeling the Qi: Emergent Bodies and Disclosive Fields in American Appropriations of Acupuncture, Ph.D. thesis defended by Mitra C. Emad at Rice University (Houston, Texas) in 2006; and, on the subject of Taijiquan: Franck Adam, "Experiencing Qi," Text, Practice, Performance II, 2000, 13-31.

The Franco-Chinese academician François Cheng translates Qi by the term "breath": "Chinese cosmology is founded on the idea of breath, which is simultaneously material and spiritual. Based on this idea of breath, its first thinkers proposed a unitary and organic conception of the living universe in which everything is connected and holds together. Primordial breath ensures its original unity and continues to animate all beings, joining them together in a gigantic network of interconnections and engendering called Tao, the 'way." The sinologist Isabelle Robinet describes the phenomenon as the "sole and unique principle of reality that gives form to every thing and every being in the universe, suggesting that there are no boundaries between human beings and the rest of the world." Finally, the sinologist Cyrille Javary offers a summary of the problem of defining Qi while addressing the difficult task of translating its ideogram: "To approach the meaning of the ideogram="">
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These French scholars' references give echo to pioneer studies of Joseph Needhams. The British sinologist used to translate Qi with the term of 'matter-energy' to express "something like *pneuma*, that is, subtle spirits, tenuous matter, resembling air, or gas or vapour, but also something which could have the character of radiant energy like radio-active emanation, or X-rays, or very highly penetrating particles" (Matter-energy' is still a common term used by the Chinese philosopher Li Chuan to explain the subtle motility between physical and functional existence and to distinguish the "five meanings in the concept of Qi" regarding philosophy, physics, physiology, psychology and ethic.

These definitions immediately evoke the distinct cosmology surrounding the practices that use the concept of Qi to make sense of their activity. Everything consists of energy and each thing is governed by a unique balance of visible and invisible as well as material and evanescent substances. Philippe Descola describes this way of relating to the living present, which is found among the ancient Chinese, Indians, and Aztecs, as an analogical ontology. This cosmology is "analogical" in that it contrasts the "physical" and "internal" differences present in every being and, to the contrary, valorizes the way they operate on identical principles, as with the Chinese theories of the Yin and the Yang and the Five Movements. In this system, each thing is different and organized hierarchically, yet analogous to every other in the way it functions. For Descola, this "ontology," like the three others he defines (naturalism, totemism, animism), rests on a "system of properties" in which self and non-self are identified through "patterns" of physical and internal demarcation.<sup>8</sup>

Descola distinguishes analogical ontologies from the naturalistic ontologies that, since the Enlightenment, have tended to prevail in Europe. Indeed, European cosmology and medieval medicine, which were also analogical, were rationalized by the natural sciences, in which human beings radically detached themselves from the object of their study—that is, nature. In other words, "modern" man of European science adopted a different form of demarcation based on physical similarities between species and internal dissimilarities, resulting in a sharp contrast between nature and culture. It is admitted, for example, that human beings have consciousness, whereas plants or animals do not, a naturalistic postulate that is not present among so-called animistic peoples, like the Ashura of Amazonia. Descola, a student of Lévi-Strauss, ultimately asks us to recognize that the nature-culture dualism upon which Western science rests is not universally shared, nor can it aspire

François Cheng, Cinq méditations sur la beauté, 2006, p. 74-75.
 Cyrille Javary, 100 Mots pour comprendre les chinois, p. 309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Needhams, J., Lu G., Manfred P. (1975), "Problems of translation and modernisation of ancient Chinese technical terms", *Annals of Science*, 32:5, p 495.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Li, C., Yann X., (2008), "A Differentiation of the Meaning of "Qi" on Several Levels", *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 3:2, p 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Philippe Descola, *Par-delà nature et culture*, 2005, p. 176.

to be, despite its obvious domination over other populations in our globalized age.

