Effects of Qi therapy on spiritual values:
as seen from the aspect of changes in “Type A” behavior

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Original Thesis

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as seen from the aspect of changes in “Type A” behavior

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Introduction

1. The new emphasis of spirituality in modern society and its
   significance in “Type A” behavior pattern

Thanks to advances in medicine and public sanitation, modern
Japan has largely reduced the effects of infectious diseases
and infant mortality rates to possess one of the highest rates of
longevity on the globe 1). On the other hand, upon observation of the realities of our
society one notices a growing trend in violent juvenile crime, an
increasing number of youth neither employed nor in education
(known as NEET), rising numbers of reclusive youth (called
hikikomori), and a yearly suicide rate exceeding 30,000 which,
along with other phenomena, we can only surmise to be rooted
in the so-called “maladies of the soul” (kokoro no yamai).

The PIL Institute points out that although basic human needs
such as food, clothing, housing, and financial security have been
fulfilled; as a result of the overemphasis on fulfillment of the
physical needs, people may have lost sight of their reason for
being and/or purpose in life once these needs have been fulfilled
2). On the other hand, the term “spirituality” has also come into
use in certain fields in recent years, notably in the fields of
medicine and welfare 3). This phenomenon can be said to be
one result of a new emphasis placed on the “dignity of life” in
areas of modern medicine and welfare, a term which points to
the new awareness in “quality of life,” that is, not just living as
existing but rather being concerned with how one lives out the
life one has been given. Particularly in the fields of hospice or
terminal care, where physical distress in the form of bodily pain,
psychological distress in the form of insecurity or depression,
and social distress in the form of financial or domestic problems
have been the focus; new emphasis has come to be placed on
the deeper spiritual suffering or pain more closely related to
issues dealing with the meaning or value of human existence

1) 3) 4). The importance of “spirituality” was discussed at the
year 2000 WHO executive board as one element of health 5),
demonstrating a new social current and world trend toward its
recognition.

In recent years, the existence of Type A behavior has been
recognized as a psychological pattern in which there is a
tendency towards obsession with materialism 6). Type A
behavior was discovered through observations by two American
cardiologists Friedman and Rosenman 7) in the 1950s as a
behavior pattern described as being associated with hostility,
aggressiveness, a sense of time urgency, and tendencies to
be being highly driven or competitive. Since the time of Type A
behavior’s initial report up to the present, several studies have
been carried out from a number of different angles 2) 8) 12). Type
A was initially typically associated with coronary heart disease
as a psycho-sociological factor. However, more recently it is
believed to be related to a number of other physical ailments as
a risk factor of stress-associated diseases or possibly an even
wider range of hindrances to health 9).

In considering how Type A behavior is formed, Friedman and
Rosenman attribute importance to the social environment 10).
Irrepressible materialism as often seen in advanced economies
is pointed out as one of the greatest factors of Type A behavior;
in addition, an increasing infatuation with speed, stiffer
competition, the tendency to reduce people to mere statistics,
and the weakening sense of religiosity in society are also
associated with increases in Type A behavior. Thus, in a society
where people are required to act speedily, value is placed solely
on social advancement and the procurement of money and
material goods, time for creative thought is not afforded at a
leisurely pace, and important human qualities such as gentleness
and thoughtfulness are lost. In other words, it would not be an
overstatement to say that in advanced economies it is society
itself that promotes Type A behavior.

Hirokazu MONOU, who looks at Type A behavior as a
global issue, believes that regional conflicts and environmental
problems are, on a deep level, related to Type A behavior 11).
He points out that hostilities among nations and/or races and
the insatiable lust for riches are the main causes of regional

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As a way to enlighten the $Qi$ \(^\text{18}\). These principles are closely connected to relaxation of the posture, breathing, and the physical and mental condition of the person practicing them. There are many people these days who seek $Qi$-gong method as a path to attain a sense of spirituality and mental/physical health. There also are many cases in which people seek therapy through a $Qi$-gong practitioner as a way to resolve mental or physical problems, in a sense apart from the disciplinary aspect. Sato Kiko method can be cited as one $Qi$-gong method for attempting to improve such a recipient.

