



Phenomenological Study on the Meditation Experience of Qigong Practitioners

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Abstract

This study conducted in-depth, one-on-one interviews with three long-term Qigong practitioners who have been consistently practicing meditation for over 20 years to analyze the significance of their meditation experiences and the changes these practices have brought to their lives through phenomenological research. The findings reveal that, through the course of over two decades of meditation practice, these long-term Qigong practitioners have experienced natural healing, are now able to regulate their bodies to maintain health, manage stress through mind control leading to comfort, deep sleep, and smoother interpersonal relationships. They reported an increase in life's wisdom, abundance, joy, happiness, gratitude, consideration, compassion, and altruism, resulting in a more relaxed life. Furthermore, by recognizing the true self, comprehending situations, and gaining awareness, they have engaged in self-reflection and internal growth, leading to positive changes in their life values and an overall improvement in the quality of life.

The study suggests that for future research to achieve a deeper and more scientific understanding of meditation, experiential research that involves researchers directly experiencing and observing the profound states of meditation is also necessary.

Keywords: Meditation experiences, Long-term Qigong practitioners, In-depth interviews, Quality of life, Phenomenological.

1. INTRODUCTION

The ancient Chinese practice of Qigong, which has been passed down through the ages, is known as a method of mind-body cultivation for regulating both the physical body and the mind. Qigong meditation is fundamentally based on three aspects: adjusting the body, regulating the mind, and controlling the breath. In contemporary China, Qigong meditation is not associated with any particular religion or faction but is regarded as a purification of the ancient tradition of the Hundred Schools of Thought, with a common emphasis on 'RUJING', or Qigongtai. Rujing represents a deeply serene and stable state of practice, characterized by a clear consciousness focusing the intention (Yinian) on the lower elixir field (Xiadantian). With consistent focus on the lower elixir field Xiadantian for a certain period, a concentrated energy known as "dan" is formed, which possesses strong vitality. This energy helps expel bodily ailments, stabilizes the mind, and promotes purification, thereby enhancing the physical and mental well-being. Moreover, concentrating the mind in one place trains the mental muscles, maintaining a subtle state of meditation[1].

Meditation, with its religious and spiritual connotations becoming diluted and more accessible to the general public, is spreading widely, leading to an increasing number of people engaging in meditation practices. Not only is there a growing interest in meditation, but many scholars are also actively experiencing and incorporating meditation into their lives while dedicating themselves to scientific research. Studies on the neurophysiological characteristics of meditation have reported that during chakra-focused meditation, the emergence of stable alpha waves indicating a state of tranquility, and as practitioners reach higher stages such as the 7th chakra, the characteristics of gamma waves,



representing a transcendent awakening state, become more prominent[2]. Furthermore, in experienced practitioners of Qigong, the increase in theta and SMR waves is reported to represent an expression of a higher level of relaxed concentration[3]. However, while the depth of meditation has been demonstrated through brainwave patterns, nothing has been shown regarding the experiential content of meditation. Shapiro[4] suggests that if meditation holds any unique meaning, it may not be found in psychological or physiological studies, but rather likely exists within the experiences of the individuals. Therefore, this researcher aims to phenomenologically explore how individuals with over 20 years of meditation experience, termed as long-term practitioners of meditation perceive meditation, what experiences they have, and how their lives have changed as a result.

Qualitative research methodology is inherently phenomenological and interpretive, as it seeks to understand phenomena through participants' lived experiences and the meanings derived from those experiences. Therefore, phenomenological research is considered a valuable approach for exploring experiences, meanings, and values in life. In the realm of meditation-related qualitative research, there are reports on various specialized meditation experiences, such as positive changes in mind and body, unique meditation experiences encompassing physical, emotional, and temporal changes, as well as spiritual experiences, positive effects on physical and emotional changes in elderly women, self-growth, positive self-healing, and spiritual practices seeking insight into "one's true self"[5-10]. However, there is a lack of qualitative research on meditation experiences among practitioners with over 20 years of qigong training.

