

Introductory Practices

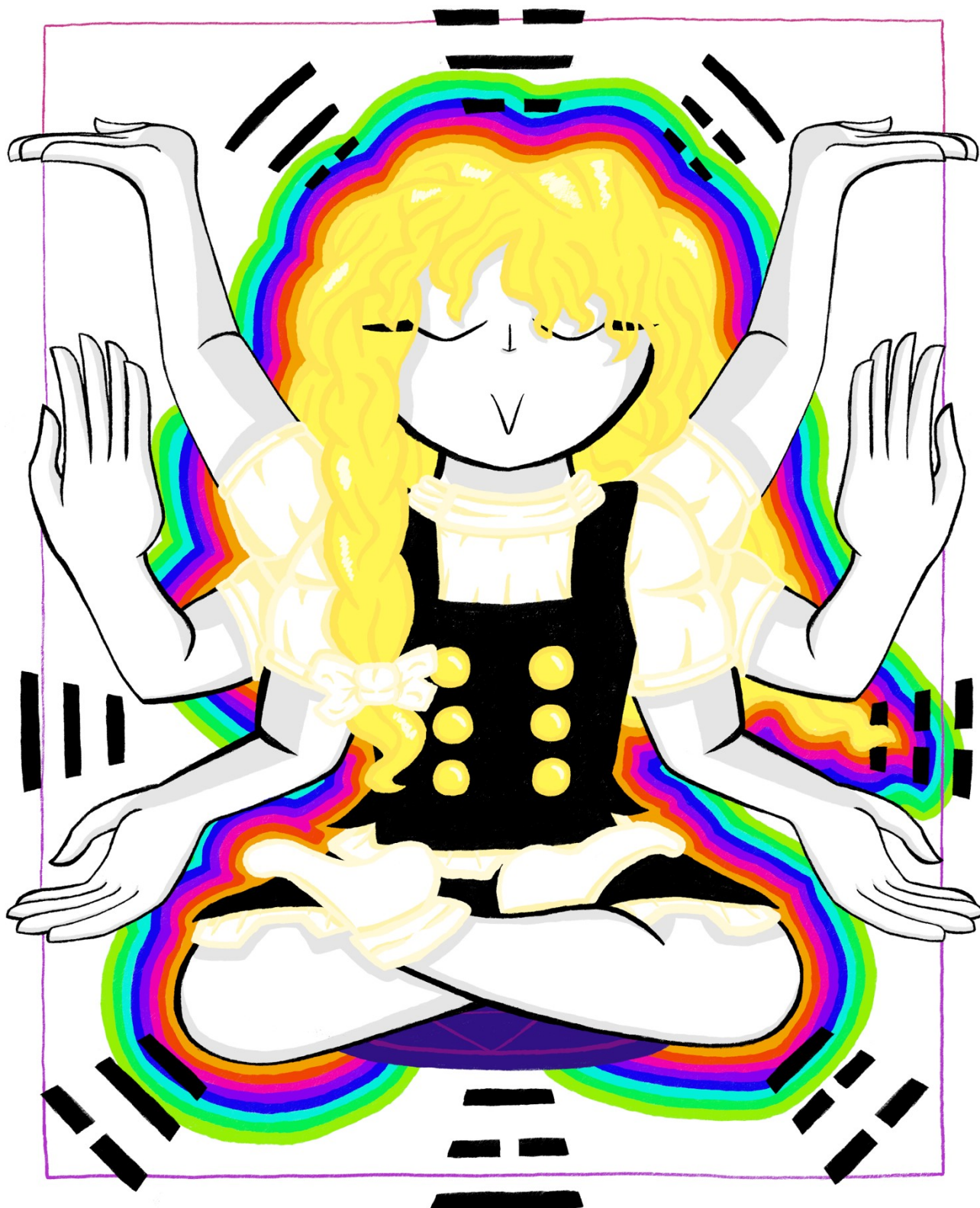


Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction..... | 3 |
| What is this?..... | 3 |
| Cultivation of qualities..... | 4 |
| Consistency is the Key..... | 4 |
| A Modular Approach..... | 5 |
| What's Missing?..... | 5 |
| 2. The Practices..... | 6 |
| Meditation..... | 6 |
| Body Practices..... | 8 |
| Progressive muscle relaxation..... | 8 |
| Body check..... | 9 |
| Breathwork..... | 9 |
| Abdominal breathing check..... | 9 |
| Box breathing or 4-4 breathing..... | 10 |
| Energy Work..... | 10 |
| Energy sensing experiment..... | 11 |
| Entry level energy work: Option 1 – Qigong..... | 11 |
| Entry level energy work: Option 2 – The Tree Exercise..... | 14 |
| Repeating the energy sensing experiment..... | 14 |
| Visualization..... | 15 |
| Dream Work..... | 15 |
| Divination..... | 16 |
| I Ching..... | 16 |
| Tarot..... | 17 |
| Which one to study?..... | 17 |
| What about the Whispered Oracle?..... | 17 |
| Grounding..... | 18 |
| Purification and cleansing..... | 19 |
| Protection..... | 20 |
| Prayer and Worship..... | 21 |
| Reflection..... | 21 |
| Study and Research..... | 21 |
| 3. Last Words..... | 22 |
| You Will Have To Let Something Go..... | 22 |
| Wait, Nothing's Happening?..... | 23 |
| Help, I Am Having A Really Bad Time!??..... | 23 |
| Oh Yeah, It's All Coming Together..... | 24 |
| 4. Example Practice Schedule..... | 25 |

1. Introduction

What is this?

This document intends to offer a simple yet effective way to take up *spiritual practice* that does not rely on any single tradition, nor invoke any particular entities. The techniques found within were collected by people contributing to the Archive of the Sealed Gods. As spiritual practice ultimately is that – practice – it's important to find a starting point. This document aims to offer just that, while allowing you to find your own path and supplementary practices.

What is offered here is by no means the only way to get started. If there is an established, legitimate tradition you are interested in, by all means find sources and teachers related to those.

The process of identifying these practices has been one of comparing similarities in multiple traditions and finding the commonalities. This should make these practices a decent starting point no matter what course you might end up taking. As there is a certain kind of mutually reinforcing nature to these practices, they will not go to waste even in case you decide to focus more strongly on some single practice like meditation, divination, or more conventional devotional practice.

Cultivation of qualities

What is the purpose of spiritual practice?