3. Sato Kiko Method
Sato Kiko Method (hereafter referred to as SK) is a meditation-based $Qi$-gong method at which Tadashi SATO himself arrived independently. Sato explains the characteristics of his method as follows (note from translator: hereafter, when referring specifically to Sato’s method the term Kiko, Japanese for $Qi$-gong, will be used):

While a traditional Chinese $Qi$-gong practitioner sends the $Qi$ ("KI" in Japanese) energy from the outside, in SK, when the practitioner sends the $Qi$, the "$Qi$ door" on the receiving end is opened and the necessary $Qi$ springs up from inside the receiver’s body. Also in SK, $Qi$ is divided into two categories, those being "contracting $Qi$" and "expanding $Qi$." Contracting $Qi$ springs from the so-called "lower dantian (Chinese: dantian)", and works toward the body’s center, stimulating the sympathetic nervous system. Expanding $Qi$ springs from the middle dantien, spreading throughout the body stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system. The SK method adjusts the balance of both the contracting $Qi$ and expanding $Qi$ to create the ideal balance for a healthy mental and physical state \(^\text{20}\). These concepts are of course not scientifically explained. However, through this method many instances of relief from depression, insomnia, improvement of diabetic or rheumatic ailments and slipped (herniated) discs have been reported.

There are some studies which are bringing to light the effects that SK has on live subjects. According to these studies, SK has clear effects on the receiver’s autonomic nervous system (skin temperature, heart rate, etc.) \(^\text{9,21,22,23}\), hormones (adrenalin, norpinephrine, etc.) \(^\text{7}\), immunity systems (NK [natural killer] cells), CD 4/CD 8, etc.) \(^\text{8}\), and brain waves \(^\text{9}\), in general puts the immune functions. Also, at a Chinese Mind-Body Science conference in 1994, it is recorded that Sato was able to stimulate a self-channeled $Qi$-gong-like movement with a number of people including Chinese and those of other nationalities \(^\text{9}\). And, as mentioned above, it has been demonstrated that SK has had positive effect on individuals’ mental aspect and sense of values, uplifting spiritual values such as the individual’s sense of fulfillment and views on life after death \(^\text{20}\).

The physical sensation that a receiver of SK experiences is not only the feeling of warmth or relaxation that can be attained through other $Qi$-gong methods, but also a sensation of floating in air or an out-of-the-body sensation in which there is feeling of the conscious mind leaving the physical body. This phenomena is thought to be the work of the $Qi$ master creating an altered state of consciousness or state of meditation.

SK is set apart from auto-suggestion or hypnotism in that SK
makes no use of verbal suggestion; also unlike hypnotism, the
receivers experience no confusion in states of consciousness nor
do they display unresponsiveness 9.

**Purpose of Study**

As mentioned above, it has been proven through previous study
that SK has some kind of actual effect on the receiver. It has
also been verified by the previous study by the authors that it
has some effect on the individual’s sense of values including
fulfillment (ikigai) and views on life after death. However, thus
far there have been no studies made as to what effect Qi-gong
may have on Type A pattern behavior.

When taking into consideration the fact that a person’s
behavior pattern is influenced by their sense of values, one can
understand the possibility of the behavior pattern being changed
through Qi-gong. In light of this, this study attempts to make
observations on the correlation between Qi-gong and spirituality
in Type A behavior and consider the effect of Qi-gong on Type
A behavior in recipients of SK.

**Study Method**

1. **Subjects**
   A total of 101 subjects (41 males, average age 46.7 yrs ±11.5 and
60 females, average age 48.0 yrs ±11.5) participated as subjects
for the study. All measurement procedures were fully explained
to the participating subjects and it was conducted with their full
consent.

2. **SK Exercised**
   SK was carried out for each subject directly by Sato (SK can
also be conducted remotely). Kiko was conducted over a period
of 40 minutes with the subject relaxing lying face up, during
which almost no words of instruction were spoken. Subjects
received the Kiko five times on a weekly basis. Of course, the
subjects received a comprehensive explanation regarding SK
and were treated with their consent.

3. **Determining of Type A Tendency**
   A survey dealing with daily situations called “KG’s Daily Life
Questionnaire” was conducted to determine the tendencies
of Type A behavior in the individual 10. This questionnaire
consisted of 55 questions to which the respondents answered
from three choices: “yes” “no” or “don’t know.” The questions
were to be answered according to the respondent’s own
judgment. One merit of this test is that besides being an
effective scoring system for Type A itself, scores of the three
subscales that make up Type A; namely, aggressiveness/hostility
(AH) scale, hard-driving/time-urgency (HT) scale, and speed/
power (SP) scale; can also be attained. This methodology has
been made use of by a number of studies using group subjects,
and has proven to be a valid method which includes as a
physiological aspects, including the autonomic nervous system,
among its considerations.