The researcher has engaged in qigong practice and qigong instruction for over 30 years, regularly receiving training to enhance theoretical knowledge and skills required as an instructor. Additionally, over the course of 30 years, the researcher has diligently practiced qigong daily, delving deep into qigong meditation, known as Rujing, to experience the infinite potential of human capabilities. Through providing qigong instruction to various groups including the general public, medical professionals, religious practitioners, college students, graduate students, and pregnant women, the researcher has personally witnessed the positive effects of meditation. This experience has led to a deep interest in studying the meditation experiences and life transformations of experienced meditation practitioners. Hence, the aim of this study is to understand the meditation experiences and life changes of long-term practitioners of qigong meditation, with over 20 years of experience, through their experiential accounts.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted based on a qualitative research design concerning the meditation experiences of long-term practitioners of Qigong, with approval for the research obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Daejeon University (IRB: 1040647-202212-HR-004-03).

2. 1. Research Design

To investigate the meditation experiences of long-term practitioners of Qigong, this researcher conducted a sequence of collecting and analyzing research materials, including recordings and transcriptions of preliminary interviews and research interviews, to derive results. The design for executing this study is as outlined in <Table 1>.

< Table 1 > Research Design

Research Subjects / Stage	Preliminary Interviews	Research Interviews	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Research Findings
Long-term practitioners of Qigong meditation	General characteristics, life lived while practicing Qigong meditation	Experiences of Qigong meditation and changes in life (physical, mental, spiritual)	Contents of in-depth interviews, phone, email, text messages	Phenomenological reduction	Discussion, research outcomes



2.2. Research Participants

Participant A is a medical professional born in 1972 who has been practicing Qigong meditation for 21 years, driven by an interest in alternative medicine. This practitioner leads a humble and courteous life, filled with pure innocence. They have maintained a daily practice of Qigong meditation for 30 minutes to an hour, achieving both physical health and mental serenity.

Participant B, born in 1945 and a retired finance professional, has practiced Qigong meditation for 32 years following Zen meditation and Danjeon breathing. Free from adult diseases, B engages in hiking for more than two hours daily and is known for their rigorous self-discipline, consideration, and kindness, earning respect from others. They consistently incorporate 30 minutes to an hour of Qigong meditation into their daily hiking routine.

Participant C, a homemaker born in 1947, has been practicing Qigong meditation for 24 years. They are known for their bright personality, clear eyes, and energetic vitality. C has found comfort and joy in life through consistently dedicating more than two hours daily to Qigong meditation.

< Table 2 > General Characteristics of Research Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Meditation Practices	Total Duration of Practice	Daily Practice Duration
A	Male	52	PhD	Medical Professional	Qigong Meditation	21 years	1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes
B	Male	78	PhD	Retired Finance Professional	Zen Meditation and Danjeon Breathing, Qigong Meditation	32 years	30 minutes to 1 hour
C	Female	76	Junior High School Graduate	Homemaker	Qigong Meditation	24 years	More than 2 hours

The participants are three long-term practitioners of Qigong meditation who have been consistently practicing daily for over 20 years and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study after understanding its purpose.

2.3. Data Collection

This study centered on in-depth interview recordings, text materials, and field notes regarding the meditation experiences of three participants who have been practicing Qigong meditation for over 20 years. Additional data were collected through phone calls, emails, and text messages with the participants. Data collection for this study was carried out from April to June 2023.

The research interviews were conducted in study meeting rooms located in Seoul and Bundang, each lasting 90 minutes and based on questionnaires. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and simultaneously transcribed, and observations made during the interviews were noted. The transcribed interview materials were documented along with field notes while listening to the recordings. Additional inquiries were made via phone calls, with the participants' consent for simultaneous recording, while further detailed questions were addressed through emails or text messages, then documented and organized into the interview data.

