

## **Daily Self-Care Guidelines / Simple Effective Qi Gong by Don Walker 06/12/2020**

### **Cultivation of the Elixir Path (Internal Alchemy) - Daoist History and Context**

The Elixir Dao is also called “Internal Elixir”, “Golden Elixir” and “Reverting to the Elixir”. The cultivation of Internal Alchemy is the innermost core and the essence of Daoist ritualistic and magical arts. The ideological pillars of Internal Alchemy are the Daoist philosophical theories of the creation of the universe and the gift of a human body, the interaction between heaven and human, Yin-Yang, Five Elements as well as the philosophy of life of the unification of heaven and human. Internal Alchemy regards Daoist Medicine and Chinese Medicine’s Qi and Blood, the meridians and collaterals, acupuncture points, Zang-organs and Fu-Viscera as the basis of the study of medicine.

Moreover, it views the human body’s Jing (Essence), Qi and Shen (Spirit) as the target for cultivation.

By means of guarding the intent in the three Cinnabar Fields: the Upper, Middle and Lower, the two channels, namely the Governing and Conception Vessel, they open up freely. The Elixir Dao strives for the physical balance and harmony to be orderly so that one can commence one’s Livelihood (Kungfu). Its’ highest goal is reaching accord with humans with the original nature of the universe; the unification of the body and the Dao, therefore achieving the Dao and becoming an immortal.

This is like an engineering project of the human body system for unleashing life’s latent ability and for exploring the profound mysteries of the Heart’s Divinity and the cultivation.

“The Golden Elixir’s Great Dao;  
Joined with Heaven and Earth;  
Identical to the Sun and Moon;  
In accord with creations and transformations;  
Reversing to naturalness;  
Returning to the Original ‘I’;  
Cultivating Inner Nature and Life-Destiny:  
It is the Dao of the unification of Heaven and Human.”

**The cultivation of the Elixir Dao (Internal Alchemy) is divided into four main phases:**

- Laying the Foundation
- The Initial Barrier
- The Middle Barrier
- The Upper Barrier

(1) “Laying the Foundation” denotes the harmonization of inhaling and exhaling, protecting and nourishing the physical body, building a good foundation for the Elixir Cauldron as well as dispelling diseases and replenishing deficits.

(2) ‘The Initial Barrier’ (the Microcosmic Orbit) includes the refinement and transmutation of Essence (Jing) into Qi, opening up of the two channels, namely the Governing and Conception Vessels, and the Eight Extraordinary vessels. It is differentiated into four levels:

1. Picking the Medicine (locking in Essence-Qi)
2. Tight Sealing (preventing loss to the outside)
3. Boiling and Refinement (cycling the Microcosmic Orbit)
4. Boiling and Refinement (cycling the Macrocosmic Orbit)

(3) ‘The Middle Barrier’ (the Macrocosmic Orbit) symbolizes the refinement and transmutation of Qi into Spirit (Shen), including the processes of the trembling of the Six Roots (genital organs, tongue, nose, eyes, ears, intellect), Seven Days to generate the Great Medicine, extracting lead and adding mercury, safeguarding the centre, warming and nourishing the Sage Embryo, transferring the embryo and so on.

(4) ‘The Upper Barrier’ incorporates the refinement of the Spirit and the return to the void, including the processes of suckling the infant and its warming and nourishing, the exiting of the Spirit and its return to the void and so on:

“Reaching the spherical merging of Body and Mind,  
the Yang Spirit, the True ‘I’, exits and enters the realms unhindered.”

Beyond the three Barriers, the refinement of the void and the unification with the Dao signifies the accomplishment of becoming One with the Dao, the “Feather Transformation” (becoming an immortal) and the ascension into the realm of immortals.