This questionnaire was given to subjects twice, once before SK
treatment and once afterwards.

**Results**

1. **Type A tendencies previous to Kiko treatment**
   Overall Type A scores, along with the mean value and standard
deviations of the AH, HT, and SP subscale scores of all persons
participating in the study previous to receiving Kiko treatment
are shown in Table 1 below by gender.

   The overall Type A score average of all participants previous
to treatment was 45.9 (±12.8), with a score of 44.3 (±15.2) among
males and 46.9 (±10.9) among females. In regards to the three
component subscales AH, HT, and ST, the average value on the
AH scale was 14.6 (±6.9) for males and 15.8 (±6.0) for females;
considerably lower than the mean values set by Yamazaki et al

   It should be noted that there was no statistically meaningful
difference between the scores of males and females either
overall or among the subscale components (see Table 1).

### Table 1. Pre-treatment Type A scores of participants and gender variablity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>overall</th>
<th>males</th>
<th>females</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean±SD</td>
<td>mean±SD</td>
<td>mean±SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TypeA</td>
<td>45.9±12.8</td>
<td>44.3±15.2</td>
<td>47.0±10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>15.3±6.4</td>
<td>14.6±7.0</td>
<td>15.8±6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>12.2±6.2</td>
<td>12.1±6.6</td>
<td>12.3±6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>13.1±5.5</td>
<td>12.3±6.0</td>
<td>13.6±5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Type A tendencies following Kiko treatment**
   Next, we made pre- and post-test comparisons of the
participants in three categories. These were: 1) the group as a
whole, 2) the “high Type A” group, namely those whose score
exceeded 1 point or more in standard deviation (SD) of the
mean value (those with stronger Type A tendencies) and 3) the
“low Type A” group, namely those whose score was 1 point or
more SD lower than the mean value (those with weaker Type
A tendencies), as shown in Diagram 1. As a result, with the
exception of the speed/power (SP) subscale, all scores within
the entire group exhibited significant drops in Type A tendencies.
Furthermore, scores among the high Type A group exhibited
drops in all score categories, while those among the low Type
A group conversely tended to show slight rises on the hard-
driving/time-urgency (HT) and speed/power subscales.

As described above, Type A tendencies show clear decreases
through Kiko treatment, an inclination most evident among the
the group which displayed strong Type A characteristics.

**Observations**

1. **Type A tendencies of participants**
   As seen in Table 1, the mean score value of participants of the
study was 45.9 (±12.8). This was a slightly higher value than
the mean value of 43.6 which was obtained from a group of college students tested by Yamazaki, the creator of “KG’s Daily Life Questionnaire” (32). Furthermore, the mean value of the aggressive/hostility (AH) tendencies of the study’s participants who had below-average AH values to begin with.

Friedman, a renowned Type A researcher who pointed out 6) that the weakening of spiritual values in modern society reinforced Type A tendencies, also states that “neither modern materialism nor its attending ‘idols’ -- computers, expensive cars, home appliances, jewelry, decorative furniture, etc. -- can provide spiritual support. Unfortunately, the more a strong Type A individual tries to be fulfilled by things, the less they are inclined to be aware of that paradox. Sooner or later they must face the reality that in order to be fulfilled they must take care of their spiritual side (paraphrased). Friedman’s sessions which emphasize approaches to spiritualism or the power of love have an important role in Friedman’s guidelines for rectifying Type A behavior, and each session is concluded with prayer 30).

In Japan it has also become more commonplace to emphasize the importance of spiritual values in rectifying Type A behavior. For example, Monou points out that, as a result of the advance of industrialization in the twentieth century, materialism has become more prevalent, people have come to value quantity over quality, and thanks to dramatically shortened time required for travel, communications and production, people have become addicted to speed. A free economy has also brought about a fierce spirit of competitiveness. These changes are said to have promoted the retreat of religiosity, without which there is little remaining that may have a braking effect on Type A behavior 14). Oishi also states that the increase of Type A persons is almost certainly a fundamental factor of the retreat of spirituality in modern society, by which we mean the placing of value on the immaterial or on religion 31).