The overall interview data collected from the participants were organized into tables according to the categories and main contents identified during the research preparation process.

2.4. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the collected Qigong meditation interview data using a phenomenological method [11] as follows. Firstly, the researcher read through the transcribed interview materials multiple times to grasp the overall context of physical, mental, spiritual, and life changes resulting from Qigong



meditation experiences. Meaningful statements were extracted and categorized.

Secondly, meaning units were extracted from the participants' meaningful statements. For each participant, tables of meaning units were created and compared with the original raw data to ensure no information was missing from the initial interview materials. This was followed by a verification process with the participants.

Thirdly, tables of meaning units created from the participants' statements about their Qigong meditation experiences were grouped into units with related or similar aspects to form a consolidated table of meaning units, facilitating the process of thematization.

Fourthly, the meaning units expressed in the participants' language were translated into academic language, undergoing a process of 'reflection and free variation'[11].

Fifthly, based on the created tables, the meaning units were categorized to derive the essential thematic meanings (physical, mental, spiritual, and life changes) of Qigong meditation experiences.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Qi Gong Meditation Practice Schedule and Total Practice Time

Long-term Qigong practitioners reported practicing for a total of 30 minutes to 2 hours every morning, noon, and evening.

Every morning before going to work for 10 to 15 minutes, at lunchtime 2 to 3 times a week for 10 to 15 minutes each time, and in the evening before sleeping for 30 minutes to 1 hour, totaling 1 to 1.5 hours of practice per day. (Practitioner A)

After waking up in the morning for about 10 minutes, during hikes at lunchtime for about 30 minutes, totaling 30 minutes to 1 hour of practice per day. (Practitioner B)

Upon waking up in the morning for 40 minutes to 1 hour, and before going to sleep in the evening for more than 1 hour, totaling more than 2 hours of practice per day. (Practitioner C)

<Table 3> Categories of Qi Gong Meditation Practice Schedule and Total Practice Time

Top Category	Subcategory	Description
Every Morning	At Home	Engages in practice for 10 to 15 minutes before getting ready for work. (Practitioner A)
		Meditates for approximately 10 minutes after waking up. (Practitioner B)
		Practices for 40 minutes to an hour after dawn prayer. (Practitioner C)
Every Lunchtime	At Work	Practices 2 to 3 times a week, each session lasting 10 to 15 minutes. (Practitioner A)
	During Hikes	Engages in 30 minutes of practice daily during hikes. (Practitioner B)
Every Evening	At Home	Practices for 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime. (Practitioner A)
		Engages in about an hour of practice before sleep. (Practitioner C)
Total Daily Practice Time	At Home or Work, and During Hikes	Totals 1 to 1.5 hours of practice at home or work. (Practitioner A)
		Totals 30 minutes to an hour of practice at home or during hikes. (Practitioner B)
		Totals 2 hours of practice at home. (Practitioner C)



3.1.2. Qigong Meditation Experiences and Life Changes

1) Wisdom of Life

Long-term Qigong practitioners have reported that through prolonged practice of Qigong meditation, they have gained wisdom in life, including self-regulation of the body, emotional regulation, maintaining mental health, and fostering healthy interpersonal relationships.

(1) Self-regulation of the Body

① Circulation, Unblock, and Clarity

Long-term Qigong practitioners experienced feeling energy in their bodies and accumulating energy in the lower abdomen (Dantian) during meditation practice. They reported improvements in energy circulation, unblocking of obstructed areas in the body, clearer vision, salivation, and healthier skin.

With energy accumulating in the Dantian and a sense of warmth in the Dantian and Baihui, one feels energy throughout the body. The body feels thoroughly unblocked, saliva accumulates, the mouth feels refreshed, vision clears, and the skin becomes glossy and improves. (Practitioner A)

Warm energy is felt in the hands and feet. There's a feeling of unblocking in the chest and head, clearer vision, and a glossy face. (Practitioner B)

After meditating, the previously constricted chest feels completely unblocked and refreshed; the head and eyes also clear, and saliva production increases. (Practitioner C)

② Relaxation, Fatigue Relief, and Lightness

Long-term Qigong practitioners reported feeling relaxed and less fatigued, leading to a sensation of lightness in the body during meditation practice.

