

# Investing in Your Health

by Francesco Garri Garripoli

## Traveling To The Source To Learn How To Heal



For the past 12 years I've been leading study and healing groups to magical places in Asia in the hopes of connecting people with the birthplaces of ancient healing modalities. What I have discovered is that not only do people connect with the past, but they also connect with their own future.

I'm sure that the upcoming annual trips we will lead to China, Thailand and India will continue that tradition.

Healing modalities of ancient times are considered holistic because of the fact that they merge body, mind and spirit into a singularity we call the "whole person." Medicine men and women, shaman, and healing masters saw how emotion, physical symptoms, diet, lifestyle, mental activity and personality all contributed to the health of every person. To look at only one or two of these was to miss critical clues that could hopefully lead to curing a person of their dis-ease. When you have the opportunity to spend time with a practitioner of these traditional modalities, you feel as if you are really being "seen," that someone cares for you and can guide you back to balance. They are looking to relieve more than symptoms, for the symptoms may be pointing to something else that is not so obvious... and when these are treated, you return to good health and you are empowered. Qigong is the main, ancient healing system that we focus on during our group trips. Pronounced "chee gong," this practice is the root of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture and the martial arts. It involves conscious breathing, slow, focused movements and mental visualizations. Beginners and experts join these trips and everyone learns what is appropriate for their level.

This is what I have experienced time and time again in leading dozens and dozens of group trips to places like China, India, Bhutan,

Japan and Thailand. I smiled when I counted well over 300 people as travelers on these journeys that I have led by myself or with my teaching partner Daisy Lee. The most common benefits travel participants agree on include:

- 1) Disengaging from routine at home and engaging in a daily healing program in a foreign country is critical to shifting stagnant patterns.
- 2) Studying and being treated by a master who is immersed in a healing lifestyle and culture accelerates learning and transformation.
- 3) Spending two weeks or more with other like-minded individuals who are all committed to personal growth enhances the healing experience.
- 4) Eating really delicious food every day and not having to cook is a very good thing.

Don't laugh at the fourth point – that's sometimes the FIRST thing people thank me or Daisy for even when they are still on the trip! Feeding people abundant healthy food that was prepared and served with love is such a part of the healing process. A lot of the year-long prep for any group trip is to make arrangements for healthy meals that reflect the essence of the local culture and display the principals of the healing modality that we are going to study. Sometimes from this one feature people's lives – and diets – change for the better when they return home.

This year Daisy and I will lead a group trip to China in September and then another group trip to India in October. People have already signed up to go on both!

The China Study and Healing Trip is the twelfth annual one I have led. It follows a particular formula that has been refined over the years, but has remained virtually in tact from the beginning – create a safe and secure healing adventure with renowned masters in authentic power spots. For the past 12 years we have been working with the same famous Qigong master in Beijing, so our comfort level



is ideal. We refer to each other as “brothers” and work together to create a magical experience for everyone. Master Wan Sujian has an amazing life story, from his training to be a healer from the age of 7... to rising up in the medical field and then almost dying in an earthquake aftershock trying to help the victims. He survived being buried underground for days by using Qigong and has been helping people heal and stay healthy using these same ancient techniques. Our group stays at his institute in the western foothills of Beijing, and Master Wan with his 40 resident students offer daily personal treatments (some that include six practitioners working on you at the same time) and various training classes. The food is amazing and cooked by their resident, Qigong-practicing chef. We make daily excursions to ancient sites around the area – from the Great Wall to hidden temples that most tourists never get the opportunity to visit. Every day of this two-week journey is devoted to our personal healing and people get very used to the daily herbal foot baths, foot massages, and energy healing full-body massage! Added to the in-depth training in Qigong by Master Wan, Daisy and Francesco, participants learn about ancient Taoist practices such as the “cha dao” tea ceremony and Tibetan long-horn healing and meditation. Our second week of this awesome healing journey takes us to one of the most sacred mountains of China – Huang Shan or Yellow Mountain. Again, not a place where many foreign tourists visit, we experience ancient China relatively untouched by the rapidly changing modern world. We will study with more renowned masters and Buddhist teachers in locations that have been pilgrimage sites for millennia.