### **Lingzhi - Ganoderma Lucidum - Used for Immortality**

Lingzhi, also commonly known as Reishi mushroom and “Ganoderma Lucidum”, has become a very commonly used product in pills, powders and raw dried form boiled as a tea over 4000 years dating back in Chinese History. It also has roots in Korea, Japan, other Asian countries, and Europe. Known as a highly spiritual herb, it was favored amongst the Taoists. Its use carried through to the emperors of that time. Lingzhi is translated as “Mushroom of Immortality” and is also known as the “Herb of Spiritual Potency”. Its physical appearance and medicinal characteristics represented success, well-being, divinity, power, and longevity. It has become to be known for its’ pharmaceutical and not just nutritional benefits. The first text of which it appeared in was the “Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing” where it is classified amongst other medicinal mushrooms. It wasn’t until the supporting text “Bencao Gangmu”, by Li Shizen classified it with details explaining therapeutic benefits such as tonification, increasing vital

energy, improving cardiovascular function, memory, and anti aging effects. It also helps to replenish Qi and aids in relieving cough and asthma related issues. There are other types of species referred to as Reishi such as, Ganoderma Oregonense and Ganoderma Tsugae. Although Reishi grows in 6 different colors (green, red, yellow, white, black, and purple), I will be focusing on Ganoderma Lucidum of the red type. Red Reishi has the most well-rounded and complete benefits and is the most popularly used in the world, as well as having the most studies conducted for its properties and benefits.

### **Adaptogenic Benefits of Reishi**

Reishi Mushrooms are known to boost the immune system and help to fight against Cancer. Consumption increases the production of natural killer cells; a type of white blood cell. These types of cells fight against Cancer and other infections in the body. Reishi can also help to produce more lymphocytes in the body. For those who aren't ill, preventative measures such as strengthening the immune system, aid in athletic performance and reduced stress caused by excessive activity are contributed by Reishi. There have been some cases of placebo, where subjects claim they felt no difference after a period of time. Overall, Reishi has provided benefits to the majority of those who consume it. Many countries classify Reishi as "Saprotrophs" and other countries still consider them as a type of parasite. Saprotrophs are types of organisms that live off the remains of dying or dead organisms. Overall, Saprotrophs exist as a result of decomposing matter and can be found in many areas related to other types of fungi and mushrooms. The continued research of Reishi has determined that its health claims are legitimate and this has created a huge market base. Of all the nutritional aspects of Reishi, two main components, polysaccharides and triterpenes have taken much of the attention. Polysaccharides are complex carbohydrates made up of chains of sugars. The sugars are known to stabilize blood pressure and blood sugar. They also have a positive effect on fighting against free radicals.

Triterpenes are steroid like molecules that inhibit histamine and contain anti-inflammatory properties. The type of triterpenes found in Reishi are considered as ganodermic acids. In clinical testing, ganodermic acids have been found to have biological mechanisms for hepatoprotection and antitumor abilities. The vasodilatory effects of consuming Reishi creates a state of calmness and wellbeing. They also act as bronchodilators aiding in lung issues such as asthma, bronchitis, and allergies that are related to these conditions. Western medical practices have recognized Reishi to be effective in protecting and repairing the immune system and this is considerably important pertaining to patients who undergo chemotherapy and radiation. Many people consume Reishi in teas, pill, and powder forms as a method of preventative care; especially before the cold and flu seasons. Spiritual seekers such as monks and taoists have used Reishi for thousands of years because it relaxes the body affecting the nervous system, cognitive function, and Will Power in positive ways. Reishi's strong anti-oxidative properties help to protect and repair cellular DNA. Benefits at this level of the body also have positive effects on anti-aging. Reishi helps to balance the Endocrine and Hormone Systems in the body. Hormones are a part of the consciousness in the body. Different

levels and fluctuations affect mood, sleep patterns, appetite, thought processes, perceptions of reality and the ability to connect in life and our environments.

### **Jiaogulan, “Gynostemma Pentaphyllum” - Poor Man’s Ginseng**

Jiaogulan, “Gynostemma Pentaphyllum”, is known to be an indigenous plant grown in Southern China. However, Chinese Medicine has strong roots in Northern China and there isn’t as much mention of Southern Chinese Medicine publicly. Although the authors from the Classic Chinese Medical Texts were from Northern China, there isn’t much prominence of Jiaogulan there. It is mentioned in a medical text in 1406 called “Materia Medica for Famine”, by Zhu Xiao, then again in the late 1500’s in the Classic Text, “Compendium of Materia Medica”, compiled by Li Shizhen. Early claims of the use of Jiaogulan caused confusion as to its value and importance as compared to other herbs of that time, so it wasn’t regarded as much. In Southern China and in some of the local surrounding villages, it was favored due to being easy to grow in the Southern Climate and easy to harvest. It grows like a weed and is like a vine. Northern Chinese in the Old days considered it as a poor person’s Ginseng. Its lack of focus in TCM in the Northern and Central regions of China, due to other plants that thrived in those regions, delayed many of the benefits experienced that are known today as modern marvels. Later on, after a census, it was discovered that Jiaogulan offered life-sustaining qualities and this gave it more credibility. The local villagers in Southern China already drank it as a tea on a regular basis, enjoying the taste, the positive effects they received, and it wasn’t surprising that those locations would be the source of where Jiaogulan is grown and harvested today.

