

Persistence and Grace of the Wild Goose

An Introduction to Dayan Qigong. By Ronnie Robinson

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Dayan Qigong is a traditional system of daoist origin, named after the wild goose. Its multitude of movements shaped to show the extraordinary strength of this bird as well as its beauty are set in two sequences of 64 parts each. Ronnie Robinson, an internationally renowned Qigong and Taijiquan teacher from Glasgow, describes Dayan Qigong as a very comprehensive system, which uses special techniques to disperse negative Qi and pick up positive Qi as well as stimulate individual meridians and akupunture points which in turn stimulates the inner organs. Dayan Qigong at the same time strengthens the body and the mental awareness.

Dayan Qigong

Dayan Qigong is a Chinese internal system of two sets of 64 movements which are designed to boost the Qi energy system, clear negative energy, increase mental clarity and thereby and leave the practitioner feeling revitalised, refreshed and both mentally and physically stimulated. Regular practice helps to stimulate the health Qi flow through the meridians whilst helping to clear negative or stagnant Qi. It contains a number of beautiful bird-like movements which are easy to learn and delightful to perform.

Origins

Dayan Qigong is from the Taoist Kunlun systems and was originally developed in the Jin Dynasty (1115 - 1234), but for many years remained a closely guarded secret. Legend has it that before one was allowed to teach this system they had to study for many years and could not teach it until they reached the age of 70 years. This was designed to keep the system hidden from outsiders. Today it is one of the most highly regarded health systems of Qigong in China and is practised in many countries across the world.

Yang Meijun

Yang Meijun is widely regarded to be the official lineage holder of this wonderful qigong system. She began her qigong training at the age of 13 when her 73 year old grandfather taught her. Although small in stature this remarkable woman worked for many years developing and preserving this unique system of Qigong. In 1978, after the death of her husband she decided to publicly teach her many systems of qigong. Being over the required age of 70 years she also began to teach the Wild Goose, Dayan Qigong as she wanted to pass its many benefits on to others. Yang Meijun is Director of Special Commission for Dayan Qi Gong and serves as a council member of China Scientific Research Institution of Qi Gong and honorary advisor to Beijing Qi Gong Research Association

Dayan Qigong (Wild Goose)

In creating many of the qigong systems the early originators were known to have adapted the natural, flowing qualities of animals, birds and serpents. Each system incorporates elements of the various creatures to depict the manner in which the movements should be performed. In our consideration of this we should think about the fact that the only creature that suffers from stresses that result in ailments to the mind and body is man. Other creatures carry no

postural problems from the stresses of modern living!

The goose is a very strong bird that flies for incredibly long distances when migrating in winter. Its strong energy allows it to sustain the rigours of the long demanding journey ahead. Dayan Qigong uses a wide variety of movements that are designed to release negative energy and gather positive energy. It contains slow, fluid, movements and quick, strong movements. There are two sets of 64 movements, each set taking approximately 15 minutes to perform. The slow movements perform a kind of qigong massage on the internal organs like the liver and spleen. There are gentle movements where the hands vibrate over particular internal organs or acupoints. These help to transmit energy from the Laogong point in the centre of the palm, where the energy can often be felt as warm or tingling, to stimulate the energy system of the internal organs. Some of the faster movements act to directly stimulate acupoints with a stronger 'surge' of energy to clear the area and ensure a freer pathway it to flow. We massage internal organs with through the hands and also perform a routine where each finger and thumb moves rapidly to stimulate the related internal organs. There are movements which are performed in the upright, vertical position, which are similar to tai chi stepping and others which sweep down from a high position to a very low posture helping to stimulate and strengthen the upper and lower back area. It is an extremely dynamic holistic system working on the entire energy system of the body. The movements are dynamic and static at the same time, combining strength with grace, bringing beauty and serenity to the performance of the form and inducing relaxation and freedom in the body.

Practising Dayan Qigong

In order to regulate the flow of energy through the practice of Dayan Qigong we should try to combine a series of applications.

Movement

The movements of Dayan Qigong are performed softly and smoothly with no external tensions. There are, however some changes in tempo. Some movements can be soft and gentle when others can be vigorous and strong. There are slow, gentle movements and rapid movements when releasing negative Qi. At all time the body should be relaxed and open with no external straining. (Some systems of Qigong or Neigong internal training do include strong harder movements but generally qigong health systems are more fluid and relaxed.)