There are likely as many answers as there are practitioners. Some wish to connect with the numinous. Some wish to have spiritual, transcendental experiences. Some wish to cultivate supernatural powers. Some wish to build their moral character. Some are drawn in without a very clear idea.

While there could be endless arguments about the relative merits and possibilities of these motives, one thing is rather clear: without consistent practice what the seeker is searching for risks becoming just occasional, fleeting moments. There is nothing *wrong* with just having these experiences. Modern humans often desperately need to have some kind of experiences that validate the existence of the numinous for themselves as our culture has alienated itself from subtler aspects of reality. Experiences can be great catalysts for further progress and change.

The promise of every single spiritual tradition however isn't some collection of unusual experiences, but rather being able to interact with the numinous side of reality in *meaningful ways*. Being able to interact with this side of reality is, however, challenging for most. Some have a natural talent for it, while others have to train hard to reach it. It could be compared to becoming a deep-sea diver, a mountain climber, or an astronaut.

To become such a person, you need to cultivate a *set of qualities* that facilitate interaction with the numinous. The point of these practices is to get you started on that journey while also offering some more coarse benefits.

Some people have kind of an opposite "problem" in that they might have some natural talents, but they aren't either aware of it or then have no idea what they really possess and how to cultivate these talents. Even those with natural inclinations to become mountain climbers need to train. Some people might also need ways to control unwanted side-effects of their talents.

Consistency is the Key

As with the construction of more mundane qualities in humans, consistent practice is the key. Just like you cannot perform an extremely demanding deadlift, run a marathon, climb a mountain, or dive into the bottom of the ocean without preparation, it is quite the tall order to interact with the numinous without preparation.

Sometimes people have spontaneous strange experiences. They can be difficult and terrifying. Perhaps the analogy would be getting dragged to a top of a mountain – or the bottom of the sea. Sometimes they are less traumatic and perhaps more like climbing a steep hill when you are not very fit. The insight and capabilities gained from fleeting experiences tends to be rather limited, and practice will bring context and tools for putting these experiences into service.

As with every training regime, we are aiming for consistent, in our case, daily practice. This consistency of practice is an extremely powerful life skill to cultivate. Rather than pushing quickly for the extremes, you should do a bit daily if just possible. Quality of practice is important too, not just numerical factors like length of meditation sessions.

A Modular Approach

Because people come from a variety of different backgrounds with different capabilities and dispositions, it's difficult to recommend a "one size fits all" set or order of practices. However, we are very fortunate in that a lot of spiritual practices eventually start feeding into each other. The practice is like an expanding circle, where, with every new piece of knowledge, insight and skill gained you can take another look at what you already can do and find new insight in there.

This set of practices is intended to be modular in the sense that if you have a very set in stone meditation or divination practice, you can keep on doing that and start taking in some other aspect of these practices into your life.

If you were to begin from zero, I would however recommend starting with meditation and body practices. These will rapidly feed into each other and offer some rather mundane benefits too.

What's Missing?

There's also a few notable things absent here. A big one is astrology, as it is very study heavy and it's hard to come up with a daily or even weekly practice for it. It is very important however, as it can get eerily accurate and very quickly when you move from Sun signs to things like planetary houses, conjunctions and transits. Take your time to study it and find ways to link it to divination or dream work.

Also absent is what is broadly called "spirit work". This is because on one level it is so simple – you really just need to try to reach out to them with respect and genuine desire to meet them. Certain rituals, offerings and correct times when these are performed help, but repeated, sincere effort is crucial. However, if you lack sensitivity, getting a reply might be difficult. This type of work is also very prone to drawing in all kinds of local garbage entities, particularly if you are lacking in the purification and cleansing department.

Developing the kind of necessary discernment and a kind of spiritual backbone where you won't easily get tricked or pushed around by such entities is an art of its own and out of the scope of this document. These practices will help you get there, as well as develop the sensitivity for receiving messages from them.

This document also lacks practices that are tied to specific traditions or religions or call out any

specific entities. Effective use of such techniques likely requires sincere faith in and alignment with such traditions and beings. As such they cannot be recommended with good conscience to those who do not wish to take part in these traditions.

2. The Practices

Meditation

Much could be written about meditation, but suffice to say, it seems to be *the* universally recommended form of practice. For modern day people, focused attention meditation is probably a good starting point for modern day people. Meditation is of course more than about just improving your focus, but it's also about that. Other techniques have their place and use, but difficulties with attention are so widespread and serve as a major obstacle for other practices that counteracting them is rather crucial.

There are many different potential approaches, but if we take the approach of building a routine and cultivating a better ability to focus, it's best to keep it simple. Breathing will be the *object of focus* here. Having a bodily object of focus feeds into more body-oriented practices and vice versa.

The meditation practice:

- 1) Sit in either a chair or cross-legged on the floor. Straighten your spine, but not too much. Tuck your chin in a bit. Put your palms on your knees. Put your tongue slightly behind the front row of your teeth.
- 2) Perform focused attention meditation on your breath. Breathe in and start counting your breath. Count from 1 to 10 and then reset to one after you hit ten.
- 3) Try to achieve and feel abdominal breathing, but don't force it. Let it settle down deep on its own with time. Feel the breath.
- 4) Let whatever thoughts, feelings, sensations, imagery come and go. Bring your focus back to breathing gently whenever you find your mind wandering.



Demonstration of posture.

If you so desire, you can seek out more specific instructions. For example, **zazen** is a type of focused attention meditation that comes with its own set of instructions as well as an extremely well-established and widespread lineage.

A good variant to experiment with is **walking meditation**. Many lineages have their own instructions, but the simplest way to do it is to walk without other distractions like music. When you inhale, count the steps you take, and when you exhale, count the steps you take. You will generally find that you inhale for about 2-3 steps and exhale for 3-4 at start. Pay attention to your breathing

and your surroundings.

Meditation is difficult and you should not be disheartened by the "noisiness" of your mind. The "noise" can give great insight into what is going on within you and why. The general idea is not trying to strangle your errant thoughts to death, but rather letting them come and go without getting attached to them. Through sustained effort you will build a mind that is more focused, clearer, less cluttered and better able to maintain attention.

Research suggests you can get neurological benefits from as little as 8 minutes of meditation, so 10 minutes seems like a good consistent minimum to go for.

Keep a meditation journal. Write your observations about the session after you are done. Look for long term patterns, particularly regarding what kind of events and conditions caused what kind of thoughts to emerge. These can be very simple things. Sometimes you will notice certain thoughts or sensations cropping up repeatedly. Sometimes you will identify challenges with practice, such as repeated strain on certain parts of your body. These observations will help you iterate on your practice and give insight into the contents of your thoughts and where they come from.