### **Adaptogenic Benefits of Jiaogulan**

Throughout the 1970’s to 1990’s, many scientific discoveries were revealed regarding the benefits of Jiaogulan. In the days of Old, there were claims that Jiaogulan was considered as the poor man’s Ginseng; however, researchers discovered that it contains 82 Saponins, whereas Ginseng only has 29. Saponins are naturally occurring glycosides found in plants also known as phytochemicals. “Sapo” translates as “Soap”. These phytochemical structures of Jiaogulan work just like soap and clean the cardiovascular system, lowering cholesterol and boosting the immune system. Saponins combine with cholesterol and are excreted out of the body instead of going back into the bloodstream. Cholesterol in the body is used to create bile to break down food for digestion. There are many cholesterol medications on the market that do this; However, Jiaogulan, is the most natural. Saponins help plants to fight against parasites in Nature. Research has shown that Saponins act as antioxidants and these substances are toxic to cancer cells. Cancer cell membranes contain cholesterol-like compounds. Some Saponins are known to bind with these membranes causing harm to them. Jiaogulan helps to detoxify the blood in the body because of its natural fighting abilities. Its compounds can bind to foreign and harmful substances in the body to be excreted and they can enhance the immune system just by their antioxidant effects killing harmful pathogens in the body. This allows for increased

energy, vitality, overall well-being and anti-aging effects. By regulating and balancing hormone levels, sugar cravings are decreased and this is why it is known to prevent diabetes and aid those who are diabetic to have less cravings.

Jiaogulan has adaptogenic qualities. Adaptogens are known to physiologically balance the body to return to normal homeostatic states creating a balance in hormones, mood, energy levels, and reduced stress. Drinking the tea can help increase the production of white blood cells which help strengthen the immune system's response to fight against foreign substances. Jiaogulan naturally stimulates the body to produce more Nitric Oxide and this helps to expand the blood vessels causing better circulation. Expanded blood vessels help reduce High Blood Pressure and Hypertension. As stated earlier, Saponins' ability to bind to cholesterol not only helps to reduce and maintain cholesterol levels, it also helps to prevent Atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is hardening of the arteries when a buildup of plaque in the heart vessels is caused by excessive cholesterol in the bloodstream that binds to the vessels; whereas white blood cells attack and die causing an increase of plaque when they calcify. Thus, the expansion of the blood vessels will also help improve memory due to increased blood flow to the brain, improved sleep patterns, improved mental focus and the increase of oxygen that flows through these expanded vessels helps athletes in physical performance. Oxidative stress in the body causes much harm and is one of the root causes of many illnesses. Stress damages DNA, causes chronic inflammation, increases risk of cancer, and increases aging. These negative characteristics can all be relieved and reversed by the adaptogenic effects of Jiaogulan because it works at the physiological level in the body to prevent, balance and harmonize the body's functions and processes.

### **Daily Self-Care for Anti-aging**

#### 1. How to prepare for sleep and how to wake up the TCM way:

- Before sleeping, make sure to take any/all devices, turn them off, unplug wifi.
- 30 min to 1 hr, acknowledge all thoughts, tasks for the day, focus on breathing.
- Sit on the edge of bed as you do this in an upright position. Straight back. Place hands on tops of knees.
- As you breathe in, focus on the area below the navel. Inhale and fill the abdomen completely until maximum. Then exhale pulling abdomen in.
- While breathing, take account of how you feel. What caused you to feel that way?
- Then make an agreement to take care of those things the next day.
- After breathing deeply for 10 to 15 min, carefully lay down on bed in supine position. Place your hands on your abdomen slightly below the navel area.
- Continue breathing in and out in the same manner.