The body relaxes, releasing tension in the neck and shoulders, and despite extensive physical activity or hiking, fatigue diminishes and the body feels lighter. (Practitioner A)

The effects of relaxation and concentration are achieved simultaneously, improving body flexibility and agility, giving a sensation of floating. (Practitioner B)

The previously tense body relaxes, spreading energy throughout, feeling less tired regardless of activity, and always feeling light. (Practitioner C)

③ Natural Healing, Quality Sleep

Long-term Qigong practitioners have experienced natural healing and quality sleep on a daily basis through Qigong meditation practice.

Practicing Qigong meditation has habituated a posture that straightens the spine, easing stiff neck and enhancing resistance to bodily pain, leading to quality sleep. (Practitioner A)

Qigong meditation practice has eliminated severe allergic rhinitis symptoms. Falling asleep at 10 PM leads to uninterrupted sleep until 5 AM, maintaining health without any particular ailments. (Practitioner B)

Meditation immediately cures colds and significantly relieves back pain, ensuring daily quality sleep. (Practitioner C)

④ Self-regulation, Maintaining Health

Long-term Qigong practitioners maintain their health through self-regulation using Qigong exercises or meditation, as confirmed by normal results in medical check-ups.

When feeling ill, I self-regulate through Qigong exercises or meditation, maintaining a healthy state each morning through long-term Qigong meditation practice. (Practitioner A)

Yearly medical check-ups have consistently shown 'very good health status,' which I attribute to the benefits of Qigong meditation practice. (Practitioner B)

Previously frail, meditation practice has significantly contributed to maintaining my health. Medical check-ups every two years show no illness. Focusing on a painful area during meditation naturally heals, for which I am very grateful. (Practitioner C)

(2) Emotional Regulation

① Focusing on the Lower xiadantian

Long-term Qigong practitioners have described that when they experience emotional disturbances, focusing on the Lower xiadantian as a means of calming the mind leads to comfort and naturally resolves all emotions, resulting in a sense of stability.



When energy is felt and observed to grow in the Lower Dantian (Xiadantian), irritability and anger are forgotten, leading to a state of comfort and a return to the original state of peace. (Practitioner A)

Almost never do I get angry, but if something displeasing happens, entering a state of meditation and calming the mind naturally resolves the disturbance, bringing about quietude, comfort, peace, and stability. (Practitioner B)

When I am disturbed, focusing on the Lower Dantian calms my mind. (Practitioner C)

② Stress Reduction and Development of Inner Strength

Long-term Qigong practitioners reported that meditation practice eradicates negative thoughts and fosters an inner strength that alleviates stress, thereby enhancing the ability to purify emotions.

An inner strength that alleviates stress emerges, negative thoughts disappear, and the ability to purify emotions becomes significantly faster. (Practitioner A)

Stress relief and a sense of comfort and peace pervade, resolving psychological traumas and restoring normalcy. Uncomfortable feelings are transformed into more constructive energy, and negative emotions are blocked. (Practitioner B)

Meditation practice builds my inner strength. When my mind is turbulent, I experience self-calming. (Practitioner C)

(3) Harmonious Interpersonal Relationships

Long-term Qigong practitioners have responded that prolonged meditation practice leads to avoiding disputes and enhancing communication, resulting in harmonious interpersonal relationships.

