

# Unlocking the Healing Powers in Your Hands

## The 18 Mudra System of Qigong



**for the Practical,  
the Pragmatic,  
the Holistic  
and the Spiritual**

***by: Seifu A. S. Umar Sharif, MA***

with a brief introduction to **Q-GP, The Qi-Golf Perspective**

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## Preface

Mudras are postures (asanas) of the hands. Like mudras, Qigong is a system of postures and movements that are correlated with breathing and meditation in order to positively effect the health and well-being of the practitioner. This book teaches a system of body-mind exercises based upon the ancient traditions of Qigong and Mudras. The 18 Mudra System of Qigong is designed and written for the Practical, Pragmatic, Holistic, and Spiritual reader. This text is not written for scholarly inquiry or academic research. Those readers might be better served by another text. But if you are looking for a system of exercises that you can integrate into your busy life and hectic schedule, This Is The One! Easy, Convenient, Powerful, Provocative, and Beautiful. Stimulate the entire nervous system, improve circulation, revitalize and energize your muscles and organs. Improve your concentration and mental focus, your emotional balance and sense of inner calm. Get sick less and heal faster. This book does not offer mudras or qigong as some sort of magic bullet. Instead, it says to you, "Of all the things that you can do to improve and maintain your health and vitality, be sure to include in your menu of options The Healing Powers in Your Hands, the 18 Mudra System of Qigong."

The practice of mudras, qigong, and other systems of body-mind energy manipulation have a long history of development and widespread use. They have no history of doing harm except perhaps where they have been seriously misused or abused. It is nonetheless generally advisable to follow these three steps in using any of these systems for health, exercise, and healing. First, LEARN from a qualified instructor (or clearly written book). Books and videotapes are fine for advanced students who already understand the basics of a system; or for new students who have contact with a qualified instructor who can answer questions and make sure that the contents of the book or video are being understood and practiced correctly. With that thought in mind, I've endeavored to make the contents of this book as clear and easy for you to follow as possible. If you do have questions you can contact me for answers or suggestions. Second, CLAIM/OWN what you have learned. That is, practice what you have learned [as you were taught] long enough and consistently enough to truly understand what you are doing and to recognize the short and long term benefits that the system has for you personally. You must make the system or techniques yours. This period might be from six months to a year, or longer. Be patient with yourself and with the system. Don't be in a rush or looking for a 'quick fix'. If others take an interest in what you are learning, be a good student and friend, and send them to a qualified instructor or to this book which is also encouraging them to find a good Qigong teacher. Seifu Sharif has been studying and practicing for over 35 years and studied for eight years before he began teaching others. Third, EVOLVE what you have learned in any way that you recognize or discover will improve the system or enhance its benefits for you. You are now ready to begin sharing what you have learned with others.



## About the Author

Seifu A. S. Umar Sharif, MA grew up in Harlem, New York City, N.Y. He earned his BS degree in Social Sciences from Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., and his MA degree (with emphasis in Medical Sociology, Social Organization, and Social Problems) from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. Seifu Sharif is a highly respected and sought after educator, public speaker, counselor, and consultant. He has provided his services to state and local governments, businesses, community organizations and educational institutions, national organizations and correctional institutions. He has been a practitioner and teacher of the Afro/Asian Martial and Healing Arts for over three decades. He is a Consultant Sociologist, and State Certified Sociology/Social Science Faculty and Martial Arts Instructor for the Maricopa County Community College District at Paradise Valley Community College (PVCC). An Alumnus of the East-West Center & University of Hawaii Asian Studied Development Program, Seifu Sharif has studied and traveled in China and Southeast Asia, and is Coordinator of the Afro/Asian Studies component of the PVCC Complementary Health Care Program. Seifu Sharif is affectionately called 'the doctor' by many of his students; and was respectfully given the name Xia' Xue` Gong (which means 'to learn from a master' or 'a model of learning') by his Chinese students while traveling in China. Seifu Sharif has studied and trained with several noted marital arts practitioners and Masters including:

Grand Master Alan Lee N.Y. [Chinese Kung Fu Wu Su Association]	—	Northern Southern Shaolin Kung Fu Wushu & Eight Silk Weaving Qigong
Master Musa [Moses Powell] N.Y.	—	Jujitsu
Sensei Luqman N.Y.	—	Aikido
Sensei Joel Muhammad AZ	—	Aikido
Sensei Muhammad Muhaymin N.Y./AZ	—	Aikido & Jujitsu
Master Li Shixin [Beijing University] China	—	Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan
Master Chen [Beijing University] China	—	Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan
Master Li [Qufu University] China	—	Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan

Seifu Sharif has also studied shotokan karate, tai quan do, Master Yamaguchi's Japanese Cat Style, and various martial arts weapons. He is also a practitioner of the African Spiritual Healing Traditions and various systems of Meditation. He has taught in New York, Arizona, Hawaii, and China, and has students scattered across the globe. He is a consultant to Tom Patrick, PGA Professional and Golf Course Developer, founder of Q-GP: The Qi-Golf Perspective, the application of eastern exercise, health and healing traditions to enhance enjoyment and performance in golf (and other sports). Seifu is an alumnus of Who's Who Among America's Teachers and a 1999 presenter at the Third World Congress on Qigong and 2nd American Qigong Association Conference held in San Francisco, California. He is founder of the Circles Southern/Northern Shaolin Kung Fu Wushu/Wugong & Qigong Pai.



