



Practice 9.

THE MACROCOSMIC ORBIT

THE GREATER HEAVEN MEDITATION

The Bridge & Linking Channels
Yin & Yang Qiao Mo and Yin & Yang Wei Mo

The Purpose:

To open and activate the channels that extend into the extremities of the arms and legs.

To integrate the four secondary extraordinary meridians, with the four primary extraordinary meridians.

To turn on the complete system so that it functions as one integrated whole.

To learn a fast and immediate practice that can be performed in two breaths.

Overview and Explanation:

The Macrocosmic Orbit is the complement to the Microcosmic Orbit, it is the larger version. While the Microcosmic Orbit circulates along the Governor and Conception/Du Mo and Ren Mo channels of the torso, the Macrocosmic Orbit extends into the arms and legs.

Doing this practice integrates the extremities of arms and legs into the whole system. It also brings in the important points on the hands and feet called the Master and Coupled Points, which are presented in the next section.

There are numerous versions of this practice, but all have in common the circulation into the extremities. The version presented here uses the channels known as the Bridge and Linking Channels which connect and regulate all of the 12 regular organ/officials channels.

There are four of these, in two pairs, known as:

Yang Qiao Mo

Yin Qiao Mo

Yang Wei Mo

Yin Wei Mo

'Qiao' means Bridge.

'Wei' means Linking.

'Mo' means Channel or Meridian.

In relation to the Eight Extraordinary Meridians it can be considered that there are four "Primary" Extra Meridians - which are the Governor/Du, Conception/Ren, Belt/Dai and Thrusting/Chong Channels that flow through the torso and head. These have already been described in the previous practices.

The additional four meridians of the Bridge and Linking Channels can be considered the "Secondary" back-up or support channels. They flow through the arms and legs, bringing these into the network of the energy system. They have no separate points of their own. They criss-cross and leap-frog over points on the 12 regular organ/officials channels.

There is little information available on these channels in the literature. The highly regarded book 'ACUPUNCTURE - A Comprehensive Text', a direct translation from the Chinese by Dan Bensky and John O'Connor of the textbook used by students in the Shanghai College of Traditional Medicine of Acupuncture, states "A single, comprehensive description of the pathways and symptomatology of the eight Miscellaneous (Extraordinary) channels cannot be found in any one of the traditional medical classics."

There are various opinions regarding their exact course and trajectory. Even to the majority of Acupuncturists and Qigong practitioners, they are somewhat of a mystery, and indeed the pathways described in Qigong are somewhat different than those described in Acupuncture textbooks.

However, common agreement exists from all sources regarding a special category of eight points on the Extraordinary meridians, which are known as the 'Master' and 'Coupled' points. These will be described in the next section.

In the following practice, the Bridge and Linking Channels are combined in one integrated flow.

The practice has a number of ways of being taught. Bear in mind that the instructions described here are the result of teaching a weekly class series of 1.5 hour classes. Given the limited time available in each class, the amount of material needed to be covered, the length of the whole program, and the complexity and unfamiliarity of the information to a wide range of students, these instructions were by necessity abbreviated and simplified.

If you lived in a Daoist Monastery, and practiced 16 hours a day, you would no doubt learn each and every point, and its function and spirit. Most ordinary people who are engaged in normal life, with jobs and families, do not have such opportunity or luxury.

Different Versions Of This Practice.

There are a number of versions of how to learn this. One version is very detailed and involves learning the exact location of each point, and slowly 'walking' from each point to the next, using the middle finger of the right hand and the middle finger of the left hand, to send Qi from one point to the next in order to open each section of the whole pathway. This takes considerable time and attention and, if you are not an Acupuncturist already familiar with all of the points, is best learned through personal instruction.

Another version is less concentrated and involves simply touching each of the points in sequence, to clear and open the whole channel. This is not as involved as the practice described above, but over time may achieve a similar result.

These points are listed for reference at the end of this section. It is not necessary to train as an Acupuncturist to learn these points, they can be learned from any of the standard Acupuncture books which are now widely available and accessible. This only requires time, concentration and focus.

The version taught here involves running the 'flow' of the channels, which is much faster and easier to learn and assimilate. This is based upon the theory that the Qi is running along these pathways already, and the practice taught simply

helps to increase and accentuate what is naturally taking place. And again, over time the whole pathway will open up.

Four Quarters - Two Stages.

The general flow of this practice follows the pathways shown in the accompanying diagrams and charts. It is in four sections or quarters:

- 1st quarter.
Head down the front of the body to the feet
- 2nd quarter.
Feet up the side of the legs and back, to the shoulders
- 3rd quarter.
Shoulders down the outside arms to the hands
- 4th quarter.
Hands up the inside arms and rear of the neck to the head.

The practice is in two stages:

- The first stage is done with the hands and fingers to lead and guide the mind.
- The second stage is done with the mind alone.

Your Fingertips As Guides.

Fingers are an important tool for tracing along the pathways and points of the body. By touching yourself you educate your mind and awareness about where places, points and pathways are located.

Although fingers vary in size from person to person they are usually in proportion to an individual's body size - generally small people have small fingers, large people have large fingers.