#### 2. How to wake up and get out of the bed the TCM way. 5-10 minutes:

- Try your best NOT to use alarm clocks. Wake up earlier to train your body to wake up naturally according to the time needed to rise.
- Upon waking up, first, do not abruptly get out of bed. Take account of how you feel and if any aches or pains are present and where they are located.
- In a supine position, take a few deep breaths in and out and extend the body.
- Pull knees to chest, cradling hands over knees. Inhale pulling stomach in.
- Exhale and relax the stomach and extend legs back to supine position.
- Place hands behind knee joints and extend legs in an extended position upward while pulling the stomach in inhaling. Extend as far and as comfortable as possible.
- Exhale and relax legs back to supine position with hands behind knee joints.
- Cross the opposite leg facing the side of the bed you exit from to get up.
- Carefully sit on edge of bed and place hands on knees with straightened back.
- As you breathe in, focus on the area below the navel. Inhale and fill the abdomen completely until maximum. Then exhale pulling abdomen in.
- After breathing deeply for 10 to 15 min, get up for Qi Gong.
- Prepare a cup of warm to hot tea with lemon or simply warm water with lemon on an empty stomach. This aids in balancing the immune system by improving gut health; therefore fighting against illness, boosting the metabolism, hydrating and signaling the organs to wake up for the day ahead.

### **Simple, Effective Qi Gong**

- Don't brush your teeth and try to hold urine. Explain.
- In a quiet area of your home, in standing position, step with left foot, then right. Pivot body to the East facing the Sun.
- Warm up with meridian massage starting with the inside of the arms from the right axilla (armpit area) moving down to hands, then backs of hands, up to shoulders, then over them bringing left hand to right side of chest. Exchange hands and massage the left arm with your right hand in the same manner as the right arm. Several times for each side.
- Move hands to the sides of the hip areas and brush down sides of legs to ankles then around to insides of legs upwards to groin area. Several times.
- Move back to standing position.
- Have arms resting by sides and slightly bend your knees. Look down at a 45 degree angle.
- Relax your mind. If you have trouble with excessive thoughts, focus on a color. In my experience, focusing on breathing has worked best being aware of breathing in and out.
- While standing, focus on the area just below your navel called the "Dan Tian".
- Concentrate while breathing in and out, filling that area from the front of your body to the back between your kidneys. After several deep breaths, clench the muscles around anal and bladder regions. Du1 and Ren 1.

- Inhale and pull Dan Tian upwards along with pulling abdomen inwards. Focus on bringing Navel (Ren 8) and Ming Men (Between Kidneys) together connecting the circuit.
- Gently close Hands (inhale with hands), making loose fists and pull them upwards allowing the Forearms to be parallel with the floor. Keep elbows close to the body.
- Pull the Qi collected from the Dan Tian upwards. Legs should straighten from the strength of core in Abdominal region eventually causing the heels to naturally lift from the floor. As the Qi along with breath moves from the Lower Cinnabar field to Middle, then Upper, the shoulders will rise along with the head lifting it upwards. Do not raise head past eye level.
- Curl the tongue upwards and push against the roof of the mouth.
- From this point, inhale with the eyes, bringing Qi into eyes, then close them while inhaling. Close fists more, inhaling with the eyes. Roll eyes backwards along with shoulders in circular motion, (using intention and visualization) circling inside up and over the brain.
- When visualizing down to the Nape of neck, with shoulders rolled back, closing the gap between scapulas. Wrap Fists around to back and over Kidneys, moving them down. While relaxing the shoulders, begin to descend the Qi. The toes and balls of feet should lift upwards.
- As shoulders descend, visualize the Qi descending from the Nape of the neck down to the abdominal region. Continue inhaling until feet return flat to the floor, relax the Dan Tian and abdominal region, then slowly exhale while relaxing the muscles around the Anal and Bladder regions. Knees should be slightly bent along with arms descended down to sides of the body. Slowly exhale, opening eyes and fists and visualize Qi moving down to the bottoms of the feet. Head should descend back to a 45 degree angle.
- Repeat the same cycle for 15 minutes. Focus on inhaling only when moving your body upwards and exhaling only after dropping Dan Tian.

## 5 Element 24 Hour Clock

