

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN BODY SCIENCE IN CHINA

Yan Zhichao

Institute of Science Policy and Management
Academia Sinica

It was reported by Si-Chuan Daily of March 11, 1979 that Tang Yu, a student of 12 years old in Da-zu county, could read with ears. After this, a number of unusual persons with special abilities were identified in localities and reported by the press. In January of 1980, 14 persons with special abilities participated in the First Symposium on Special Abilities of Human Body and performed their special abilities in public.

These fantastic news attracted the attention of personalities of various circles and evoked discussions among scientists. If the special abilities of unusual person were true, science would face a great challenge and a exploratory field of total new. More and more scientists joined in the excavation and research on the special phenomena. In September of 1979, the National magazine published in Shanghai came to series reporting of investigations and experiments in special abilities of human body, touching up not only the special information process but also queer energy process and physical, biological and physiological effects.

Simultaneously, a new upsurge in Qi-Gong was in the making. It should be noted that Qi-Gong was regarded not only as a method of cultivating moral character and healthing and strengthening physical body but also a subject of modern science in the new development. As the research on Qi-Gong and special ability of human body was deve-

loping, it was identified that there were similarities and interlinks between Qi-Gong and special ability of human body and that some phenomena of Qi-Gong and special ability of human body related with the theory of traditional Chinese medical science. Some persons insight awaked to the profound inner relations among phenomena of human body in Qi-Gong, special ability and traditional Chinese medicine.

It was supposed that deeper mysteries of human body would be brought to light if the theoretical and experimental research on Qi-Gong and special ability of human body with the knowledge and means of modern science and technology were developing, the practice and theory of Qi-Gong and traditional medicine with the history of thousands years could be assimilated and the research on special ability, Qi-Gong and Chinese traditional medicine could be integrated closely. The basic concept and frame of human body science in China was clear gradually and put forward by Prof. Qian Xue-sen. Traditional Chinese medicine, Qi-Gong and special ability are an organic whole and integrated subject of research and the human body science has to take these three aspects into account at least. In May of 1986, the representative assembly of human body science was opened and the National Society of Human Body Science was set up in Beijing which was officially ratified by the State Commission of Science and Technology in May of 1987.

The research object of human body science, as the term suggests, is human body obviously. But as for human body, the understanding or the research angles of human body science is distinct from such traditional branches of learning as physiology, modern medicine psychology, and etc. Developing and integrating knowledge of traditional disciplines, human body science holds a systematic view of human body and treats it as an enormous, complex and opened organic system with consciousness. First, with huge variety and number of

component parts like biological moleculars and cells and interactions differing in thousands of ways. human body is a complex and enormous huge system. much bigger than what is called big system generally. Second, as a living organism, human body is an open system keeping its communication and association with environment and even the Universe constantly. Third, the most important character of human being has consciousness and the exercise and operation of consciousness counteracts upon human body itself.

Using the methodology of system theory, human body science describes the huge system of human body by overall function state of human body, namely the function conditions manifested by human body as a whole at certain time and space. Some phenomena in traditional medicine, special ability and Qi-Gong are considered as special function states and readjustment of function states. The function states of human body could be adjusted and changed through three ways:

1. material and energy exchange of human body with external world.
such as eating, drinking and taking medicine and etc.
2. information and field exchange, such as electromagnetic fields, sound wave and etc.
3. exercise and operation of human consciousness, the highest level of operation, counteracting lower level of human body.

The research on human body science involves many traditional disciplines, such as biology, physiology, psychology, medicine and etc., but it strides across these branches of learning at the same time. It is necessary to conduct interdisciplinary research and coordinate efforts of specialists of various learning. Especially for research on special ability of human body, supporting cooperations of unusual person with special ability is essential. There constantly exists two-way interactions of the person with special ability, researchers, instruments and environment in experimental research. The

macro functions of human body and the micro structure and mechanism of function states can be described and grasped only by directing of philosophy concerning the relations of human being with the Universe and synthetical agglomerating of all gained knowledge concerning human body, including the rational and the perceptual knowledge, the scientific and the experienced, the qualitative and the quantitative.

Some research phenomena reported in human body science, especially some special abilities, are beyond the experience of most people. For example, it is difficult for general thinking to image people reading without using of their eyes. Judging from the scientific standard accepted by most scientists, some design of experiments and theoretical explanations in human body science have not convinced the whole scientific and technological circles. For example, it seems that nobody has put forward a theory or hypothesis that can perfectly explain the essential nature of external Qi emitted from Qi-Gong master. Regarding human body science in China, there have existed disputes since the very beginning. Material matter, consciousness and their relations spark controversies perpetually in philosophy. The Qi-Gong art in China goes back to ancient times. And in its development, various cultural components coming from Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and traditional medicine have been integrated and different sects and schools in theory and practice have been formed. At the high tide of the research on Qi-Gong and special abilities of human body, people of all descriptions flock to join in so inevitably the waters are muddied and the bad becomes mixed with the good. Suitable policies and management will promote the sound development of human body science.