

# The Fire Flower System of Qigong

## Overview

The Fire Flower System of Qigong has evolved over a period of four decades since *student* Sharif first learned the *Eight Silk Weaving Exercises* or *Eight Square Deep Breathing* from his teacher Grand Master Lee in the late 1960's. During Seifu Sharif's past four decades of development the core elements of the system were maintained and at least five of the original exercises have remained in each of the sets. These five are *Pushing the Sky*, *Bow & Arrow*, *Looking Behind*, *Head & Body Swinging*, and *Body Bending* (although some significant refinements have taken place in each of these original techniques). Four of the five *new* exercises are original developments of Master Sharif, one being an adaptation from another traditional system.

The changes made in the System are indicated by *italic* below.

**Original Set:** Eight Square Deep Breathing [Eight Silk Weaving Exercises – these are the names Grand Master Alan Lee used to refer to the system.] (1968 – 1984)

The Original Set: 8 Movements X 8 Repetitions = (64 Movements)

| Number | Name                   | Number of Breaths |
|--------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1      | Pushing the Sky        | 3x8=24            |
| 2      | Bow and Arrow          | 1x8= 8            |
| 3      | One Arm Raise          | 1x8=16            |
| 4      | Looking Behind         | 1x8= 8            |
| 5      | Head and Body Swinging | 2x8=16            |
| 6      | Toe Standing           | 1x8=16            |
| 7      | Body Bending           | 3x8=24            |
| 8      | Pierce & Plane         | 1x8= 8            |

[104 Controlled breaths + 13 Transitional breaths = 117 Total breaths]

**Second Set:** The Fire Flower System [Developed during the period of 1984 – 1986 when Seifu Sharif change one exercise (exercise 8) and changed the name of the system. *Fire* meaning (internal dynamics) and *Flower* (external beauty)].

The Second Set: 8 Movements X 8 Repetitions = (64 Movements)

| Number | Name                   | Number of Breaths |
|--------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1      | Pushing the Sky        | 3x8=24            |
| 2      | Bow and Arrow          | 1x8= 8            |
| 3      | One Arm Raise          | 1x8=16            |
| 4      | Looking Behind         | 1x8= 8            |
| 5      | Head and Body Swinging | 2x8=16            |
| 6      | Toe Standing           | 1x8=16            |
| 7      | Body Bending           | 3x8=24            |
| 8      | <i>The Wave</i>        | 2x8=16            |

[112 Controlled breaths + 13 Transitional breaths = 125 Total breaths]

**Third Set:** Developed during the period of 1986 – 1997 before and after Seifu Sharif traveled, studied, and trained in China. Three exercises (3, 6, & 8) were changed from the original set because of the valuable dynamics of the movements.

The Third Set: 8 Movements X 8 Repetitions = (64 Movements)

| Number | Name                             | Number of Breaths |
|--------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1      | Pushing the Sky                  | 3x8=24            |
| 2      | Bow and Arrow                    | 1x8= 8            |
| 3      | <i>Arcing in Four Directions</i> | 2x8=16            |
| 4      | Looking Behind                   | 1x8= 8            |
| 5      | Head and Body Swinging           | 2x8=16            |
| 6      | <i>Twisting</i>                  | 2x8=16            |
| 7      | Body Bending                     | 3x8=24            |
| 8      | <i>The Wave</i>                  | 2x8=16            |

[128 Controlled breaths + 13 Transitional breaths = 141 Total breaths]

**Fourth Set:** Developed during the period of 1997 – 2005 when Master Sharif had completed his international travels to China, Southeast Asia, and Africa and was teaching students of various ages and levels of readiness on a regular basis. One change (exercise 8) was made offering a less challenging alternative to *The Wave*.

