

Book review

Pang, M. (2014). *The Theory of Hunyuan Whole Entity: Foundation of Zhineng Qigong Science*. (Y. Zhang, Trans.) (Vol. 2). Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.: ZQ Educational Corporation.

The *Theory of Hunyuan Whole Entity* is the first complete English translation of the Chinese original written by Pang Ming, the founder of the “Zhineng” style of Qigong. The Chinese original was published in 1994 as the fourth book in a 9-volume series of college-level textbooks which laid out the basic principles of Pang Ming’s “Qigong science”. Pang Ming’s ideas are still highly relevant to serious practitioners of Qigong and also offers many insights to practitioners of “energy medicine” such as reiki, yoga, or transcendental meditation.

Pang Ming’s books must be understood in the context of the Chinese Qigong fever. In China during the 1980’s and early 1990’s, Chinese society was swept by the largest non-political social movement in China’s modern history, referred to as the “Qigong fever” (*qigong re* 气功热). During this period, charismatic Qigong masters attracted thousands, sometimes millions of followers, filling entire stadiums with spectators and sick people who had come to cure their diseases through the master’s emission of external “Qi” (*qifa* 气发). Universities, semi-official research associations and leaders in the medical and military establishments supported large-scale research into the phenomenon of “Qi” and the “paranormal abilities” which were believed to be developed through the practice of Qigong. Like many educated Qigong masters at the time, Pang Ming was deeply interested in resurrecting Chinese traditional culture after the painful events of the Cultural Revolution, to strip it from its “superstitious” past and the many dubious Qigong masters who were spreading false and sometimes dangerous teachings, and create a new, revolutionary kind of science based on Qi and paranormal abilities. Pang Ming devoted much of his energy to use Zhineng Qigong to treat terminally ill patients and develop people’s “paranormal abilities”. He founded several training and rehabilitation institutes, the largest of which is now known as the “medicine-less hospital”. This hospital operated for 10 years in northern China, during which it treated over 200,000 patients using Zhineng Qigong.

Zhang Yuhong’s translation has done the many English-speaking practitioners of Zhineng

Qigong a great favour by producing the first complete translation of one of Pang Ming's most important books. Although the ideas found in the book have been previously translated in part, these translations usually left out critical parts without indicating such omissions. Pang Ming's discussion of the "materiality of consciousness" for instance makes many references to the writings of Marx, Lenin and Engels, which were a central aspect of Pang Ming's ideas, but have not been translated into English by previous translators so as not to confuse English readers with the political context in which Zhineng Qigong was created. Zhang has done an excellent job not only by preserving the difficult aspects of Pang Ming's original work, but also by adding footnotes to clarify some terms. Pang Ming's reference to "modern science" for instance is usually left without further comment, however, as it becomes clear in reading Zhang's translation, Pang Ming was primarily referring to a very specific branch of modern science - the so-called "new and old three theories" of systems theory, cybernetics, informationism and dissipative structure theory, mutationism, and synergetics, which had become very popular in China during the 1980's. Having had the rare opportunity to directly clarify key concepts in the book with Pang Ming certainly helped her accurately reflect Pang Ming's intentions.

Translating Chinese to English is an extremely challenging task, and so it does not surprise that despite the translator's best efforts, many passages of the book are still difficult understand, with many terms and sentences seemingly translated to preserve faithfulness to the original at the expense of readability. Issues of historical context and language barriers aside, Zhang Yuhong's translation stands as the most accurate translation of Pang Ming's ideas thus far, and for the first time gives Western readers an unadulterated look into one of the most powerful forms of Qigong to have come out of China.

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