Communication improves, disputes are avoided, life is led proactively, and interpersonal relationships become harmonious. (Practitioner A)

I have gained confidence in my interpersonal relationships. (Practitioner B)

Seeing people becomes enjoyable, communication flows smoothly, disputes are avoided, and interpersonal relationships are harmonious. (Practitioner C)

<Table 4> Qigong Meditation Experiences and Life Changes - Categories of Life Wisdom

Top Category	Subcategory	Description
Body Regulation	Circulation, Unblock, and Clarity	Energy accumulates significantly in the Dantian, and a sense of warmth is felt in the Dantian and Baihui. The whole body feels thoroughly unblocked, saliva accumulates, and the mouth feels refreshed. Eyes become clear, and the skin looks glossy and improves. (Practitioner A)
		Warm sensations are felt in the hands and feet, with a sensation of clearing in the chest and head, leading to clear eyes and a glossy face. (Practitioner B)
		After meditating, the previously constricted chest feels completely unblocked and refreshed; the head and eyes also clear, and saliva production increases. (Practitioner C)
	Relaxation, Fatigue Relief, and Lightness	The body relaxes, releasing tension in the neck and shoulders. Even after extensive physical activity or hiking, fatigue lessens, and the body feels lighter. (Practitioner A)
		The effects of relaxation and concentration are achieved simultaneously, enhancing body flexibility and agility, giving a sensation of floating. (Practitioner B)
		The previously tense body relaxes, spreading energy throughout, feeling less tired regardless of activity, and always feeling light. (Practitioner C)
	Natural	Practicing Qigong meditation has habituated a posture that straightens the spine, easing stiff neck and



	Healing, Quality Sleep	enhancing resistance to bodily pain, leading to quality sleep and significantly improved health. (Practitioner A)
		Qigong meditation practice has eliminated severe allergic rhinitis symptoms. Falling asleep at 10 PM leads to uninterrupted sleep until 5 AM, maintaining health without any particular ailments. (Practitioner B)
		Meditation immediately cures colds and significantly relieves back pain, ensuring daily quality sleep. (Practitioner C)
	Self-regulation, Maintaining Health	When feeling ill, I self-regulate through Qigong exercises or meditation, maintaining a healthy state each morning through long-term Qigong meditation practice. (Practitioner A)
		Yearly medical check-ups have consistently shown “very good health status,” which I attribute to the benefits of Qigong meditation practice. (Practitioner B)
		Previously frail, meditation practice has significantly contributed to maintaining my health. Medical check-ups every two years show no illness. Focusing on a painful area during meditation naturally heals, for which I am very grateful. (Practitioner C)
Emotional Regulation	Focusing on the Lower xiadantian	Feeling and observing the energy expand in the Lower xiadantian helps forget irritation and anger, leading to comfort and a return to the original state of peace. (Practitioner A)
		Rarely do I get angry, but if something displeasing happens, entering a state of meditation and calming the mind naturally resolves the disturbance, bringing about quietude, comfort, peace, and stability. (Practitioner B)
		When I am disturbed, focusing on the Lower xadantian calms my mind. (Practitioner C)
	Stress Reduction, Development of Inner Strength	An inner strength that alleviates stress emerges, negative thoughts disappear, and the ability to purify emotions becomes significantly faster. (Practitioner A)
		Stress relief and a sense of comfort and peace pervade, resolving psychological traumas and restoring normalcy. Uncomfortable feelings are transformed into more constructive energy, and negative emotions are blocked. (Practitioner B)
		Meditation practice builds my inner strength. When my mind is tumultuous, I experience self-calming. (Practitioner C)
Healthy interpersonal relationships	Smooth Communication	Communication improves, disputes are avoided, life is led proactively, and interpersonal relationships become harmonious. (Practitioner A)
		Confidence in interpersonal relationships has grown, maintaining harmonious relations. (Practitioner B)
		Communication flows smoothly, disputes are avoided, never harboring negative feelings towards others, finding joy in seeing people, and maintaining harmonious relationships. (Practitioner C)



2) Leisure of Life

Long-term Qigong practitioners have experienced joy, happiness, and gratitude from deep meditation immersion. Through prolonged Qigong meditation practice, they have achieved mental stability, consideration for others, compassion, and a sense of abundance, contributing to a leisurely life.