In Chinese cosmology, Qi is characterized by its immanence. In other words, it is present in every living form and one must learn to encourage its circulation, as much at the microcosmic level of the body and its energetic network as at the macrocosmic level of its relations to the heavens and the earth. This vision has been elaborated in Confucianism as well as Taoism, the two pillars of Chinese thought. Put simply, one might say that Confucianism explored social and moral values out of respect for the hierarchical system of the heavens and earth, while Taoism was turned to psychophysiological rules of our ephemeral corporeal lives. As Zhuangzhi, one of the founding fathers of Taoism, argues, "man owes his life to a condensation of Qi. As it long as it condenses, there is life; as soon as it disperses, death occurs." Thus Taoist alchemy, which was very popular between the eleventh and fourteenth century, developed as it sought to elaborate the rules of conduct needed to master the alchemic ingredients and breathing exercises designed to preserve life to the point of immortality. 10 One example is the Taoist monk Hu Yin, who, in the ninth century, composed an important work that connected the theory of the "five phases" or five agents (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) to the preservation of the five organs (liver, heart, spleen, lungs, and kidney). These analyses, which blended Taoist cosmology with Chinese medicine, associated physical exercise, breathing, and dietary habits with the five organs, stimulated in accordance with the five seasons of the year. 11 They include, notably, the breathing techniques that are currently disseminated through the practice of Qigong—a practice of "mastery/gong" and "breathing/qi" and notably the Qigong of the six sounds.

Approaching the concept of Qi from the perspective of its historical and cultural context poses, in principle, no problem. It is understood that we are talking about a cosmology, a system for interpreting life that is distinct to a particular culture, location, and history. The discussion becomes a little trickier, however, when Qi is considered as a phenomenon that is still experienced today. It ceases to be merely a theory, and becomes an actual way of perceiving and sensing the world. Recent work in medical and religious anthropology illustrate these considerations. For example, Elisabeth Hsu describes in detail Doctor Qiu's sessions in the Yunnan region. He treats patients through a number of traditional methods, such as acupuncture and Qigong. He only uses Qigong in cases in which he believes that his patient will be receptive to an "energetic" relationship. 12

At the Shanghai Qigong research institute, where for four years I have been responsible for international education, Dr. Sun Lei gladly explains in his lectures how he uses mastery of Neigong or "inner work" to optimize Tuina massages with his patients—in other words, how he manages his inner energy to render the pressure of his massages more profound. At the same institute, Dr. Xu Feng, in teaching ZiFagong, specifies that in this type of exercise, which is translated as "spontaneous movement," practitioners become aware of the "Qi field" of their practice group, which is perhaps not all that different from the collective unconscious theorized by Jung. <sup>13</sup> In different places, one finds different approaches: the Wudang Mountains are a major center of so-called "inner" Chinese martial arts, notably Taijiquan. The old master Pi explains how his practice

<sup>9</sup> Zhuangzi 22, in Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*, 1997, p. 252.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Vincent Goossaert (1998), "L'alchimie intérieure réhabilitée? (notes critiques)," *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, volume 215, issue 4, p. 493-507.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Jia Jinhua (2015), Longevity Technique and Medical Theory The Legacy of the Tang Daoist Priestess-Physician Hu Yin, Monumenta Serica, 63:1, 1-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Elisabeth Hsu, *The Transmission of Chinese Medicine*, Ed. Cambridge University, p. 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> In his article, "The Silenced Body – the Expressive *Leib*: On the Dialectic of Mind and Life in Chinese Cathartic Healing", Thomas Ots (1994) describes a remarkable experience with spontaneous qigong. Some on-the-ground information leads us to believe that these practices, after 1980, were inspired or at the very least justified by Western approaches such as psychoanalysis and trans-personal psychology.

of Qigong, which he developed on the basis of the Taoist writings of Laozi, allows one to feel one's body merging into the mountains and surrounding nature. <sup>14</sup> Finally, when I go to practice in Luxun Park in Shanghai with the Tajiquan masters Chen Ming Liang and Li Hong Da, they both ask me to touch their chest, stomach, or back to feel how Qi descends from the "Dantian" (abdominal area) to their heels, in order to annul the push of their training partner an opponent's attack, and to throw them off balance without using force.

## Contextualizing the Diversity of Qi Practices and Interpretations

Starting with examples from a variety of different milieus (medical, spiritual, and martial), it is easy to see how the Qi experience becomes complex when techniques employed in local contexts—having, that is, a meaning that is a very unique to a specific set of relationships with others and the environment—spread and become generalized on a very broad scale and in very different contexts, both inside and outside of China. I should clarify that the situations I cite as examples are in no way more "authentic" than others. Taijiquan masters in Shanghai parks emerged after parks began to appear in Chinese urban centers: Master Pi, like other Taoist "grandfathers," who were summoned to the Wudangshan, sought "refuge" in the mountains after deciding, shortly after the Cultural Revolution, to abandon their civilian lives.