The Fourth Set: 8 Movements X 8 Repetitions = (64 Movements)

| Number | Name                             | Number of Breaths |
|--------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1      | Pushing the Sky                  | 3x8=24            |
| 2      | Bow and Arrow                    | 1x8= 8            |
| 3      | <i>Arcing in Four Directions</i> | 2x8=16            |
| 4      | Looking Behind                   | 1x8= 8            |
| 5      | Head and Body Swinging           | 2x8=16            |
| 6      | <i>Twisting</i>                  | 2x8=16            |
| 7      | Body Bending                     | 3x8=24            |
| 8      | <i>Wind, Thunder, and Rain</i>   | 1x8= 8            |

[120 Controlled breaths + 13 Transitional breaths = 136 Total breaths]

**Fifth Set:** Developed during the period of 2005 - 2010 Seifu Sharif introduced another set to the family of Fire Flower Qigong Exercises by again presenting an alternative for exercise 8. [Dredge the Sea/Measure the Sky was adapted from the *Tai Ji Qi Gong 18 Forms as taught by Master Simon Wang, M.D., Ph.D. and Master Julius L. Liu, M.D. in their book Qigong for Health & Longevity.*]

The Fifth Set:            8 Movements X 8 Repetitions = (64 Movements)

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Name</b>                            | <b>Number of Breaths</b> |
|---------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1             | Pushing the Sky                        | 3x8=24                   |
| 2             | Bow and Arrow                          | 1x8= 8                   |
| 3             | <i>Arcing in Four Directions</i>       | 2x8=16                   |
| 4             | Looking Behind                         | 1x8= 8                   |
| 5             | Head and Body Swinging                 | 2x8=16                   |
| 6             | <i>Twisting</i>                        | 2x8=16                   |
| 7             | Body Bending                           | 3x8=24                   |
| 8             | <i>Dredge the Sea/Measure the Sky*</i> | 2x8=16                   |

**[128 Controlled breaths + 13 Transitional breaths = 141 Total breaths]**

## Levels of the System

In the period 1997 – 2005 Master Sharif further refined the Fire Flower System by introducing the four (4) levels of practice. This development in the system greatly enhanced the student's ability to derive a broader range of benefits from their qigong practice.

**Level 1: Stretching** – the focus of level 1 is body movement, rotating the joints and stretching the muscles, ligaments, and tendons. Breathing is full but not regulated as in levels 3 & 4.

**Level 2: Asanas** (postures) - the focus of level 2 is on feeling the movement of energies through the body and breathing deep into the cavities of the body while holding the key transitional postures that make up the each exercise. Breathing is full but not regulated as in levels 3 & 4.

**Level 3: Cleansing Breath** - the focus of level 3 is cleansing the body of toxins and tensions while stimulating all of the cells of the body through the dynamic body movements of each exercise. The breath is regulated using the Cleansing Exhale technique and the Beginner/Intermediate method of Closing the System.

**Level 4: Agni Breath** - the focus of level 4, the highest level of performance is on using the internal power of the body and the breath to invigorate the body and to potentiate *Ase* (*Qi - life force*). The breath is regulated using the *Agni* (Fire) Breath technique at the Beginner thru Advanced methods of Closing the System.

When performing the Fire Flower System at **Levels 3 & 4** your breathing is consciously regulated and controlled. This process is referred to as **Closing the System**. Master Sharif has adjusted the number of controlled breaths used to *close the system* across the five current sets of the Fire Flower System of Qigong. He has also try to keep the number of controlled breaths used to *close the system* in the range of the original Eight Silk Weaving Exercises.

**Advanced Closing the System** = 64 Movements and **117 - 141 Breaths** (104 - 128 Controlled Breaths + 13 Transitional/Cleansing Breaths)

**Beginner and Intermediate Closing the System** = 64 Movements and **124 - 148 Breaths** (104 - 128 Controlled Breaths + 20 Transitional/Cleansing Breaths)

**Note:** Because of the breathing dynamics of **Level 3**, this level is always performed using the Beginner/Intermediate Closing the System where an additional Transitional/Cleansing breath has been added between each of the eight exercise.

The changes to the System, that is the introduction of new exercises and the refinement of various movements in the original exercises was often motivated by the abilities and needs of the students Seifu Sharif taught over his four decades of practice. Some of the changes are a result of the observations and experiences that came to Master Sharif as a consistent and long-term practitioner of the Fire Flower System of Qigong and of the Traditional Martial and Healing Arts.

You can receive private instruction in the Fire Flower System of Qigong from Master Sharif by contacting him through his web site at [Seifu-sharif.com](http://Seifu-sharif.com). Seifu Sharif also teaches several other qigong systems including *Da Mo 12 Palm System*, *Da Mo 12 Palm Fire Flower System*, the *18 Mudra System*, and the *7 Animals System of Qigong* developed exclusively by Master Sharif between 2008 and 2010, based on his 7 Circles System of Southern/Northern Shaolin Kung Fu Wu Shu.