

Document 1: The “Guiding and Pulling” Chart (*Daoyintu*)



This chart was found in Mawangdui Tomb No. 3. It shows forty-four people—men and women, young and old—engaged in a kind of gymnastics believed to heal some diseases and extend life. The chart is considered the ancestor of the exercises called *qigong* practiced today in China and all over the world.

“Guiding and pulling” (*Daoyin*) refers to the different postures involved in these exercises. The physical basis for *daoyin* is *qi*. In the last centuries before the beginning of the Common Era the Chinese came to believe that the whole world and everything in it was made of *qi*. *Qi* was the basis of Chinese medicine. Wellness was the result of *qi* circulating freely throughout the body. Exercises could help *qi* circulate properly.



The philosopher Zhuangzi (4th century BCE) criticized those merely interested in extending life through exercise. In the process he gives readers the names of some exercises:

“To huff and puff, exhale and inhale, blow out the old breath and take in the new, do the ‘bear stride’ and the ‘bird stretch,’ and to be interested in nothing more than longevity, these are the methods of those who practice the ‘guiding and pulling (of the vital breath) (*daoyin*)’” (*Zhuangzi* 15; Roth 1999: 170).