*"Do not blame God  
for creating the Tiger,  
But thank Him for not  
having given it wings."*

*Ethiopia*



## Introduction

Have you every really paid attention to the various ways you hold your hands? You may have noticed that you hold your hands in slightly different ways when you are thinking, anxious, or not feeling well. Take the time to make a candid observation of other people, in your office, on the street, even at home. You will see that there is an intimate connection between our psycho-emotional state and the postures and movements of our hands. This relationship is not unique to your hands. We see this same connection between our patterns of breathing and our psycho-emotional states. Every major shift in our psycho-emotional state produces a corresponding shift in our breathing. Fear has a breath. Passion has a breath. Calm has a breath. Anxiety and stress have related breathing patterns. And so on. As a student and teacher of Qigong and the Shaolin Martial Arts I have had to entertain the same question that practitioners have contemplated for thousands of years. Is this relationship between breathing and psycho-emotional state a 'two-way street'? And the answer is an absolute yes! If we learn to control our breathing, we can also alter our psycho-emotional states. Singers experience this when they sing. Actors and actresses use this fact to 'get into character'. Meditators traverse the corridors of consciousness riding effortlessly upon the breath. Athletes and performers of all kinds can be seen taking a deep breath before beginning their 'performance'. We also know that there is a direct relationship between our psycho-emotional state and our health. Although exposure to agents of illness is a factor, it is 'dis-ease', 'energy imbalance', and disharmony in the rhythm of the breath, that is the usher who invites 'disease' to come in and abide.

Now the same principle can be applied to mudras, postures of the hands. Since we tend to position or posture our hands in correspondence with various mood states, then it is possible to manipulate the hands in such way as to 'induce' various psycho-emotional shifts in mood, consciousness, and awareness. We can also evoke Life Force, Vital Energy to flow more freely and abundantly in, around, through, and from our bodies. This book offers you the opportunity to experience The Healing Powers In Your Hands. The 18 Mudra System of Qigong is a selected set of mudras adapted to be easy to learn, comfortable to perform, and powerful in their ability to stimulate the energy channels of your body and mind, facilitating Health, Healing, and Well-being.

The 'practice' of mudras really began when the first of our ancient ancestors sat down to think or pass the time and folded his or her hands in a way that caught their attention. In other words, that ancestor not only performed a mudra, but also became aware of the effect that it had on their psycho-emotional state. From that point forward there have been those among us who have pursued a deeper understanding of the positions of the hands and fingers and their relationship to the health of mind, body, and spirit. Over the millennia our Ancestors have ascribed names, meanings, and qualities to the mudras. Mudras have been used to induce trance, heal the body and mind, improve mental focus, achieve enlightenment, prepare for battle, and praise God. Before the advent of the television, it was not uncommon for us to see our children sitting quietly, busily experimenting with mudras [playing with their fingers]. If we're lucky we can still catch them doing it when the t.v. is broke or the power goes out. Even infants, without conscious awareness, use their hands as a way of altering their psycho-emotional disposition, entertaining themselves, or relieving distress. Even gang signs are mudras; mudras being used to induce identification with a certain social or asocial energy. Mudras exist as a characteristic of our species, but certain cultures have

integrated the 'practice' of mudras into everyday life more than others. Mudras have a history on the African continent from indigenous practices to ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. Mudras are most prominent in the history, practices, and iconology of Hinduism and Buddhism which predominate in India, Asia, and Southeast Asia. The Chinese Shaolin and Japanese Samurai and Ninja traditions included mudras in the training of their monks and martial artists. Mudras are practiced in the esoteric aspects of Islam and even in the Sunni Muslims' five daily prayers when the believer sits on bent knees, declares that 'there is but one God', and points the right index finger while making this declaration. In fact, it is doubtful that there is any religious, esoteric, or metaphysical practice that does not employ some form of mudras. In the Eastern cultures attention is drawn to the significance of the mudras because of the way and degree to which they are integrated into the everyday life of the society. But in the West, we are primarily instructed about hand gesturing as it relates to interpersonal communication. We are not taught about hand postures as they relate to intrapersonal communication and the health, well-being, and spiritual development of the practitioner.