(1) Satisfaction - Abundance, Joy, Happiness, Gratitude

I feel abundant, bright, and joyful without comparing myself to others, always feeling grateful. (Practitioner A)

During deep meditation, a sense of ecstasy and exhilaration arises, bringing happiness and making the heart joyful and abundant. I am deeply grateful for the many benefits this has brought to the quality of my life. (Practitioner B)

Life becomes enjoyable as my mind relaxes. Feeling as though embracing the universe with my heart brings abundance and happiness. I am so grateful to be aware of the sensations in my body parts. (Practitioner C)

(2) Altruism - Consideration, Compassion

A generous and considerate heart develops. (Practitioner A)

Just one smile and a few breaths can transform into forgiveness, understanding, and love, changing to positive energy. (Practitioner B)

In the past, there were people I disliked, but now they seem pitiable to me, and a generous, considerate heart, compassion emerges. (Practitioner C)

<Table 5> Categories of Experience and Changes in Life - Leisure of Life

Top Category	Subcategory	Description
Satisfaction	Abundance, Joy, Happiness, Gratitude	Practitioner A feels abundant, bright, joyful, and always grateful without comparing themselves to others. [Practitioner A]
		During deep meditation immersion, Practitioner B experiences ecstasy and exhilaration, feeling happiness and brightness, along with a sense of abundance in mind. They express deep gratitude for the many benefits that have improved the quality of life. [Practitioner B]
		As their mind becomes comfortable, Practitioner C finds life enjoyable, feeling abundant happiness as if embracing the universe with their heart. They are extremely grateful for becoming aware of the sensations in their body. [Practitioner C]
Altruism	Consideration, Compassion	Practitioner A develops a generous and considerate heart. [Practitioner A]
		Practitioner B believes that with just one smile and a few breaths, they can transform negative energy into positive energy such as forgiveness, understanding, and love. [Practitioner B]
		deviously disliking certain people, Practitioner C now sees them with compassion and develops a generous, considerate heart. [Practitioner C]

3) Value of Life - Inner Growth

Long-term Qigong practitioners have reported that through extended Qigong meditation practice, they have engaged in self-reflection and introspection, prioritizing inner values and seeking enlightenment, which has led to an elevation in their life values toward inner growth.



(1) Self-reflection

Feeling awakened and enlightened, I consistently reflect on myself and practice self-reflection. (Practitioner A)

I experience the true essence of stillness and freedom in the profound silence, leading to enlightenment and continuous self-reflection. (Practitioner B)

I have realized the existence of my inner nature and am engaging in self-reflection. (Practitioner C)

(2) Inner Values

I have come to feel that internal values are much more important than external ones, as I do not compare myself with others and take a step back to assess situations. (Practitioner A)

I gain deep insights into myself and the world, realizing the greater importance of inner values. (Practitioner B)

Acknowledging the importance of inner values, I seek enlightenment through deep meditation. (Practitioner C)

<Table 6> List of Categories for the Meditation Experiences and Life Values of Qigong Practitioners

Top Category	Subcategory	Description
Inner Growth	Self-reflection	Feeling awakened and enlightened, I always reflect on myself and engage in self-reflection. (Practitioner A)
		Experiencing the true essence of stillness and feeling a profound freedom in the quietude, I become enlightened and continually practice self-reflection. (Practitioner B)
		Becoming aware of my inner self, I engage in self-reflection. (Practitioner C)
	Inner Values	Inner values are significantly more vital than external ones because I refrain from comparing myself with others and instead step back to assess situations. (Practitioner A)
		I acquire profound understanding of both myself and the world, recognizing the paramount significance of inner values. (Practitioner B)
		Acknowledging the significance of inner values, I pursue enlightenment through intensive meditation. (Practitioner C)

4) SPECIAL EXPERIENCES

(1) Stillness and Immobility

Long-term Qigong practitioners reported experiencing a sense of stillness and immobility during their meditation practice.