This is why sociologists like David Palmer interpret the development of Qigong after 1949 in China as a "reinvented tradition." For the lives of these actors and the transmission of their practices are the result of a decidedly recent history, in which personal destinies were influenced by deeper social movements that the social sciences have sought to illuminate. Between the 1980s to the end of the twentieth century, Qigong became, in a way that vaguely recalls the "New Age" trend in the west, a popular craze, implicitly expressing social tensions arising from the repositioning of political and religious authority and the need to reorganize social bonds on the basis of the foundational myths of Chinese identity, even as the country asserted itself in the competitive international market through a form of scientific nationalism (with the goal of proving that "Qi," a concept of Chinese origin, has a scientific basis).

In France, since around1980, Qigong developed in tandem with the wellness industry, situated between academic medicine, which was unreceptive to non-conventional approaches, and a martial arts milieu based on a system of competing federations. Instructors were trained to meet the demands of a public in search of relaxation, anti-stress techniques, and methods for understanding and managing self-care. The contemporary image of the practice of Qigong is difficult to separate from European projections about Asian spirituality (the cultivation of inner wisdom, calm, serenity, and so on) and, consequently, the Qi experience is often tied to this form of cultural representation, a spirituality and lifestyle that is amenable to balanced health.

This perception is not exactly shared by Chinese doctors at the Qigong Institute in Shanghai. Their goal is the same, as their pedagogical priority is to ensure that their students develop a mastery of techniques and knowledge relating to the regulation of their bodily and mental attitudes, either for resolving major health issues (such as insomnia, anxiety, pain, and so on) or improving self-control. They have different approaches, however, to achieving these goals, as their various teaching styles often include learning stages that are more painful and much less comfortable than the softness and relaxation the non-Chinese often seek in so-called wellness exercises. In the classes on contemporary and traditional dance I have offered since 2010 at the physical education college at the East China Normal University, the majority of my Chinese students also have different

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> I met Master Pi twice at Wudang Shan, including once with the French TCM Thomas Morrillont, through trips organized by the Franco-Chinese school *Les Temps du Corps*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> David Palmer, La fièvre du Qigong, Pouvoirs, politiques et religions en Chine de 1949 à 1999, EHESS, 2005.

conceptions of Qigong and Qi: the more respectable view, which sees them as "upkeep" exercises that are useful to their grandparents but very far from their own aspirations, or the more ironic and fantastical view that is tied to movies like *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Dragon* and *Kung Fu Panda*. The ethnographer's role is to describe these different cultural perceptions of oneself and others, respecting their diversity without assessing their legitimacy.

### Learning Qi and Reinterpreting one's Body

If one considers in detail the experience of individuals who undertake the training offered by Shanghai's international Qigong institute, it becomes apparent that what we call "Qi culture" is adopted in different stages of immersion. Students first familiarize themselves with the distinctive discourse tied to learning either the methods and sequences that are deemed "traditional" (such as the Eight-Section or Baduanjin Qigong and Lui Zi Jue's six sounds) or those that are contemporary (Fang Song Gong and Shanghai's Liu He Gong are as "modern" as Beijing's Daoyin Yang Sheng Gong or Beidaihe's Nei Yang Gong). In this initial stage of memorization and psycho-physical regulation (including speed of movement, breathing, and mental focus), practitioners learn to recognize states of relaxation and tension in different parts of their bodies. Depending on their kinesthetic sensitivity, they will discover quickly or over the long term new physical sensations, such as, for example, the feeling of heat or tingling in their hands, which they can then interpret as manifestation of Qi.

In the next stage, practitioners develop a subtle sense of the body's key points, such as the Lao Gong (palm centers), Yongchuan (the centers of the soles of the feet), Ming Men (the "doorway to life" in the lumbar region), Ba Hui (the upper skull), the Dan Tian (the abdomen), and so on. In this second stage, trainees are introduced to a new relationship with their bodies. In other words, the image of the anatomical body that is characteristic of analytic gymnastics will yield to what is known as a "subtle" image consisting of "doors" (Lao Gong, Ming Men, and so on), "centers" (Dan Tian), and "circulation" (meridians, micro-circulation). This "subtle body" is mentioned by many spiritual traditions and techniques associated with them (such as yoga and meditation) and refers to a non-material dimension of the physical body, one that transcends its carnal substance.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, this absorption of Qi culture is accompanied by an immersion in a community of actors who trade books and follow theoretical courses on traditional Chinese medicine, Taoist philosophy, and other therapeutic and spiritual topics. The trainee discovers, in this way, theoretical definitions of the Qi's various natures, the concepts of Yin and Yang, and the alchemy between Ji-Qi-Shen (that is, the interaction between bodily essence, breath, and consciousness), making it possible to attribute meaning to Qi's role in the mind-body relationship. The five agents (Wu Xi) are often approached from the standpoint of the corresponding theory of organs (Zhang Xiang).