Time:

Start with 5 minutes for 1-2 weeks, then move to 10 minutes for 2-4 weeks, then 15 minutes for 1-2 months and finally 20 minutes for the rest of your life. You should aim for consistency, especially in the beginning. Do it every day. Try to put more effort into quality of focus rather than length of session.

Body Practices

The line between meditation, energy work and some body practices is basically non-existent. Making some conceptual distinctions can however be helpful. Here are some very useful practices which are also used in entirely mundane therapeutic contexts. You can find more esoterically flavored versions of these floating around which demonstrates their usefulness in such a context too.

Progressive muscle relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation comes from the deep esoteric tradition of "Western Medical Science", pioneered by Edmund Jacobson who also created the Biofeedback method. Considering how close it is to some subtle body practices, it is either somehow influenced by them or a convergence of good ideas.

This technique involves sequentially tensing and relaxing groups of muscles. You can find great many variations of this technique, and I encourage you research them to find ones that suit specific needs.

If you want a quick and simple version of the technique to experiment with, go with this:

- 1) Lie down on your back, arms and legs slightly spread out. Get a feel for how your body feels. As you go through your body, observe if and how the different body parts feel before and after.
- 2) Focus on your toes. Contract them for a while. Release the contraction.
- 3) Focus on your ankles. Tense your feet so that your toes point more towards the body. Release the contraction.
- 4) Focus on your ankles again. Straighten your feet so that the toes point away from your body. Release the contraction.
- 5) Focus on the posterior of your knee. *Carefully* press your knees more straight against the surface you are laying on. Release the contraction.
- 6) Focus on your buttocks. Squeeze your buttock muscles together. Release the contraction.

- 7) Focus on your stomach. Tense your abdominal muscles. Release the contraction.
- 8) Focus on your upper back. Pull your shoulders back against the surface you are laying on. Release the contraction.
- 9) Focus on your shoulders. Pull your shoulders upwards towards your neck. Release the contraction.
- 10) Focus on your fingers. Squeeze your hands into a fist. Release the squeeze.
- 11) Focus on the back of your head. Press it flatter against the surface you are laying on. Release the contraction.
- 12). Focus on your face. Squeeze your eyelids close tightly. Bite down your teeth. Release the contraction.

You should feel a clear sense of tension, but don't overdo it either.

This is a very good way to release tension. I like to do this before going to sleep, as I find it helps me to fall asleep faster. Carefully observing the tension and release feeds into body awareness, meditation and energy work.

Time: 5-10 minutes a day after finishing your work, studies or before going to sleep could be a good baseline for this practice. Can be extended if you feel particular benefit from it.

Body check

When you start getting a better feel for how your body feels in different situations, you can use this to perform these general body checks to kind of "see where you are". Do you find that most of the time you are very strongly in your head? What kind of things bring you out of your head? Do you find yourself consistently tensing yourself in response to certain events? Do you change the way you breathe or alter your posture? Do you physically feel certain memories somewhere? Does tensing or relaxing a certain body part bring certain feelings or memories?

There's also an entire form of meditation known as **Body Scan Meditation** and developing this kind of awareness will quickly feed into that kind of practice. You might find yourself questioning what such physical things have to do with the spiritual, but over time you will probably discover that the distinction is not so clear. Bodily awareness is also important in various subtle body and energy practices, and building it will serve as important groundwork for such.

Time: A quick check whenever there is reason for it.

Breathwork

What these days gets called "breathwork" can be indistinguishable from certain forms of energy work. This umbrella also contains some novel techniques not strictly based on esoteric traditions, as well as forms of practice that fit within conventional materialistic medical understanding of the world. Suffice to say, since breathing techniques are used in many spiritual traditions, you should get a feel for it. Next, two techniques to get you started will be presented: abdominal breathing and box breathing.

It should be noted that this is one of the practices where having IRL guidance is great. Explore options for practice near you. *Qigong* and *yoga* include breathwork in them.

Abdominal breathing check

A lot of meditative and energy practices have an element of breathing in them. Often the goal is a deep but relaxed abdominal breathing. Many people these days however breathe by default in very shallow ways. This can make it very difficult to even notice if you are breathing abdominally or not.

Shallow breathing also helps to maintain a stressed state.

This check is an extremely simple way to get a feel for what your default mode of breathing is. Lie down on the floor and place your other hand on your stomach. Breathe as you would normally. Do you feel your stomach expanding a bit when you breathe in? If not, you are in a state of shallow breathing. Try to relax and see if the situation changes. If not, you can try to intentionally breathe in a way that expands your stomach. Don't overdo it, but try to get a feel for it.

When you get a feel for it, you can throughout your everyday life occasionally take time observing how you are breathing. It's normal to breathe in a shallower way when stressed. Are you breathing in a tense, shallow way even when you are not in a stressful situation? If so, try to bring yourself back to a relaxed state of deep breathing.

Time: 5-10 minutes should be more than enough. You might only need to do this once or twice ever, more if needed.

Box breathing or 4-4 breathing

This is used for stress and anxiety management in mundane contexts, but there are also more esoterically oriented techniques floating around which utilize this form of breathing exercise. This is really simple and can be very useful in many situations, so getting a grasp of it early on can save you some learning later.

How to do it:

- 1) Breathe in for four second.
- 2) Hold the air in for four seconds.
- 3) Breathe out for four seconds.
- 4) Wait another 4 seconds until you breathe out again.

The breath should be deep but not labored, and if four seconds feels very difficult you can try 2 or 3 seconds. If you get dizzy or feel very uncomfortable during this or any other practice involving breathing, you should resume normal breathing.

Time: Start with few minutes and work up to 5. Use as needed. Some people like to do this for up to 10-15 minutes, while others can get dizzy with longer sessions.

Energy Work

"Energy" is a term you will hear often in the esoteric circles, and it's a word with a wide variety of meanings. As such, it's not easy to write about it. For some it's something very real, some kind of "soul-stuff" or "breath of life" that you can move around and shape in order to influence the world. For some it's phenomena in human body experienced as energetic sensations. For some it's a way to talk about variety of interrelated, seemingly separate subtle phenomena. For some energy seems to be something more of the emotional realm or a kind of psychic atmosphere.

Some think this energy can be perceived, shaped and moved by mind's eye, other see it something that can only be manipulated strictly by bodily processes. And for many, they have begun with one understanding of "energy" and ended up with another.