I felt completely still and stopped, as if a photograph had been taken. (Practitioner A)

During meditation in the mountains, I felt at ease and experienced the true essence of tranquility. (Practitioner B)

My mind is calm and serene, with nothing else present. (Practitioner C)

(2) State of No-Self

Long-term Qigong practitioners experienced a special state of no-self during meditation, feeling as though their body had disappeared, the real world had vanished, and they were in a state of egolessness.

I felt as if my body had disappeared, fading away transparently. (Practitioner A)

I felt as though the real world had completely vanished. (Practitioner B)



There is no mind, no body, just a state of no-self. (Practitioner C)

(3) Experience of Light

Long-term Qigong practitioners experienced special moments of seeing light or feeling it enter and move within their bodies during meditation.

Light entered my body, filling it with bright white light, swirling up from the lower Dantian, enveloping me. (Practitioner A)

I felt light shining on my eyes, with afterimages remaining even when I opened them. (Practitioner B)

The Baihui point on my head slightly shifted to the side, and light entered, bright and clean, with various rainbow colors. (Practitioner C)

(4) Unique Abilities

Long-term Qigong practitioners reported experiencing unique abilities during deep meditation, such as seeing the surroundings with closed eyes, hearing inner sounds, or feeling a connection with the universe.

I could see my surroundings or feel someone watching over me with my eyes closed. (Practitioner A)

I heard inner sounds. (Practitioner B)

Light entered my body, which expanded, and I felt a connection with the universe. (Practitioner C)

< Table 7 > Categories of Special Experiences During Qigong Meditation

Top Category	Subcategory	Description
Special Experiences	Stillness and Immobility	I experienced a profound sense of stillness and immobility, akin to being frozen in a photograph. (Practitioner A)
		While meditating in the mountains, I became peaceful and comfortable, feeling the true essence of tranquility." (Practitioner B)
		My mind was calm and utterly serene, with no disturbances." (Practitioner C)
	State of No-Self	I felt as though my body had disappeared, fading away transparently." (Practitioner A)
		It felt as if the real world had completely vanished." (Practitioner B)
		There was no mind, no body, just a state of no-self." (Practitioner C)
	Experience of Light	Light entered my body, filling it with bright white light, swirling up from the lower xiadantian and enveloping my whole body. (Practitioner A)
		I felt light shining on my eyes, with afterimages remaining even when I opened them. (Practitioner B)
		The Baihui point on my head shifted slightly to the side, and light entered, bright, clean, and in various rainbow colors. (Practitioner C)
	Unique Abilities	With my eyes closed, I could still see my surroundings or felt as though someone was watching over me." (Practitioner A)
		I heard inner sounds. (Practitioner B)
		Light entered my body, which then expanded, and I felt a connection with the universe. (Practitioner C)



3.2. Discussion

This study aimed to analyze the experiences of long-term Qigong practitioners with over 20 years of Qigong meditation practice and the changes in their lives resulting from their meditation experiences. Through in-depth interviews with long-term Qigong practitioners, it was possible to explore the unique physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of their meditation experiences and the changes in their quality of life.

The discussion is as follows.

