

Thoughts on Daoist Teachings

Specific advices on exercises are noticeably vague, e.g. there is the suggestion to meditate in the morning or to do Qi Gong or Yoga, but no particular style or techniques are requested. This is because:

*'there is no fixed system of thought of practice in Taoism, and many different methods have been articulated over the centuries. Different temperaments & different times have different requirements, so the responses of the Tao to these varying conditions must themselves differ to be effective.'*¹

The idea is that you search out a system for yourself which works for you, which you feel will achieve the task. If you think gardening is activity enough for your whole body, choose this over learning Yoga or Tai Chi Form.

This is an aspect of the 'law of resonance', that which feels comfortable or familiar is the pathway for you to follow. It 'resonates' or is the same energy or frequency as your own constitution in terms of physique or temperament (personality).

Similarly, these is no authority to tell you what is right or wrong. You are to learn from your own experience. The meaning is to edge forward yourself, in a sense of trial and error, finding out what works for you or not.

As many spiritual teachers, but particularly Daoist, [Jeffrey Yuen](#), whose teachings I have now followed many years, *teachers only according to 'Oral Lineage'*, directly from his own interpretation of the subject at that time, with few or no notes, for those students in the classroom. One will notice if you listen to the same lecture with on a different occasion a different group of students the details of the lecture are quite significantly different !!

One has the possibility to receive and understand, or not, in that moment – which is now lost forever.

So, it is for you to learn that there is only this day within which to begin your practice – for tomorrow it is already gone. And if you did not sit and meditate or stretch your body, then you do not carry it with you in the future.

And there is only this moment in which you can experience, for that moment has already gone. So, it is for you to be as cognisant as you can in this present one, because if you are not attentive enough to learn it now, that chance has also departed.

And if you really wish to live from that space, it is ardently learn the practice of Ge Hong Meditation.

And it to realise that you will, literally, 'live and die', according to your own ability or 'level' of comprehension. Or, to say in a more soft way 'you state of health or sickness is dependent upon you own possibility of putting into action that which is being offered'. But you need to work it out for yourself.

Quoting from the Dao De Ching, Chapter 5:²

'Heaven and Earth are not humane*
They regard all things as straw dogs**

The Sage is not humane,
He regards all people as straw dogs`

* Read as 'are impartial', as in, not caring or being involved in the outcome

** Straw Dogs were made as ceremonial objects, cast away or used as fuel after usage

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|-------------------|------|--------------------|---|
| 1) Thomas Cleary | 2000 | Taoist Meditation | Shambhala Books |
| 2) Wing-Tsit Chan | 1963 | The Way of Lao Tzu | Bobbs-Merrill / Library of Liberal Arts |

Check-List

As suggested, decide with which exercise you wish to begin; maybe one which you already practise or which is familiar to you. Once you have that 'in your system', that is 3 months / 100 days of practice; add the next.

If you do not feel 'connected' with one of the exercise, do not do it. It probably means it is not suited to you, or you are not ready to go there in yourself.

The Daoist approach does not ask you to do something which is not comfortable, or which involves stress or strain; rather to offer the next step from where you are. By taking the next step, by gradually making a new habit you direct yourself to change and to grow forward.

It might seem that all the exercises will take much time; but remember that energy moves fast !! Once you have created the structure (regular, every day practice for 100 days), a matrix has been created soon you can do many of the exercises in a momentary flash of the mind.

- **Meditate each morning** between 05.00 – 07.00
Take about 30 – 40 minutes; together with some form of stretching, yoga, Qi Gong or Tai Chi. You are both waking up your body, as well as 'scanning in' to know how you feel and if anything needs to be fixed.

- **'Let go of the Day' each evening** between 21.00 – 23.00
Take about 20 – 30 minutes to either review your day, write in your diary or learn the 'Ge Hong Mediation'; do some form of relaxation to take out the tension – both physical and mental from the day.

- **Learn to scan the body** use this both morning and evening
Sitting or lying, beginning above your head, direct your attention gradually through your body, continuing through to below the feet. As you go through the body, become aware of physical and emotional tensions, and as you touch them with your mind, drop them away, let go of them into the earth.

It might take a bit of training, so begin step-by-step: first more outside, then a bit deeper in the organs, then the most deep in the bones, nervous system, brain etc.. First on a physical level, then on an emotional.

- **Sleeping**
21.00-23.00, the more unwell, the earlier. If possible, rarely later than 23.00.
Awaking, 05.00 – 07.00. If possible do not stay in bed longer.

- **Be in the vitality of the fresh air**
Remember the key to your good health is the vitality from the environment: air, food, emotional, mental, spiritual, relationship. The easiest of those is from the air and by being outside each day, whatever the weather, you will attune yourself to the seasonal changes → which will create the sensibility in your body and emotions to adapt to your personal health needs on a daily basis.

Exercise outside, not inside or in a gym; walking is as good, probably better than running; gardening or something with a purpose – to make beauty – even better.

- **Eat seasonally**

This is quite simple to achieve: buy produce from local growers; or as relevant within the same temperate zone, e.g. southern Europe during Spring and Summer months.

Care during winter (in Sweden), thinking what your ancestors would have used: stored roots; fruits conserved naturally; adding foods *which fit with the cold climate* from the south, but avoiding anything tropical. Use a minimum of frozen foods; preserve naturally.

This book can give more tips related to diet: [The Tao of Long Life by Chee Soo](#)

- **Be aware of the Narratives you have created about your life**

This is a bigger project, though again once you have learnt your own method to approach it, you will find you can begin to 'scan' into the stored emotional and mental memories.

One approach can be to begin a 'time line' of your life, going backwards from your present age; use the 'Age Markers' as a guide. Set aside a regular time, e.g. 2 or 3 evenings during the week or time during the weekend, *then beginning from the age you are now, go back through this period*. So, if you are aged 73, the period you will begin to scan is from now back to age 60.

Remember, you are looking for all the stories you have told yourself which have taken you away from the core essence of your being; those parts of yourself which do not resonate with the deepest parts of your soul.

- **Be attentive to the Markers of your human life**

Beginning with the exercise of investigating the narratives, using the Age Markers as the structure, you will quite quickly find you that you can check these during the same process.

Begin with the narratives, then once you are secure with that activity, include the investigation of those aspects of your psyche and character which were to be matured during that phase. You will most probably find that there is a similarity or that they are faces of the same coin.

That which prevented growth were those narratives created to manage your life at that time. By revealing one, the other disappears; the natural growth of human development, waiting as potential within you, will flourish.

- **Live from within yourself**

Waking in the morning, be present, aware; allow your soul to sink into your body from the night's adventures in other places, spaces and worlds. Orientate yourself between Heaven and Earth.

Take this into your day and live from that space every moment

- **Remember the 85% – 15% Rule in all areas of your life**

No obligations, no extremes, no systems, no theories.

Live from within yourself, being comfortable with yourself

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[Zhuang Zhou Dreams of Being a Butterfly](#)

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