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Scientists in the People's Republic of China are experimenting with evidence of links between extrasensory perception and traditional Chinese medicine.

Banned as "'corrupt and useless'" under the tenets of the 1960s Cultural Revolution, the research is now published freely in Chinese journals, although it receives no government funding or recognition.

Recent conferences on psychic phenomenon and its relation to acupuncture and an ancient deep-breathing discipline called "'Qigong'" now draw hundreds of interested scholars, including Americans.

What has attracted the most attention in China is a body of research conducted with children, ages 7-12, who purportedly exhibit exceptional psychic ability.

Reports of these studies inspired a study team led by San Francisco parapsychologist Stanley Krippner to visit China for two weeks last October. Krippner revealed the team's findings to UPI Wednesday.

The Committee for the Study of Exceptional Human Functions met with 10 of the allegedly gifted children, but they proved unable to demonstrate any statistically unusual psychic ability during the group's brief stay, Krippner said.

However, previous research findings were "'provocative,'" he said, and further research in more relaxed settings using more sophisticated American equipment could be significant.

More compelling were Chinese experiments into the physical side effects of ESP-related phenomenon.

Physicists working in their spare time at the Institute of High Level Physics in Peking have demonstrated that acupressure points show a lower skin resistance and higher conductivity to electricity during periods of increased psychic activity.

The Chinese have shown that the acupressure point on the back of the neck gets hotter during experiments in clairvoyance and telepathy.

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But "the change relates to the task itself rather than to the success of the task," Krippner noted. Temperature increases whether the subject's guess is right or wrong.

The research is unique, Krippner said, and with primitive equipment, lack of government funding and relative inexperience in the field, the Chinese "have accomplished a great deal."

Another area of study with far-reaching potential involves an ancient movement and deep breathing discipline called Qigong.

"They claim that once people start to study Qigong their psychic ability increases," he said, noting that researchers have demonstrated that Qigong increases heat and photon emissions from the body and intensifies the body's electrostatic field.

The Chinese believe that practice of Qigong, first recorded in the "Yellow Emperor's Classic on Internal Medicine" written at about 400 B.C. "spreads the vital energy, called Chi, through the body," said Krippner.

They are conducting research into this folk science in laboratory settings which have not yet produced a significant body of data but show much promise, he said.

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"The most interesting thing to us is that a medical technician named Ku has built a machine that artificially produces these fields and is using them on sick people," Krippner said.

Ku has had a particularly high success rate with patients suffering from high blood pressure. Seventy percent show lower blood pressure readings after spending time in the "Qigong Machine."

"The Chinese are eager to find a physical explanation for psychic phenomenon," said Krippner, the author of a book on mind exploration in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

While the Soviets are purportedly looking at ESP for "military and strategic purposes," he commented, Chinese researchers are looking more at medical applications.

"This work is very controversial in China, so to justify their work they tend to look for practical applications -- especially in medicine," he said.

Reports from Soviet defectors indicate the Soviets, in contrast, are looking at potential for mind control and intelligence-gathering in ESP-related phenomenon.

Although some observers fear the Soviets -- or their American counterparts -- will develop sophisticated methods of "psychic warfare," there is no evidence to show that they have found "anything useful," Krippner said.

The study team found "absolutely no indications" of "psywar" research in China, he added.

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