This profusion of "energy" is not a modern phenomenon by any means. Basically every major culture in the broadly-defined Eurasia (and likely outside of it) developed their own notion of some kind of animating life-energy, and many cultures developed arts for manipulating it. Commonly this energy was associated with breathing, easily seen in the names for it: pneuma, anima, chi, prana...

This section will provide an experiment for sensing this "energy" and two different ways to work with energy. One method works more with breathing, the other more with the mind's eye. This will allow you to experiment with it and come to your own understanding of what it might be.

It should be noted here that attempting advanced energy work without doing preparatory work will either not work or result in harm. There are horrible stories out there of people developing crippling ailments when experimenting recklessly with techniques they were not prepared for. For more advanced energy work please seek qualified instructors and advance slowly.

Energy sensing experiment

This comes from the Chinese tradition and is a classic. There are some variations of it you can find by looking for "chi sensing experiment", but the simple version goes like this:

- 1) Put your hands in front of you so that your palms are facing towards each other
- 2) Move your palms so that there is some space between them
- 3) Try to feel the empty space between your palms
- 4) Move your palms away from each other, then closer to each other and observe how this sensation changes

Can you feel it?

Some people find it helpful to rub their hands together to get the initial sensation going, but if you do this, you shouldn't "cheat" by holding your palms too closely as they are capable of sensing the heat from each other.

Entry level energy work: Option 1 – Qigong

Qigong means "energy work" in Chinese, and is the origin of the term. It is a wide family of various exercises that utilize breathing and body movement to operate with qi. The exact aim of qigong practices vary, but they include health benefits and spiritual cultivation.

Qigong is best taught in-person, and the general understanding is that higher levels of it require long preparatory work to change the body both on physical and subtle levels. Good entry points for qigong are the Five Animals qigong, the Eight Silk Brocades and certain forms of Tai Chi. I highly recommend getting engaged in one of these practices. They are very good for you on multiple levels.

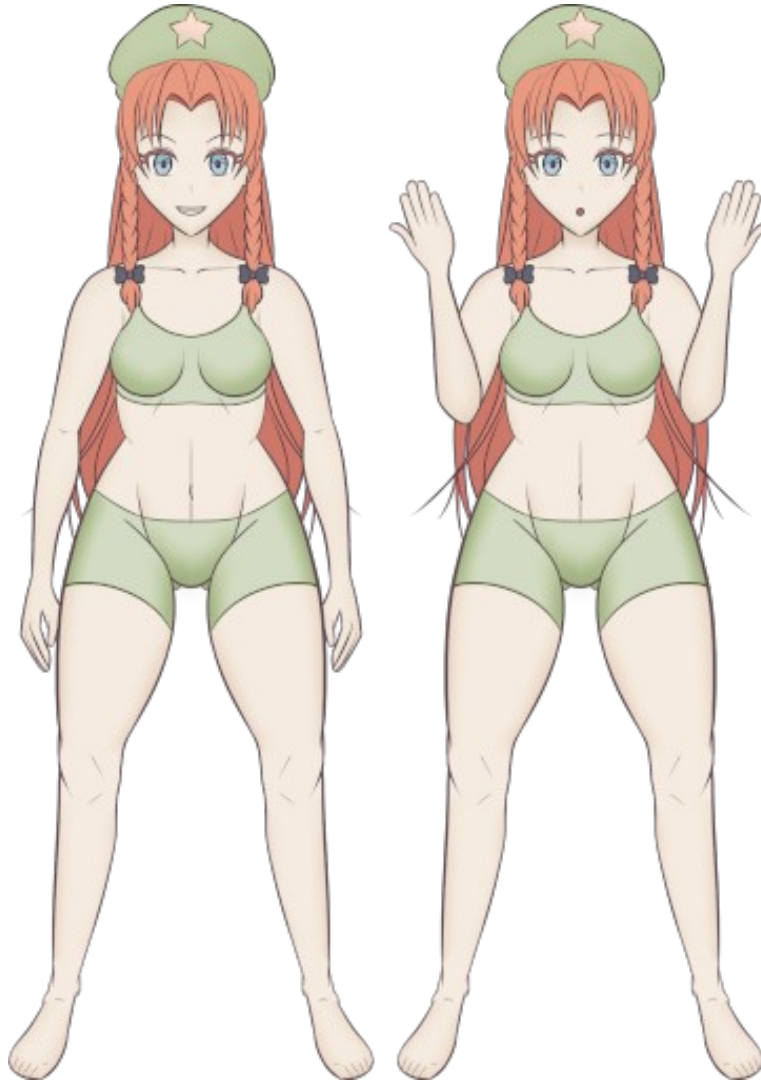
Here is a simple but useful qigong practice that you can begin to work with. It's intended to raise, distribute and release qi for health benefits. You should aim for this exercise to be about 5-10 minutes long. Focus on your breath and mind when you do this exercise. You should breathe deeply but, don't overdo it. In the Chinese tradition, the general idea is to do things at around 70% of your maximum.

The movements should be synchronized with your breathing: when you move your hands up you breathe in the whole time when moving up, when breathing out breathe out the whole time you breathe out. With your mind, visualize that you are breathing in bright, vibrant energy straight from the heavens and exhaling out any negativity and stress.

The exercise:

Part 1 - Lifting the Chi

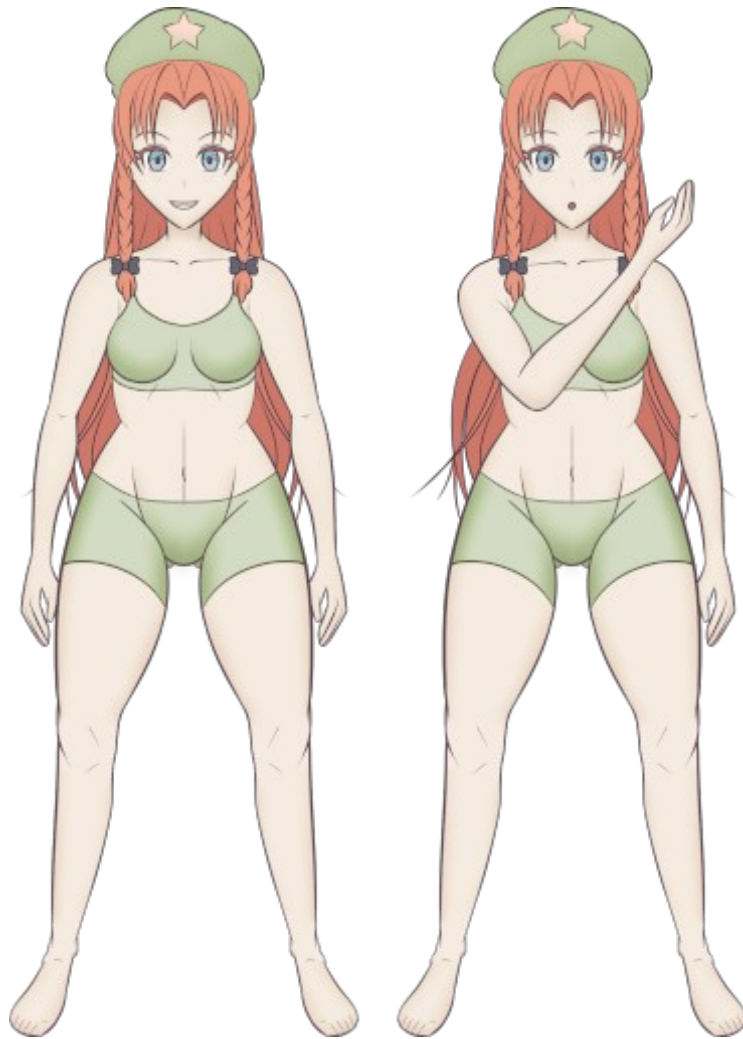
- 1) Stand, knees lightly bent, shoulders rolled a bit back, chin slightly tucked in, arms relaxed by your side, palms facing backwards.
- 2) Start breathing in deep and simultaneously turn your palms facing outward and raise your hands up by bending your elbow
- 3) Start breathing out and turn your palms facing downwards and lower your hands by bending your elbow
- 4) Repeat this several times



Demonstration of end and start posture for part 1.

Part 2 - Circulating the Chi

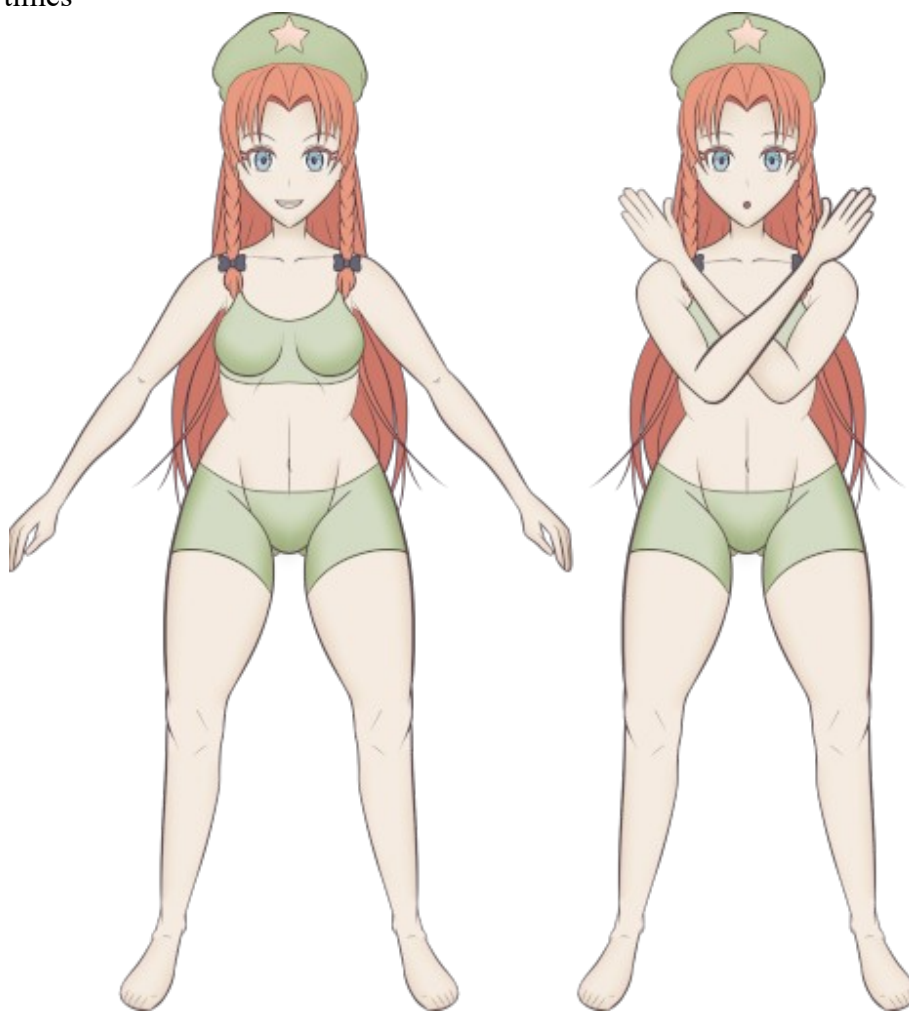
- 1) Continue straight from the previous exercise
- 2) Start breathing in deep, turn the palm of your right hand and lift your right hand upwards so that your hand is roughly next to your left cheek, palm facing backwards
- 3) Start breathing out deep, turn the palm of your right hand facing down and bring your hand down to the starting position
- 4) Start breathing in deep, turn the palm on your left hand and lift your left hand upwards so that your hand is roughly next to your right cheek, palm facing backwards
- 5) Start breathing out deep, turn the palm of your left hand facing down and bring your hand down to the starting position
- 6) Repeat this right to left, left to right (contralateral) movement several times



Demonstration of start and end posture for part 2.

Part 3 - Releasing the Chi

- 1) Continue straight from the previous exercise
- 2) Start breathing in deep and simultaneously turn your palms facing outward and raise your hands up so that they are crossed in front of your chest, one wrist over another
- 3) Turn your hands around so that your palms are facing outwards and uncross them by moving the back downwards to the side. They should go to a position that is slightly wider than the start position, palms facing downwards. At the same time, breathe out deeply.
- 4) From this position repeat the upwards swinging motion that results in your arms crossed by the palms several times



Demonstration of start and end posture for part 3.

Entry level energy work: Option 2 – The Tree Exercise

This exercise utilizes more of the mind's eye to drive the energy, and some people might find they get more results with this than the other method. One can find similar type exercises that aim to energize a central column of sorts within the body all over the Western esoteric tradition. Some of the rely on invoking particular entities. This however works simply through visualization, no entities invoked. It is said to have both grounding and energizing properties.