You can use your fingers in a variety of ways:

- When the middle three fingers are held next to each other they have a width between 1.5 - 2.5 inches from side to side (depending on the size of your hands and fingers).

- When turned sideways the tips form a line, one behind the other, which can 'draw' along a pathway on the surface of your body.
- The tip of one finger can rest on a single point, and give precise location and focus.
- If you bring all five tips of your fingers and thumb together you form a 'circle' of fingertips which is about 1 inch wide. This circle can be held over a particular point or area, to focus Qi there.
- If you open up these fingertips, spread them apart, you can expand this circle to 4-6 inches wide, to cover a larger area of focus.
- The position and angle of your hand will determine the amount and area of contact that is possible. The hands and arms only move in certain ways and angles, and these angles and positions determine what contact between your fingers and body is possible. Experiment for yourself, and follow what comes easily and naturally. Do not over-stretch or strain your fingers, hands or wrists.

By touching and tracing with your fingertips in these ways, you are educating your mind and awareness about your body and energy. Your mind 'reads' and learns where the various pathways are, and remembers them.

Preparation:

Minimal: Smile at Yourself, The Ba Gua, The Microcosmic Orbit.

Optimal: Everything so far.

THE PRACTICE:

To begin it is easiest to start on one side of the body only. Later, as this practice becomes familiar, both sides can be performed at the same time.

1st Quarter.

Head down the front of the body to the feet

With the three middle fingers of one hand, using your left or right depending on your natural preference, touch the Bai Hui point on your crown. Then move it out to the side 1-2 inches, so that you are touching the Gall Bladder line.

Slowly draw your fingers forward, following with your mind, so that they come over your forehead, over your eyes, and down the middle of your cheek to the edge of your jaw.

Then draw your fingers under the edge of your chin to the midpoint.

Now draw down the center of your throat, over your Adam's Apple, to the notch at the base.

Move out to the side along the top of your collar bone/clavicle until you feel a prominent 'bump' at the side (However, some people do not have this bump because of their particular anatomy). This point is directly above the nipple on a man.

Then proceed vertically down over the top of your chest, over your breast and nipple, if you are a woman coming back at the base of your breast to the same distance from the center line, and continue on down to the bottom edge of your rib cage.

Now slowly continue straight down in a vertical line until you meet the crease of your groin.

From here trace down the inside of your thigh, down to the inside of the knee. Continue on over your knee down the inside of your lower leg to the point directly below your inner ankle bone.

Continue along the inside edge of the foot to the big toe.

You have now completed the first quarter of this practice, tracing from your head to your foot.

2nd Quarter.

From the feet up the outside of the legs, to the back and shoulders.

Slide your fingers under the bottom of your foot so that the tip of the middle finger is touching the Bubbling Spring/Yong Quan point in the center of your foot, just behind the base of your toes. Keeping the tip of your middle finger in contact with the Bubbling Spring, turn your hand in a half-circle, so that the back of your hand is facing outwards to the side.

With the tips of your fingers roll up and over the edge of the little toe on the outside edge of your foot, so that they are now touching the top surface of your foot between the fourth and fifth toe.

Draw your fingers backwards towards your heel, to stop below your outside ankle bone.

Slowly draw up the outside edge of your leg, along the lower leg, past the knee, right up to outside of the hip joint.

From here move inwards under the cheek of your buttocks, to the mid-point in the center of the back of your thigh.

Then continue vertically upwards along this line, over the back of your pelvis, reaching as far up your back as your arm will go. Your arm can only reach so high up your back. To continue up your back and make the connection along the path where your hands cannot reach, you have to use your mind to direct and connect your Qi.

You also now have to use the other arm and hand.

With the opposite arm and hand reach over your shoulder so that the center of your palm is resting on the top of your shoulder and the fingers extend down your back so that the tip of your middle finger touches the top inner edge of your shoulder blade. Draw your middle finger up another inch or two so that it is contacting the back of the shoulder, but not the top edge.

You have now drawn your energy from your foot to your shoulder. This completes the second quarter of the practice.

3rd Quarter.

Shoulders down the outside arms to the hands.

The third quarter of this practice is shorter, and involves moving from the shoulder down the outside arm to the fingers.

From the point on the back of the shoulder slide your fingertips sideways so that they touch the point at the top of the crease where the arm meets the torso.

Keeping your fingers at this point slide the palm of your hand forward over the corner of your shoulder so that it is now covering the outside edge of your arm.

With the palm of your 'passive' hand facing toward your body, trace your 'active' hand down the outside edge of your 'passive' arm, to the outside edge of your elbow.

Then draw your fingers from the elbow, down the outside surface of your arm to stop in the middle above your wrist, between the two bones.

From the wrist, slide your fingertips over the back of your hand to the outside edge of the little finger.

Continue along the edge of the little finger to its tip, and around to the tip of the middle finger, so that you end with the tip of the middle finger of the 'active' hand touching the tip of the middle finger of the 'passive' hand.

You have now completed the third section of this practice, from the shoulder to the tip of the fingers.

4th Quarter.