Firstly, Qigong meditation practice has cultivated wisdom in aspects such as bodily self-regulation, emotional management, and fostering harmonious interpersonal relationships. Long-term Qigong practitioners have reported during their meditation sessions that energy builds up in the Lower xiadantian, resulting in the clearing of blockages and a refreshing sensation through the circulation of Qi. They noted clearer vision and minds, more radiant skin, increased salivation, relaxed muscles, alleviation of fatigue, and an overall sense of lightness. This corresponds with research findings indicating that practitioners experience energy accumulation in the Lower xiadantian, heightened salivation, improved skin radiance, and an enhanced sense of circulation and communication[12]. Long-term Qigong practitioners have reported experiencing natural healing from conditions such as colds, relief from straight neck syndrome, alleviation of allergic rhinitis, and an increase in resistance to various bodily pains through meditation practice. A commonality among these experiences is the maintenance of quality sleep and overall health. This supports research findings that meditation practices have positive effects on psychosomatic healing, self-regulation, natural healing, stress relief, and sleep [9,13,14,21]. While focusing on the Lower xiadantian, practitioners have developed inner peace and the ability to control stress, gained confidence in interpersonal relationships, and maintained harmonious relationships, reflecting the wisdom acquired from life. This aligns with studies suggesting that meditation training enhances emotional regulation, aiding in stress relief and transforming negative emotions into positive ones, thus improving vitality in everyday life[7,18,22].

Secondly, Qigong meditation practice has led to an increase in satisfaction and altruism, enriching practitioners' lives. Long-term Qigong practitioners experienced satisfaction from deep meditation immersion, such as abundance, joy, happiness, and gratitude. They reported developing compassion and consideration for others, indicating an enriched life. This supports research indicating that deep immersion in meditation increases emotional stability and calmness, psychological well-being, happiness, satisfaction, joy, and compassion, thereby improving quality of life[7,10,20].

Thirdly, Qigong meditation practice has enhanced life values. Long-term Qigong practitioners reported feeling awakened and more self-aware during meditation, leading to self-reflection. Additionally, their perspectives on the world changed, valuing inner qualities more and seeking enlightenment, indicating a shift in life values. This supports research that discovering one's true inner self and engaging in self-reflection can lead to positive changes in one's quality of life, including altered perceptions of the world and human understanding, and changed values [5,6]. Long-term Qigong practitioners have explained that these various positive changes are the reasons they have continued meditation for over two decades.

Fourthly, special experiences were reported during Qigong meditation. Long-term Qigong practitioners experienced a sense of stillness and immobility, a state of no-self with no mind or body present during deep meditation immersion. They also witnessed light entering and moving within their bodies, saw their surroundings with closed eyes, heard inner sounds, felt their bodies expand and relax, and experienced a connection with the universe. This process is aligned with research that highlights special meditation experiences, including relaxation and high levels of arousal, changes in the sense of time, alterations in body image, and unity with the universe consciousness[9,19,20].

There are various challenges associated with Qigong meditation practice, depending on the practitioner's constitution, physical condition, and understanding. It is recommended for beginners to receive systematic teaching about the theory and method of meditation from qualified instructors, cultivating faith and patience, and continuing practice until reaching a certain level before practicing



independently.

4. CONCLUSION

This study conducted in-depth interviews with long-term Qigong practitioners who have practiced for over 20 years, examining their unique meditation experiences and the changes in their lives through a phenomenological analysis. It was found that long-term Qigong practitioners engage in meditation practice for about 30 minutes to 2 hours daily. They reported experiencing a sense of stillness and immobility, a state of no-self with neither mind nor body present during their Qigong meditation Rujing. Additionally, they observed light entering and circulating within their bodies, feeling relaxed and expanded, and experiencing a connection with the universe.

Initially starting with a desire for learning, practitioners who underwent over two decades of meditation practice have experienced natural healing. They now maintain their health through self-regulation of the body, manage stress, enjoy quality sleep, and maintain harmonious relationships, reflecting an increase in life's wisdom. Furthermore, they reported satisfaction, compassion, and altruism, leading to a more leisurely life. Recognizing their true self, gaining insights, and engaging in self-reflection have led to inner growth and a positive transformation in their values, enhancing their quality of life.

Through this research, it is hoped that the positive changes in mental and physical health and the improvement in the quality of life resulting from long-term and consistent Qigong meditation practice can be conveyed to others, encouraging more people to practice Qigong meditation and contributing to the formation of a stable and peaceful society.

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