No particular time frame was given for how long this exercise should be done, but I would say the 5-10 minute range is probably good to get started. You should really put effort into visualizing and

feeling the things described within the exercise. This exercise most likely works the best when done outside and during a season where the trees thrive.

The exercise goes like this:

- 1) Stand firmly and visualize roots growing through the soles of your feet, spreading down into Earth.
- 2) Take a deep breath. As you breathe in, imagine that you are drawing in new, fresh energy in.
- 3) Breathe out. As you breathe out, imagine that your old, stale energy is getting pushed into the Earth via the roots.
- 4) When you stop, visualize that the roots get pulled back into you.

Repeating the energy sensing experiment

A good experiment would be to first perform the energy sensing experiment, then do some energy work and then do the energy sensing experiment again. Do you feel a difference? Do you get better at sensing it over time? Does your baseline get stronger? Do you feel certain things increasing or decreasing this energy?

Time: 10-20 minutes a day and don't overdo it.

Visualization

Many esoteric practices call for visualization. Simply put, visualization is trying to perceive something in your mind's eye. These can be simple or complex things, they can be either intentionally crafted or perceived from subconscious or external sources. For some people this is tremendously easy, and for others it is immensely difficult. Despite referring to the visual faculty, this process can also include smell, touch and even taste.

The ability to visualize can be practiced. Here's some exercises to get you started:

- 1) Look at your hands. Close your eyes. Try to recall your hands the best you can. Try this with various positions and gestures.
- 2) Close your eyes. Try to recall details of the room you are in the best you can.
- 3) Rub your hands together vigorously until they warm up. Close your eyes. Visualize your hands, and then visualize the warm sensations as blueish-whitish energy enveloping your hands.
- 4) Visualize different simple geometric shapes. Try moving and rotating them and changing their colors.
- 5) Try to visualize memories from your life and note the kind of emotions they rouse in you
- 6) Try to visualize something that rouses emotions in you. Does it work better than trying to visualize things that don't stir emotions in you?

Note: trying to visualize spirits, including your favorite Touhou character, puts you at risk and possibility of reaching out to them with all the consequences that flow out from there.

If you have very severe issues with visualization, you can try several workarounds. The first one is to try intently focusing on one detail at a time and then let it come together on its own. For example, when visualizing your hands, you can try to recall your fingers, their position, the grooves of your palm, the color of your skin and so on. Even fleeting and vague stuff is a starting point.

The second workaround is using other sense. For example, if you were trying to imagine a tree, you could try first imagining how different parts of it would feel, smell, and sound. Sometimes the visual comes by itself after that. There is evidence to suggest that a kind of a visualization process is going on in all of us, and for some reason some people have a harder time accessing it and reach it more easily through "mind's touch" and other such extended senses.

You may also find visualizations adjacent to things you are doing – such as ”breathing in vibrant chi” or ”draw energy via roots in the ground” more productive than trying to visualize things in isolation.

Time: 5 minutes, building up to 10 minutes daily. Can also be blended with other practices such as energy work, prayers or rituals that call for it.

Dream Work

Dreams can be a contact point for the numinous. There are techniques for improving dream recall and guiding your dreaming towards the numinous.

Firstly, you should start dream journaling. It will take a while, but this will improve your dream recall over time. This will also help you better remember your dreams and over time you can start noticing certain patterns within them.

There are a number of external factors you can use to create more vivid dreams. These include:

- 1) Sleeping in a dark room
- 2) Not going to bed hungry, as hunger disrupts sleep
- 3) Certain scents: lavender, rose, star aniseed and frankincense
- 4) Melatonin supplementation and huperzine A (may have acetylcholinergic effects especially if taken in excess)
- 5) Waking yourself up in the middle of the night, recording your dreams and going back to sleep

You can also try intentional dreaming. This requires you to create a dream incubation, which is setting an intention for the dream. You can simply think about it or then write it down. These should be fairly simple and uncomplicated, and you should hold them in your mind as you fall asleep.

For reaching out to specific entities you can pray or invoke them before you go to sleep. Drawing symbolism associated with them and putting it under your pillow seems to also work.

Time: Daily dream journaling as soon as you wake up. Intentional dreaming max once a week.

Divination

There's a school of thought that says basically anything can be a system of divination, and that divination practices are about cultivating a certain kind of abilities and sensitivities, essentially a kind of ”dialogue with the world”. Some have more mundane interpretations of this dialogue, other more numinous. It is ultimately up to you to judge which it is.

However, it is good to begin with a structured tradition of divination. The two big ones are the I Ching and the Tarot. Both are such deep topics that they would deserve pages and pages of analysis, so a brief glance will have to do.

I Ching

I Ching comes from China. To put it in briefly, it is a system that produces a hexagram – collection of six lines – that may change into another hexagram. This hexagram or sequence of them describes the factors surrounding your query and how they might change, or what kind of impacts taken actions might have. These descriptions come in short written poetic, storylike texts known as the Ten Wings Commentary. Most interpretations of I Ching focus on this textual element. There are however other ways to approach this process.

The I Ching operates on Chinese ideas such as yin and yang, the five wu xing and the bagua. Each of the 64 I Ching hexagrams are constructed from two bagua trigrams. The trigrams in turn are three yin or yang lines. Two yin or yang lines make up younger (changing) or elder (unchanging) yin or yang.

One can easily find sources in I Ching which gloss over this kind of "emanation" of the hexagrams, but delving into these concepts and how they come together to make up the hexagrams is a good way to get familiarized with these ideas. Understanding these systems and their correspondences will bring further depth and nuance to I Ching divination. There are schools of I Ching divination which entirely ignore the Ten Wings Commentary and focus on the constituent bagua trigrams and how they change or correspond to the query.

The I Ching hexagrams can be produced via a number of means. Traditionally these include the more laborious yarrow stalk method and the more approachable coin toss method. The hexagrams can however also be generated via counting beans or rice, throwing cowrie shells, astrology, or even observing patterns of the wind...

Benebell Wen's *I Ching: The Oracle* is kind of the English language gold standard for spiritually-minded use of I Ching. She states that the Oracle appears to be a spirit with its own nature. It certainly seems to produce very different results from Tarot, having a sagely, restrained nature that consistently appeals to the higher nature in humanity.

Tarot

Tarot is a divination system based on Tarot cards. They started their life as Tarocco playing cards in Renaissance era Europe, and later had extensive mythology projected upon them. Cartomancy as a divination art seems to have developed earlier than modern Tarot, so there is historical basis for their use in divination, if such a thing matters.