The India Study and Healing Trip, like all our trips, is based on the same premises. We keep the same Qigong focus, with morning classes to set the flow and continuity, but because we are in India, we honor the traditional Ayurvedic medicine practice as our treatment modality. Many people would be surprised to realize that Chinese Qigong was heavily influenced in ancient times by yogis from India. Last year was the first group trip I led to India after visiting there alone to do my research. Meeting with gifted Ayurvedic doctors, Shivani and Mahesh, I knew that that I had to make their northern city of Dharamsala, India one of our healing destinations.

For anyone who had the chance to meet wife and husband Dr. Shivani and Dr. Mahesh when we sponsored them to visit Kaua'i you know that they carry the ancient healing knowledge of Ayurveda deep in their hearts. Many people in Hawai'i got to experience their healing sessions at our Kahuna Valley Retreat or attended the Women's Health and Empowerment workshop with Dr. Shivani at the Inspiration Kaua'i Wellness Expo that Char Ravelo organized so well.

Ayurveda divides personality, lifestyle, body and spirit types into three main categories called “doshas.” Everyone has some percentage of one or all doshas. Based on your unique doshic tendencies, you receive a treatment that corresponds to bringing you into “tridoshic” balance. On our group trip to India, every participant receives a personal diagnosis from Dr. Shivani and then she outlines a two-week treatment protocol that includes the amazing array of offerings known as Panchakarma. Each daily treatment lasts nearly three hours and ranges from a warm, herbal oil massage, to a powerful pressure point release that opens and frees emotions in the most amazing ways. Dharamsala is the home of the Dalai Lama and many Tibetan monks, so we include trips to the Dalai Lama's temple and

many other beautiful sites in the area throughout this trip that lasts nearly three weeks.

These trips can be experienced on their own, or you can enjoy an offer we have for people who want to go on both, back to back. In a world that is changing so fast, the opportunity to visit and study the traditional healing practices in an authentic way is becoming more and more difficult to experience.

I just returned from leading a group healing trip to Thailand, another one of my favorite places in the world. The Thai people understand “aloha” and really live it every day. Over 85% of the people there are Buddhists and this, in part, lends to their joyful and respectful energy. Our healing trip starts in the magical city of Bangkok, getting to know this waterway culture by traveling on traditional longboats visiting glorious gold-leafed temples and floating markets. The following two weeks takes us up north to the beautiful city of Chiang Mai. With over 200 temples, Chiang Mai can absorb you with a smile. We stay in a healing resort where western trained physicians combine complementary and traditional medicine to offer healing and rejuvenation treatments that I have never seen all in one place anywhere else in the world. There is something so empowering when you can have your blood analyzed using high tech dark field microscopy and then have an M.D. sit with you for an hour to design a diet and treatment array that will best serve you. From a variety of massage techniques to chelation, blood ozone, vitamin drips and colon cleansing, you are treated and pampered by a caring Thai staff all under the physician's direction. This trip was such a success that I will be leading another in the spring.

We limit each of these trips in size so that everyone can receive a high level of personal attention. Healing is a personal experience and it requires a caring and loving environment to facilitate the right energy. After a dozen years of learning and observing, I am grateful to have the opportunity to facilitate these group study and healing trips that take the courageous on a life-changing and life-enhancing journey. We can in fact learn to connect with our future, and to dream the changes it takes to create one that is joyful, abundant, and vibrantly healthy. 🌱

For more information on these healing adventures that help support an orphanage in China and our youth and family non-profit programs in Hawai'i, email Daisy at [info@kahunavalley.org](mailto:info@kahunavalley.org)... or visit [www.kahunavalley.org](http://www.kahunavalley.org). Qigong information is available at [www.wujiproducts.com](http://www.wujiproducts.com)

