

24-48hr Fast & Qi Gong Session:

Fasting is an established practice within many religions and spiritual communities, and has been recently shown to be associated with brain and body health within western scientific studies.

In Daoism, this practice is called Biguan 闭关, *shutting and closing*. There can be several different biguan practices, some for several days where yang qi is conserved due to the longer period of withdrawal and retention. Here I am inviting you to a 24-48 hour fast linked to our training session, to initiate a closure of and limitation of stimuli, followed by yang qi release as part of an energetic cleansing for the transition to Spring and Wood phase.

In the Thursday 2nd March classes, we will do the following practices to stimulate qi release and circulation:

- 7-8:30pm Class: qi gong (baduanjin, both sets of wuxing qi gong and zhan Zhuang standing practice).
- 8:30 – 10pm. Flow yoga sequences, body movement drills and fuchen basics. No running, xie bu twists, etc that we usually do.

If you would like to link a fasting practice to these sessions, do plan ahead, and consider your work and family commitments on the Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd March. You are likely to experience a drop in energy/fatigue before the rise of energy after, and hunger/irritability.

I recommend a normal and substantial breakfast on Wednesday 1st March. Then only water until after training on Thursday 2nd March, or a basic evening meal on the Wednesday evening consisting of miso soup only, or *zhou* (rice porridge, recipe below), that you have prepared in advance.

Zhou is used for more substantial fasts 2-5 days, when you should not attempt to go to work or do any substantial martial arts practice at all, just meditation and some slow movement qu gong. However, you may be interested in incorporating this in our 24-36 hour fast, for interest.

After training on thursday, you may choose to eat a good meal in the evening, or go to bed and eat a hearty breakfast on Friday morning.

**粥 ZHOU – RICE PORRIDGE
RECIPE (from Shifu Jeff Reid)**

Ingredients:

- 1 c. rice
- 10 c. water

Recipe:

- Rinse rice with cold water in a strainer, then soak rice for about 30 minutes. Mix with about half a tablespoon of sesame oil. Let stand for about 20 minutes. *Note: Some people freeze the rice before cooking which apparently makes it cook faster and breaks the grain for a softer *zhou*.
- Bring the 10 cups of water to a boil in the pot and add the drained rice. Allow time for the water to come back to a full boil. Drop to medium-low or low for at least another 30 minutes. *Note: If you want the grain to be very broken, stir the *zhou* for the last 5 minutes or so of cooking.

If you feel that this will be too bland to have as your only food throughout the day, here is another *zhou* recipe with sliced chicken:

- Follow all similar steps above.
- While *zhou* is cooking, slice some chicken very thinly.
- In a separate container, mix chicken with some very thin slices of ginger, some salt, and a little oil.
- When the *zhou* is finished cooking, add the chicken to the pot and stir until the meat is fully cooked.
- Make sure that you don't cook the *zhou* too thickly. If this does happen, you can add water each time you recook it.

The following is another recipe provided by Lele. If you will be making this for the *biguan*, please use it as perhaps your first or last meal or post-*biguan* re-introductory breakfast:

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Ingredients:

- *Note – fresh ingredients are ideal, but frozen can supplement as some ingredients difficult to find outside of an Asian grocer. ○
Chestnuts ○ Lotus root ○ Peanuts ○
Shiitake mushrooms ○ Carrots
- Dried bean curd sticks (tofu skin) or fresh tofu

Recipe:

- Place all ingredients in pressure cooker. Boil to boil and lower heat for about 30 minutes.
- A large pot is also fine, follow same instructions but leave on lower heat for about 1.5 hours.
- Add salt and/or black pepper to personal taste when serving.
- Lele has also recommended adding 枸杞子 *gouqizi* wolf berries if you feel deficient.

Finally you may wish to donate the money you have saved from fewer meals to a personal charity or cause of your choosing.