The Tarot symbolism reflects ideas from the Western esoteric tradition. They include the various characters of the Major Arcana, which are representations of various kinds of strong archetypes. The Minor Arcana represent more event or phenomena-like things, and they are categorized into four categories corresponding with the four classical Western elements. The language of the Tarot is less systematic and nonverbal than that of the I Ching and relies strongly on visual cues. The variety of designs can end up having different meanings. Some argue that the "original" Rider-Waite designs are the best for parsing out the visual symbolism.

There are an immense amounts of resources for the Tarot in English, to the point where it's difficult to make recommendations. Anthony Louis' *Tarot Plain and Simple* could be a good starting point. The Tarot also seems to have a spirit of its own, but it is more difficult and tricksterish than the I Ching. This is likely a combination of its origin as a game, the kind of mythologization it was born out of and the forced secrecy and intense symbolism that European esoteric tradition had to veil itself into. Experiences may vary, but vague consensus seems to be that the I Ching is more sagely and the Tarot is more "schizo".

Which one to study?

Nothing prevents you from studying both systems and using them in a supplementary manner. Some have even attempted to draw correspondences between these systems. Whether they are good or not is up for you to judge. Benebell Wen is the latest to attempt to build such a bridge, and she had to invoke the existence of a ninth, "hidden gua" to make it work. While the existence of such a thing is justifiable within the Chinese tradition, one can also argue it might be Tarot's schizo energies leaking into the orderly Chinese system...

Which system you choose to go with is up to you, but I Ching does seem to produce bit clearer, more legible results. It's connection to Chinese and therefore East Asian thought also be of interest to those coming from Touhou.

It should be noted that you can also use divination systems as tools to contact spirits. You can invoke spirits to speak through your chosen system, and there are ways for them to give out answers via these systems in other ways, such as dreams or visions involving the hexagrams or Tarot symbolism.

What about the Whispered Oracle?

The Whispered Oracle of Hakurei Shrine is a canonical Touhou fortune telling book that is based on the Japanese omikuji system. There is nothing stopping you from using it, but I believe it's good to start learning either I Ching or Tarot, because they also educate you on the esoteric concepts of their respective cultural sphere. For some specific questions, Whispered Oracle might be more legible than I Ching or Tarot. Do experiment with it if you feel like it!

Time: It's very tempting to overdo it in the beginning, but such will quickly blur whatever message the system is trying to convey. A good baseline would perhaps be 1-3 divinations per week and put real effort into understanding what the system is trying to convey.

Perhaps a good early practice would be at the end of every week asking your chosen system "How can I make the best of the coming week?", and then at the end of each week comparing how the last week's divination played out. From there on out, you can expand it to help you with situation where you are uncertain how to approach.

Grounding

Grounding, like energy, is another word you see thrown around that has quite different connotations varying from person to person and tradition to tradition. The common denominator between these ideas is that there exists a state of "being grounded", which is some kind of a relatively calm, collected, focused state of being present in the here and now in the physical world. There's also an idea that there exists an "ungrounded" state, and it's here that the interpretations start to diverge.

For those who interpret grounding in a literal energetic sense, it is viewed as an energetic process, with being "ungrounded" a kind of energetic imbalance or condition. Some see being grounded as a state where you are present in the material reality, and being "ungrounded" is a state where you start to slip into other layers of reality. For some, this is simply a down-to-earth, focused on immediate material reality kind of attitude. Others see it as a kind of emotional state that is focused and not overly excited or prone to being swayed.

As for what being "ungrounded" is like, it can manifest as feeling like you're not "fully here", but also things like feeling lightheaded, dizziness, agitation, nervousness and strange physical sensations that happen during or after spiritual practice. You can also feel a kind of linger energy or tension in you. Ultimately being grounded and ungrounded are a spectrum, and we can dip in and out of these states in everyday life very easily. Most of just don't pay much attention.

For many esoteric practices, becoming ungrounded in a controlled manner is part of the practice, as contact with subtle aspects of reality or other realms is sought. For such practices you of course have to shift your focus from the everyday material reality. The practitioner however should be able to bring themselves back to an everyday state of being. Different traditions have their own methods and ways to conceptualize these things.

Nothing given here should make you particularly ungrounded. However, it could be possible either

as a result of overdone practice, or if you find yourself unexpectedly talented and experience and kind of surge of energy or activity.

There's a number of common suggestions for grounding that get passed around. These include:

- 1) Very intently focusing on the bottom of your feet, and trying to feel the pull of gravity.
- 2) A bit more advanced variant features taking the "neutral qigong pose" and shifting your balance carefully until you feel very "locked in" and then focusing on feeling the pull of gravity. It's hard to explain, but there should be a point at which your feet start to feel very heavy and solid. This state correlates with a good and supporting posture.
- 3) Eating is commonly recommended.
- 4) Some find consuming very moderate amount of alcohol helpful – it's probably not good if this becomes the go-to tool.
- 5) Physical activity in general. Many people want to go out for a walk kind of intuitively when they feel off-balance.
- 6) Sex or masturbation, though these can be done in ungrounding ways too.
- 7) Calming meditation – meditation can be ungrounding, but some find it helpful. You can do meditation that tries to focus on feeling the pull of Earth and a kind of process of letting what is heavy in you settle downwards.
- 8) A variant of the Tree Exercise where you especially hard focus on pushing out stale or bothersome energies out of you and take in grounding Earth energy instead. You of course need the ability to drive energy with visualization to make this work.

Not pushing too things too far too fast helps you keep grounded. As you do practice, you might recognize that you are by default way less grounded than you'd imagine, and that you are going through a kind of latent state of ungroundedness. Something about the current digital age kind of rewards very unconnected, dysregulated state of being in people. On the other hand, taking up body practices like Tai Chi and such seems to over time build a kind of more "grounded" orientation to things in general.

I find it useful to keep that "down-to-earth, focused on immediate material reality" interpretation of being grounded also in mind. There are times and places when we must let go, but our current society has very little social positions for people who live their lives in permanently ungrounded states.

Time: As needed when needed. You should probably take some time to practice the "really feel the pull of Earth" thing. Taking time to figure out your center of gravity is a good idea too.

Purification and cleansing

Purification is an uneasy idea for some, but ultimately all spiritual traditions have tools for removing hostile spiritual influences. However, as the spiritual and material dimensions of reality are linked together, it is good to begin this process with some very concrete things.