The 18 Mudra System of Qigong is derived and adapted from three sources. Fourteen of the mudras are adapted from the Hindu tradition. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands of these mudras. The first set in the 18 Mudra System of Qigong has been referred to as the Mudras for the Worship of the Divine Mother.<sup>1</sup> After practicing these mudras, personally experiencing their effects, listening to the comments of my students, and adapting the mudras to maximize their effect in stimulating the various energy meridians [pathways], I felt that they would give you the holistic health benefits that we are all seeking. They also reflect the kind of personal, social and spiritual philosophy that I consider important to achieving High Level Wellness. Three of the mudras (Part II) are from the innumerable icons of the Buddha that I observed while traveling in China and Southeast Asia. These particular mudras elicited powerful feelings of love, empathy, compassion, humility, kindness, patience, and diligence in me as I observed and practiced them. And these are feelings that I want to share with you in hopes that you will internalize them and extend them to others. The Healing Place Mudra [our CENTRAL transitional posture] is from a childhood image I have in my mind that I believe came from an African wood carving of a tribal healer sitting in 'healing meditation'. The other transitional posture is Namaskaram Mudra which is the Hindu position of greetings. It is the same mudra that most Christians and many others use in prayer, hands held upward with palms together. The Healing Place Mudra and Namaskaram Mudra will be performed, with few exceptions, in between each of the other mudras to link them into a comprehensive system of energy manipulation and meditation. The final mudra in the system (Part III) is called Eagle Perched on the Cliff Mudra and is another one of the mudras that I personally developed for my Shaolin Kung Fu and Qigong students. This mudra closes the set with a wonderful message of opportunity and unlimited possibilities.

The information and lessons in this book are laid out in a very easy to follow format. In Chapter 1 we'll discuss how to get the best use and enjoyment out of this book and the 18 Mudra System of Qigong. In Chapter 2 we'll cover the concept of 'Qi' [Chi] from the Chinese perspective, from a cross-cultural perspective, and from a state-of-the-art scientific perspective. We'll also discuss some of the research into the health benefits of Qigong practice and you will learn a powerful system of breathing that you will use while doing the 18 Mudra System of Qigong. These powerful breathing

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<sup>1</sup> These days you can find numerous internet sites listing mudras. Some show sketches and offer brief traditional meanings. One such site is called ShreeMaa. None provide the level of instruction you will receive from this

techniques will revitalize your respiratory system, invigorate your metabolism and immune system, and help you to achieve instant relaxation, calm, and peace of mind. In Chapter 3 we'll introduce some of the deeper metaphysical aspects of this system by briefly discussing Odic Impressions and the Akashic Record. Chapters 4 and 5 present the central and connecting postures of the system referred to as the Transitional Mudras. In Part I, Chapters 6-19, we will explain and describe each of the first fourteen mudras, Mudras To The Mother Goddess. In Part II, Chapters 20-22, the Buddha Mudras will be presented. Part III, Chapter 23, is devoted to the closing mudra in the system, 'Eagle Perched on the Cliff' 7 Circles Mudra. Each mudra is presented from several different perspectives, the philosophical or spiritual meditation of the mudra, the physical performance of the mudra, and the energy meridians effected by the mudra. Each Chapter is complete with pictures laid out in an easy to follow sequence leading you step by step to unlocking the Healing Powers in Your Hands. In Chapter 24 we'll review a summary chart of the 18 Mudra System of Qigong. And, in Chapter 25 I'll suggest ways of integrating the 18 Mudras into your everyday life.

After a final word on Qigong I'll make a brief introduction on Q-GP: The Qi-Golf Perspective for you golfers out there. The practice of Qigong can improve your performance and enjoyment of your chosen recreational active or sport. The general improvement in health, focus, body awareness, and confidence that you will experience will lead naturally to improvements in other areas. With the growing interest in golf these days, one of my students (and a dear friend) Tom Patrick, PGA Golf Professional and International Golf Course Developer and I have included a brief introduction to Q-GP: The Qi-Golf Perspective at the end of this book. Tom came to me some 15 years ago taking eighteen aspirin per day, with chronic back pain, and a recommendation for back surgery. I'm not a golfer myself but from what Tom says, there are many golfers out there who have made PAIN a part of the Game. As he told it at the Third World Congress on Qigong, within several days he noticed some changes; within weeks he was experiencing noticeable improvements; and within a few months he was pain free, aspirin free, and he never had the surgery or any more pain. Tom is a dedicated student of the Fire Flower System of Qigong. According to Tom, Qigong also measurably improved his golf game. At the end of the book you will find a list of recommended books to further your knowledge of topics that require greater depth than this book will allow.

You are about to become acquainted with your hands in a way that you never have before. And your relationship to them will never be the same. You are yet a mystery, even to yourself. Beyond the surface of simple gestures lies a deeper understanding of yourself and your ability to live a longer, healthy life; to heal yourself and others. Extend your hands and discover the mystery that is you! Pure Potential!



*"We live our choices."*

*Umar Sharif*

