

Zhang Yu Huan and Ken Rose have teamed up to write a beautiful book that captures the essence of a most important concept/phenomenon in Chinese culture: qi. These scholar-authors do the world a great service by bridging the epistemological gap between Eastern and Western cultures with this timely publication. Like their previous work on traditional Chinese medicine, *Who Can Ride the Dragon?*, this book is well written, and contains exquisite and informative historical illustrations taken from the arts, medicine, literature, and sciences of China. (Paradigm Publications, 2001)

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"In the deepest sense, no one can tell anyone else the ultimate or complete meaning of *qi* ... such understanding is only achieved through individual contemplation...relax and do not resist; but do not let go. We're going for a little ride." —*A Brief History of Qi*

This book is the closest that those who don't read or speak Chinese can get to understanding the concept of qi in its entirety. This book gives readers a sense of the way TCM concepts come embedded in linguistic and cultural meanings.

As practitioners, we are constantly asked, "What is *qi*?" and this book provides the answer from every direction: in history, philosophy, art, martial arts, qi gong, and of course medicine. The authors will tell you why you have been underestimating qi by translating it simply as "energy," and how the larger more complete meaning has been thousands of years in the making. There is an extensive discussion of how the concept of *qi* can be found in other cultures including modern quantum physics. The authors have done their homework and reading this book allows a brief touch on many of the ancient Chinese classics. One possible fault of the book is that it is sometimes overly enthusiastic in its presentation of the quotes. One section, for example, contains 7 straight pages of a direct quotation.

In some ways, perusing this book is like visiting a well laid out exhibit at an Asian art museum. The pages contain elegant illustrations and examples of calligraphy that are so beautiful that you might consider getting one framed as office decor or possibly as a tattoo.

For anyone interested in Chinese culture and philosophy or metaphysics in general, this book is an enjoyable read. For those of us who balance and tonify qi on a daily basis, *A Brief History of Qi* helps us to consider what it is we're doing and what we're working with. And if you believe, as I do, that to practice Chinese medicine we must understand its cultural significance, this new book will be essential reading.