3. Kiko and Spirituality

In light of the above, Nigorikawa et al have reviewed the effects that SK has on an individual’s spiritual values, such as a sense of fulfillment or views on life after death. It is reported that, as a result of treatment, the receiver’s sense of fulfillment changes for the better; while views on life after death also tend to shift towards a belief in “life after death” or “rebirth;” in other words, a permanence of the soul 30).

As pointed out by Friedman above, Momose and Monou also agree on the possibility that a change in spiritual values may lead to a lightening of Type A tendencies, if indeed Type A behavior is related to an individual’s spiritual values.

Why would Kiko have the potential to influence a human’s sense of values? At present there are no materials which address this question. Although it has become clear that Qh has a tangible effect on the human body, almost nothing has been proven as to the mechanism that causes such an effect to occur.

There are many reported instances of people experiencing dramatic changes in their view of life after death following a near-death experience. Moody discusses the commonly seen change-of-heart in people who have had a near-death experience.

He states that “Almost every person who has had a near-death experience...
experience says the same thing: that the most important thing in life is love. Many say that humans are alive because of love. By being enlightened as such, almost every one who has had a near-death experience has a basic change in their sense of values. People who had been set in their beliefs came to believe that all humans are to be valued in their own way; while those who had believed that their material possessions were above all else came to place value on brotherly love (paraphrased) 16).

In almost the same way, Morse also points out that a person who returns from a near-death experience is freed from material greed and are more likely to say things to the tune of “we have to love more, and be kind to others 17).”

Among those who have had SK treatment, there have been multiple reports of recipients who have experienced sensations of floating in air or the loss of sense of the physical body in which their consciousness leaves the body; in other words, phenomena similar to an out-of-the-body experience which those who have had a near-death experience have had 18). It is unknown why individuals who have had such experiences should be affected in such a way as to experience changes in value systems, but nevertheless it cannot be denied that SK seems to offer the recipient a spiritual revelation similar to that of those who have had near-death experiences; one that provides a catalyst for change in belief systems.

4. Conclusion
Since Type A characteristics as seen in Japanese people may have been one factor in the phenomenal economic growth that Japan saw in the 1960s and 70s, it may be problematic to simplistically position it as something to be avoided. However, at least when considering an individual’s physical health and quality of life, dominant Type A tendencies are not beneficial. This is particularly significant knowledge when considering the decrease on the aggressive/hostility subscale as seen in this study and the relation to the degree of response in coronary disease as well as the autonomic nervous system.

Modern society has indeed brought about material wealth, but we would be hard pressed to say whether it is a society which provides a high whole-person quality of life which includes fulfillment or spiritual aspects such as faith 19). This reality can be considered to have triggered the explosion of the above-mentioned kokoro no yamai which affect NEET and hikikomori (reclusive youth), as well as increasing suicides. Not only SK, but the effects of the many other “body work” methods have not been particularly well understood by the public in general. However, if there is any potential in these or other efforts as ways to raise the individual’s whole-person quality of life, it may be worthwhile to consider the proactive utilization of them as tools in society.

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Abstract

In this study, the effects of Qi therapy on Type A behavior pattern were investigated. There were 101 participants; 41 males average age 46.7 (±11.5) and 60 females average age 48.0 (±11.5). Qi therapy was performed by Qi therapist Tadashi SATO of Sato Kiko Center. “KG’s Daily Life Questionnaire” was implemented to investigate Type A tendencies, including the three subfactors aggression/hostility (AH), hard-drivenness/time-urgency (HT), and speed/power (SP). The mean total score of both Type A behavior overall and its subfactors decreased following Qi treatment (with the exception of SP). These changes in score were all statistically significant, and suggest that Qi therapy has an effect on Type A behavior. The relation among Qi therapy, Type A, and certain spiritual aspects are discussed.

(Translator’s note: While the concept of Qi [pronounced as “chee”] and basic practice of Qi-gong originated from China, its practice has been widespread throughout East Asia for centuries; known as Kiko [or Kikou] in Japan, Gigong in Korea, Khí công in Vietnam, etc. With its relatively recent spread outside of Asia from different sources it may be known by different names/spellings to different communities. This translation makes use of the relatively standard Chinese alliteration, except when referring specifically to the Sato Kiko method)