

## Six Healing Sounds 六字訣, a Brief Overview

Liu Zi Jue 六字訣 (six healing words), is a widely accessible form of Qigong. A quick online search for Liu Zi Jue may result in finding varying forms/types of Qigong as taught by various Qigong masters and teachers. Modern *Chinese Medical* Qigong will differ from *Daoist*, *Buddhist*, *Confucian* or *Martial* Qigong. Each branch has distinct theories and characteristics.

The first written records of Liu Zi Jue can be found in Tao Hongjing's summation of TCM and Daoist theories and methods into his book 'Journal of Nurturing the Mind and Prolonging the Life'.

As described in Tao Hongjing's Journal, the six healing sounds were originally a *breathwork* technique. And according to Daoist and Qigong master, Mantak Chia, the sounds were discovered through Meditations of Daoist practitioners/masters. Eventually movements and postures were developed alongside the sounds.

Though the forms and movements may differ depending on your source, the words are generally agreed to be the same six words/sounds. And by consensus they correlate with and activate the meridians/energy channels of the corresponding organs. In sound healing we touch upon energy being stuck (by whatever means, ie. emotionally or otherwise). This practice also works with this principle. Whether it's stuck, negative, or poorly circulated energy, the practice of Liu Zi Jue aims to smoothly run energies through the meridians and allow better release of trapped energy from the organs. Through practice, one will be able to create inner balance between the organs and energies in the human body. In this paper I have only described a portion of the theory. And so if you find interest in this practice I would suggest a deeper dive for those inclined to learn in more detail. (A good place to start would be my list of sources) Whether it's through teachings of Daoist/Qigong Masters like Mantak Chia or International Health Qigong Federation. Or other credible, researched sources.

As there are different forms/movements depending on who you learn from, I will discuss the healing sounds themselves, and how they are pronounced, and also about the breathing and how to sound the 6 words/sounds. These elements remain consistent despite encountering different forms.

字 Zi, directly translates to word(s). Learning how to pronounce the words/sounds correctly are conducive to a complete practice.

The six words, pronunciation and corresponding organs are:

Word/Sound	Pronunciation (extend the vowel sound for each word)	Corresponding Organ's energy
嘘 Xu	Shhhh-ü-ü-ü-ü	Liver
呵 He	Her, without the r. Heeeeeee	Heart
呼 Hu	Who-o-o-o-	Spleen/Pancreas
呬 Si	Sir, without the r, Siii	Lung
吹 Chui	Phonetically, Ch-ooo-ay	Kidney
嘻 Xi	She	Triple Warmer

Mantak Chia's Daoist derived version of the sounds:

Word/Sound/Order according to Mantak Chia **Subvocally	Organ Exercised
Ssss-s-s-s-s	Lung
Choo-oo-oo-oo	Kidney
Sh-h-h-h-h-h-h	Liver
Haw-w-w-w-w-w	Heart
Who-o-o-o-o-o-o	Spleen
He-e-e-e-e-e-e	Triple Heater/Warmer

The following are some tips for the breathing and sounding part of practicing six healing sounds Qigong. They are by no means a complete list, as things can get more detailed as you advance in your practice, but are a good place to start thinking from.

- As with most QiGong exercises, calming the mind and body, and centering in preparation is essential. Being in this state, on the emotional, mental and physical level (spiritual as well if you are so inclined) is the first step.
- As mentioned before, this practice originated as a breathing/breathwork. Abdominal breathing is most commonly used while performing Qigong. Breathing smoothly through the nose and into the dan tian/navel, and exhaling just as smoothly either through the nose (or in this case the mouth). Visualize and feel like you are gradually filling up your body with pure Qi/energy from the abdomen up till your lungs.
  - A slightly more advanced type of abdominal breathing is reverse abdominal breathing. Instead of relaxing your abdomen as you breathe in, you slightly contract your abdomen while inhaling. And relax while you exhale. This takes a bit of practice and getting used to, as it is mechanically opposite to what we're used to doing.

- Any movements along with the breathing in this exercise is encouraged to be performed smoothly, softly and naturally. Think of it as naturally taking in a relaxed abdominal breath through the nose and a slow exhale of the corresponding sound.
- The order in which we go through the sounds is important, and so following the words and their corresponding movements is key to a complete healing practice. This is because the practice is designed as a flow to move and circulate energies according to the theories in Qigong/TCM/Daoist practice.
- I find a common thread of likeness with toning as a practice, is that beginners are encouraged to pronounce and exhale the six ways out loud, but as your skill level increases, you are able to do the exercise/breathing silently/subvocally.

\*\*While the medical Qigong version of the sounds, you will typically work from vocalizing to subvocalizing, Mantak Chia's sounds start at a subvocal level.

## Resources

From Medical Qigong:

*A really great and succinct resource for a more detailed description of how to perform the Liu Zi Jue.*

Liu Zi Jue 六字訣 Six Healing Sounds - Tai Chi, [www.taichi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/LiuZiJue.pdf](http://www.taichi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/LiuZiJue.pdf). Accessed 10 Jul. 2023.  
<https://www.taichi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/LiuZiJue.pdf>

*Along with the above PDF, this YouTube playlist gives examples of pronunciation and movements*

YouTube, Chinese Health Qigong Association, 16 Apr. 2020,  
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLwoNfHmTuN7I9fV2ZCX08SK7Z2zoRZGe>.  
Accessed 7 Aug. 2023.  
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLwoNfHmTuN7I9fV2ZCX08SK7Z2zoRZGe>

*\*Mantak Chia teaches a slightly different set of sounds and movements which is derived from Daoist Qigong, The order, you may notice, is also different*

Chia, Mantak. The Six Healing Sounds: Taoist Techniques for Balancing Chi. Destiny Books, 2009.

*A more concise discussion and research of the Liu Zi Jue, its historical origin and development.*

Shi, Juan, et al. "Mind–Body Health Technique Liu Zi Jue: Its Creation, Transition, and Formalization." SAGE Open, vol. 10, no. 2, 2020, p. 215824402092702, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020927024>.