This mechanism will, at a practical level, lead to new perceptions and images of self and body. For example, slow movement and points of attentions will stimulate new perceptions of the internal control of balance and breathing. Frequently, parallel experiences of massage (tuina) and acupuncture will help the practitioner to make sense of this new, so-called "subtle" information. These techniques affect the bodily pattern, as they create a new habitus of postural and gestural conduct. "Consciousness" is achieved through the feelings produced by the interaction of new sensations created by exercise, the image and imagination of the body resulting from bodily

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The approach proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, which consists in considering the continuity between body and mind as a question of intensity, leads to an interesting dialogue between their concept of a "body-without-organs" and that of a "subtle body." See William Behun, "the body of light and the body without organ," *SubStance*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Issue 121: Spiritual Politics after Deleuze (2010), p. 125-140.

techniques, the general theories that serve as frames of reference for physical activity and, finally, the sharing of experience and knowledge with the community surrounding the practitioner.

One can summarize this process of appropriation by drawing on Michel Foucault: this social apparatus provides a "technology of the self" that can transform the practitioner's perceptions. By discovering a corporeal heritage consisting of a wide range of bodily techniques and a new corporeal language, individuals who are initiated into the perceptions of Qi become accustomed to a new bodily self that is no longer defined anatomically, but in terms of centers, portals, and circulation. This transition from a point of view that is outside the body, with its anatomical and physiological maps, to a fluid and mobile internal image is an essential aspect of learning Qigong. In this respect, the intriguing "Neijing Tu," a map of the body describing the circulation of vital forces in the spine and the cavities of the head and torso, illustrated by mythical figures drawn from Taoism and Buddhism, scenes of social life, and natural landscapes does in fact represent the concrete relationship between the microcosm in the human body and a conception of the environmental macrocosm.<sup>17</sup>

Catherine Despeux explains how the definition of the body in China until the end of the Ming dynasty (in the seventeenth century, with the beginning of Western influence) avoided analytical conception of a body composed of limbs, organs, bones, cells, and so on: in ancient Chinese texts, the body was above all a space-time continuum defined in terms of its relationship to the social, natural, and political order. As the concept of Qi was formulated in this past ontological and cultural context, it is possible to hypothesize that the shift from the idea of an individual self to a "comprehensive" self is one of the major characteristics of the Qi experience. This intimate experience expands one's identity, which previously revolved egotistically around the material body, and allows the mind to imagine and feel its subjective body extend beyond its concrete image, at times as something circulating within a physical body, at others as an invisible cloud enveloping the physical body and its surroundings. It becomes clear why some Qigong practitioners feel like they are returning to past knowledge, while social scientists note the parallel phenomenon of the invention of a tradition that serves contemporary social needs. We are inclined to prefer the middle way defended by the sociologist Emilie Wilcox, who speaks of a "dynamic heritage," when observing, for instance, the development of traditional Chinese dance at the Beijing opera.

#### Qi: Between Esotericism, Science, and Practice

To summarize, the concept of Qi is described by the communities of practitioners who use it as a principle that is natural and essential, and, consequently, as a universal ingredient found in all living things. In contrast, for foreigners not familiar with the globalized Chinese language of the culture of Qi, it is a subjective phenomenon that can be perceived as singular and local—that is, as a belief or particular interpretation of psycho-physical phenomena that different cultures will explain differently. Finally, an intermediary position holds that an effective appropriation of the Qi experience depends on its performativity. In other words, it becomes meaningful to an individual or a group to the extent that it satisfies a need and that it provides a degree of self-improvement in response to this expectation (a health issue, for instance). One such example is that of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> D.T-Y. Wang, "Nei Jing Tu, a Daoist Diagram of the Internal Circulation of Man," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, Vol. 49/50 (1991/1992), p. 141-158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Catherine Despeux, "Le corps, champ spatio-temporel, souche d'identité," L'Homme, 1996, 36(137), 87-118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> David Palmer, JianXu, and Evelyne Micollier all agree about the reasons for the contemporary appearance of the word "Qigong" and the practices that it encompasses: the discipline, which first appeared in 1949, with the creation of the People's Republic of China, had as its political and scientific goal to "dust" popular superstitions off of a number of ancient physical exercises.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Emily Wilcox, *The Dialectics of Virtuosity: Dance in the People's Republic of China, 1949-2009*, Ph.D. dissertation for the degree of Joint Doctor of Philosophy in Medical Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, 2011.