Breathing

The breath is very important all practices of Qigong. Some systems require the practitioner to make movements in time with the breath whereas others may require the breathing to be relaxed and natural. In performing the Wild Goose the breath should be centred in the lower abdomen remaining deep and even with no hypertension.

Yi

The term Yi is generally translated as focus or intent. It is the most important component in the practice of qigong. You can move beautifully and breathe naturally and fluidly but if your mind is not focussed on what you are doing the results will be substantially less. The focus need not be hard or fixed but you should carry an awareness and 'connectedness' to the movements you are performing. Imagine driving a car. You have to travel in a certain direction to reach your destination. You may look out to one side and then another from the

window but if your attention strays too far from the road you will crash. You know that your mind must be with the intention of travelling in a particular direction so it is important that you stay there. In qigong you should try to keep your attention on the movements you are performing with your mind being aware of the direction you are moving, both outside and inside the body.

Dayan Qigong and the Energy System In the practice of Dayan Qigong there are a number of acupoints and meridians that we focus on to stimulate the energy system. When beginning, as we raise the hands we visualise the energy moving up the Du Channel in the centre of the back and down the Ren Channel in the centre of the front of the body. We do this three times to let the energy travel through the Zhou Tian Circle or Lesser Heavenly Cycle. In the first movement we open the arms above the head once more and then, as the arms are coming back down we allow them to rest in front of the abdomen where the Laogong Point in the centre of the palm can stimulate the lower Dantien. In performing Dayan Qigong we go on to stimulate a number of acupoints throughout the energy system. These include: Qihu, Quepen, Tai Yang, Huantiao, Shenshu, Mingmen and the Hegu. During practice the major channels, arteries and veins of the 12 even channels and the 8 odd arteries and veins are dredged and a Qi field will be produced all over the body. This helps to detoxify the body whilst the functions of the human body and the performance of Qi Gong will increase to a higher level. The Qi will return to Dantien creating a refined (tempered) 'Inner Dan.'

Dayan Qi Gong gets to the root of many imbalances. In combating disease it works to stimulate all the principal channels and improves the function of the human body as well as strengthening the nerves, regulating the body fluid, adjusting the function of the viscera and balancing yin and yang. It can aid various kinds of chronic diseases improve cardiac symptoms and illnesses of the nervous, respiratory, digestive and urinary systems. It can aid chronic fatigue, back and neck pains, hypertension and insomnia. It is also reputed to be good for sufferers of multiple sclerosis, arthritis and asthma.

How it Works

There are a variety of movements that perform different functions on the energy system. The stronger rapid movements work to quickly release negative energy, softer movements stimulate various internal organs like the heart, liver, spleen and kidneys and we also vibrate the hands and fingers to stimulate the energy of the internal organs. We draw positive energy to particular points like the Qihu, and Yongquan and in rotating the waist we help to stimulate the flow of energy through the body.

There are movements where we strengthen the spine and back and stimulate the kidney energy and we also directly stimulate the 'Sky Eye' or upper Dantien by bringing the Laogong point directly to the forehead. Once learned and practiced regularly the practitioner will feel a sense of inner strength in the body whilst having a sharper, clearer mind.

Practice

Like any system regular practice is important. The more you do the more benefits can be gained. Once familiar with the pattern of movements you will be able to move more fluidly thereby increasing the likelihood of increased energy.

When I first learned the system I asked my teacher how long it would take until I got it. He said that once I had done it 300 times it would be mine. I practiced 3 times each morning and

3 times each evening for 50 days - less than two months. After 10 - 20 days I became familiar with the sequence, after 30 - 40 days I had it re-checked and by the end of 50 - 60 days I was able to perform the movements in a fluid manner. The more familiar I became with the system the more I felt the benefits.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned the various styles of Qigong that I had learned. I knew it would not be possible for me to retain all those systems, as my time was limited for practice. I chose to work on Dayan Qigong, as it is a system that stimulates all the body. After doing the sequence 3 times in succession I feel very strong and refreshed. It does what I want and the benefits increase as I practice it more. Although the movements are a little strange at first, with regular practice they are easy to learn and accessible to most people.