Up the inside arms, to the back of the neck, and finally return to the head.

The fourth, and final, quarter involves moving from the hands to the top of the head, back to the beginning to complete the whole practice.

Turn the 'passive' hand so the palm is facing upwards, finger tips still touching.

Now draw the tip of the middle finger of your 'active' hand along the inside of the middle finger of your 'passive' hand, until it comes to the center of your palm.

Then continue along your hand to the center of the wrist.

Continue up the center of your inside arm to the point three finger widths above your wrist.

Then slide outwards to the thumb side of the arm, again three finger width above the wrist.

Draw your fingers upward, to come to the middle of the inside crease of the elbow.

Then continue up the center line of the upper arm to the 'hollow' just under the collar bone/clavicle, where the shoulder meets the torso.

From here continue up to the center of the top ridge of the shoulder.

Having used your 'opposite' hand to run down and back up the 'original' hand, you can now revert back to the original hand to touch the last two points and end this section.

From the top of the shoulder trace up the side of your neck to end in the 'hollow' at the base of your skull.

Finally, trace up and over the back of the head, to end at the beginning point, off to the side of the crown point.

The Whole Circuit

Repeat the previous four quarters slowly three times, tracing with your fingers and following with your mind/awareness, so that you educate your mind about these pathways.

Repeat it on the opposite side.

Once you are familiar with each side separately you can do both together from head to feet.

From your feet continue up your legs to your pelvis, then as far up your back as you can reach. There is only so far up the back your hands can go. You have to fill in the unreachable space, along the length of your shoulder blade to the back of your shoulder, with your mind alone.

From this area each arm has to be traced separately and independently by the opposite arm, down to the fingers and up to the top of the shoulders. Then both arms can be used together again, so that you end up ready to repeat the practice.

When done slowly, with intentful purpose and focus, this practice becomes like a slow motion dance, and self-energy massage.

When you have done this on both sides you will have completed the circuit of the Bridge and Linking Channels, the sequence known as The Macrocosmic Orbit.

Once you are thoroughly familiar and comfortable with this practice, then do it with your Mind alone. Send your Qi down when you breathe-out, and up when you breathe-in. The whole practice can be completed in two cycles of breathing. Once these points and pathways are opened correctly it is possible to complete the whole circulation in two breaths.

From head to feet when you breathe-out.

From feet to shoulders when you breathe-in.

From shoulders to fingers breathing out.

From fingers to top of your head when breathing in.

Eventually the whole practice becomes as easy and natural as breathing. This can be repeated for three or more circulations.

A further variation of practice is to observe the complete circuit simultaneously as it flows as one complete system.

To do this visualize the whole series of pathways at the same time. You can imagine that you are looking at yourself from a distance and from all directions, and seeing the complete circuit all at once.

To end, bring the Qi to the beginning points on the crown, draw it from each side to the Bai Hui point in the center, connect the tongue to the roof of the mouth, then bring it down the Microcosmic Orbit, down the Conception Channel on the mid-line of the torso, back to the navel - and seal it with the Ba Gua.

To Continue:

The Macrocosmic Orbit is complete in itself, and may be practiced as such.

It is also paired with, and complementary to, The Microcosmic Orbit and they can be practiced together.

However, it is a pre-requisite for learning the next practice of The Master and Coupled Points.

The following sequence of points is more advanced, for people who already know them, such as Acupuncturists, or those who want to learn the specific points from charts or books.

An excellent recommended reference book is 'Traditional Chinese Acupuncture : Volume 1, Meridians and Points' by J.R.Worsley. ISBN: 0-906540-03-8.

The Bridge & Linking Channels – Points

The abbreviations of the channels are as follows:

GB = Gall Bladder
ST = Stomach
CV = Conception
LV = Liver
SP = Spleen
KI = Kidneys
BL = Bladder
TH = Triple Heater
SI = Small Intestines
LI = Large Intestine
PC = Pericardium
LU = Lungs

Note: The Heart and Governor Channels are not included in this practice.

Down the front of the body - head to feet

GB 17, GB 16, GB 15, GB 14, ST 2, ST 4,
CV 23, CV 22, ST 12, ST 16, ST 17, LV 14,
SP 16, SP 15, SP 13, SP 10, SP 9,
KI 6 (Master point of Yin Qiao Mo), SP 4 (Master point of Chong Mo), KI 1...

Up the back of body - feet to shoulders

GB 41 (Master point of Dai Mo), BL 62 (Master Point of Yang Qiao Mo), GB 34, GB 31, GB 29, BL 50,
BL 48, BL 47, BL 44, BL 42, BL 39, BL 38, BL 37,
TH 15, SI 10, SI 9...

Down the arms to the hands

LI 14, LI 11, TH 5 (Master point of Yang Wei Mo),
SI 3 (Master point of Du Mo)...

From the hands up inside arms to shoulder, neck and crown

PC 8, PC 7, PC 6 (Master point of Yin Wei Mo),
LU 7 (Master Point of Ren Mo), PC 3, PC 2, LU 1,
GB 21, GB 20, GB 17. Back to the beginning.