Frenchman in his sixties who took a course at a Qigong institute because he suffered from knee joint problems. Regular exercise allowed him to reduce and occasionally end his intake of pain-killing medication. He freely admitted that he was curious about and receptive to Qi sensations, even if the idea was somewhat abstract to him. What mattered to him was that he felt the efficacy of physical exercise in relieving his pain, without having to explain more precisely how this occurred.

An increasing number of scientific studies test the psycho-physiological effects of Qigong, Taijiquan, meditation, and yoga on stress, chronic pain, the immune system, respiratory problems, insomnia, the side effects of cancer treatment, and on the quality of life more generally.<sup>21</sup> There have also been studies on the use of Qigong for addiction and depression. Yet there is no evidence within the current scientific paradigm that can legitimate the holistic discourse used in these exercises, and there is to my knowledge no study that demonstrates that these results are in any way different from traditional forms of exercise, such as walking and swimming. At this point, common sense seems adequate for understanding why soft techniques of this kind are better suited for people who are elderly or in reeducation or rehabilitation physiotherapy, for whom physical effort must be moderate. Thus there is a discrepancy between scientifically studied psychosomatic effects and the holistic and energetic discourse of the practitioners. Yet this is not a problem specific to Qigong, as there are regularly historical conflicts between scholarly knowledge and the empirical knowledge of the body, just as there is a recurring power relationship between medical knowledge and teachers, as Pierre Bourdieu observed in the case of sports.<sup>22</sup>

For this reason, optimists hope that a day will come when scientific advances and quantitative theories will support the experiential basis of these psychosomatic techniques, so that Qi achieves a kind of official legitimacy in the discourse of a new humanism. Convinced materialists will maintain that this belief, which has been renewed thanks to knowledge from a different era, will soon blend in with other ways of interpreting the living, joining the endless debate that generates new discourses and images of the mind-body relationship, whose physiological laws are apparently more stable. One finds here, too, a paradigmatic cleavage between vitalist approaches that value the pulse of life and living organisms and the reductionist trend of the natural sciences, which carefully dissect and classify the body's mechanisms.

In his "complex thought," Edgar Morin asks us to overcome such obstacles.<sup>23</sup> To take into account the complexity of "Qi culture" is, in a sense, to observe a "self-organizing system" in which the evolution of a personal dialogue between various strata of the sensory and the logical in human knowledge depends on a broader context of exchange: ontological source and cosmological reference of practicing and practitioner cultures, transnational spiritual movements, intercultural neo-orientalism, scientific discourse on somatic techniques, federation policies and association regulations relating to practice, school or style-based communal bonds, and so on. It is a system that encompasses intimate experience as much as well as the community in which it is lived, the culture of the practicing group, and the relationship between the social and natural environment with which it identifies. In this sense the experience of "vital forces" continues to pose very relevant questions to our conception of the "living body," challenging scholars in the human and social sciences to be open to new, less ethnocentric paradigms<sup>24</sup> and to take more seriously into account the impact of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ng. B.H.P. and Tsang H.W.H., "Psychophysiological outcomes of health qigong for chronic conditions: A systematic review," *Psychophysiology*, 46 (2009), 257–269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "Comment peut-on être sportif?," in *Questions de Sociologie*, Éditions de Minuit, 1980, p. 173-195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Edgar Morin, *Introduction à la pensée complexe*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2005.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> The colloquium organized by the research center "Bodily Techniques and Issues" (EA 3625 TEC), which is run by Bernard Andrieu, from June 26 to 30, 2016 at the University of Paris Descartes, launched the first convention of "emersiology," an emerging paradigm for understanding the "living body."

"awareness techniques" coming from the globalization of Asian practices<sup>25</sup>. By the same token, this humble attitude might encourage Asians to demystify their fascination with "Western" progress, before this consumerist and consumptive attraction proves fatal for the culture of Qi in China itself.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> See current works on this field: Chenault, M., Hamard, A., Hilpron, M. (2011) 'Introduction aux techniques de conscience du corps', *Transverse*, *2:31-46*.; Halloy A., Grison B., "Techniques de consciences du corps: pratiques, modèles théoriques et application", symposium June 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 2015, Nice University; Midol N., Chenault M., (2017), "Awareness practices", STAPS (to come).