First is maintaining personal hygiene, both before any rituals and in general. For example, if you are doing an I Ching or Tarot reading, it is good to wash your hands before doing it. Second is maintaining the cleanliness of your living space to the best of your abilities. Dirt and clutter draw in all kinds of negative and stale energies and therefore entities attracted to those energies.

Beyond these two baselines, you can spiritually cleanse spaces, items and yourself by other means. Salt is widely recognized to have purifying effects. You can scrub yourself with salt as part of personal purification, and you can use it to purify objects and spaces. Sprinkling salt into the corners of a room and then cleaning it out after 24 hours have passed is a way to purify a room. Some forms of incense, beyond being common offerings, are also thought to have purifying effects.

These vary from culture to culture and tradition to tradition, but sandalwood, frankincense and sage are commonly used for purification. Frankincense is regarded to have near-universal effect.

Avoiding the consumption of distressing and inflaming material is another important dimension of purification and cleansing that needs to be addressed

Avoiding the consumption of distressing and inflaming material is another important dimension of purification and cleansing that needs to be addressed. This includes things like excessive consumption of horror, violent media, pornography or social media. These things are engineered to generate very strong, visceral reactions. Many people fill themselves with "entertainment" that carries extremely strong energies. This affects not only their behaviors, but also fills them with the kind of energies that are very attractive to hostile and parasitic entities.

I don't think it's good to be hysteric about such things either, and we do live in a reality that includes fundamentally violent and horrifying aspects. Sexuality is ever-present in both nature and human society. It's however one thing to be occasionally exposed to such things versus being in them all of the time. Realizing just what kind of an impact such has on you can be a very stark experience.

Going beyond these basics, many spiritual traditions have their own purifying and protective measures. These include certain Buddhist mantras, the haraekotoba of Shinto and rituals from Chinese and Western traditions. Utilizing them most likely requires sincere belief and the desire to associate with the entities and values associated with these systems, as well as taking care of the baseline. Thus, these techniques are out of the scope of this document.

Time: Purification practices are not separate from other practices or day to day life. Take the time needed to keep yourself and your living environment clean. Commit purification before prayers, divination and rituals.

Protection

A lot of entry level spiritual practice guides have some kind of section on protection rituals. I find these tend to be quite troublesome for a couple of reasons. First is that a lot of them basically require you to call upon specific entities. This is sometimes done with the mentality that the entities called upon are akin to spiritual vending machines that anyone can use if they just say the right words. I find this rather puzzling, and I doubt that beings associated with specific traditions have very much interest in helping someone out who is not genuinely committed to that specific tradition. Calling upon specific beings begins a relationship that will likely come with two-way expectations. I find it downright unethical to urge people to use such rituals without clearly establishing what will happen.

Secondly, the focus on spiritual protection can cultivate either a false sense of security or a false sense of *insecurity*. The first will lead to the practitioner taking unnecessary risks that would have been best avoided if they had not been taken in the first place. The second will lead into a dynamic where the practitioner starts to view spirituality as a kind of combat, where the whole world is full of dangerous forces that have to be blocked off. This is an excessive reaction that will just cultivate a kind of an anxiety disorder or paranoid psychosis, unless the practitioner already has something like that. Excessive concern with protection and blocking off external influences will also lead to diminishing of the kind of sensitivity and receptivity required for spiritual practice.

Thirdly, the techniques require very good handle on visualization and being able to drive the "energy" to work, and a lot of practitioners who are starting out lack the ability to really do one or both effectively. It's very strange then that often some kind of protection ritual is given as the very first thing to do. At worst this will agitate local garbage entities who will sense the intent, while the practitioner lacks any kind of ability to protect themselves. Riling up the locals who then knock on

the walls and flash lights and project apparitions and learning to manage the situation seems to be an almost unspoken rite of passage for some traditions...

The best defense against spiritual threats is maintaining spiritual hygiene in the broad sense, allying yourself with a higher power and not seeking trouble. That said, sometimes trouble finds *you*, and this appears to be the case either when the practitioner suddenly “lights up” or becomes sufficiently advanced through practice.

With that in mind I give you the most stripped down, minimal form of a general protection ritual that I have found. It relies entirely on driving energy and visualization and thus requires being able to do so.

- 1) Visualize a shaft of white light descending from the heavens, reaching down to the middle of your chest, called the heart center in some spiritual circles.
- 2) Visualize a shaft of red light ascending from the earth, reaching to the middle of your chest.
- 3) Visualize these two shafts of light blending into one and really try to feel their energy.
- 4) Clench your arm into a fist and press on the middle of your chest with enough force to feel the pressure.
- 5) Visualize the energy expanding outwards into a sphere that blocks hostile external influences.

An alternative is to perform the Tree Exercise and when you feel yourself filled with energy, start pushing it outwards into a sphere. Staying grounded – in all senses – is also a form of protection.

Prayer and Worship

While the purpose of this document is not to proselytize any particular religion, it needs to be acknowledged that things like prayer and worship are for many – if not the majority – the core part of spiritual practice. These things can, without sincere intent and belief, become very empty rituals and burdens. Some deities seem very distant and hard to reach. In contrast, there have been some who have been shocked by how responsive to prayers the spirits of Gensokyo have been.

Ultimately, as much as we cultivate our own power and self-reliance, it is good to be on good terms with at least some form of a higher power. The worthwhile forces appreciate and support our efforts. Prayer and worship is more about aligning with these forces, and less about wish-fulfillment – though if we align ourselves with such forces, these two merge to become one.

Every tradition has its own approach to what is the proper way to conduct prayer and worship. If there is something general to be said about this subject, it's that sincerity of faith, intent and truly, genuinely aligning with the values these traditions and deities represent is the way to go. Lacking a clear tradition, trying to reach out to the highest, most admirable qualities of the target of prayer is likely the way to go.

Time: Most traditions have their own ideas about appropriate frequency of worship, but it tends to be daily.

Reflection

Spiritual development is ultimately – among other things – a journey of self-reflection. You should take the time to do enough of this, to pay attention to where you are and where you are going to. It can be easy to miss subtle signs of development if you are not paying attention.

At the same time the practices will make different aspects of reality more visible to you. These too

can be missed if you are not paying attention. Thankfully meditation cultivates that capability. Still, it's good to take the time to intentionally reflect upon both yourself and the world.

Time: At least once a week with some dedicated time put aside for it.

Study and Research

Ultimately, this is a simple beginner's guide, written by a relative beginner. You will by necessity have to do a lot of your own research. The journey might be the point of all of this. You will have to read a lot and if that is difficult for you, you will have to cultivate the qualities to become a reader. You need to study old materials. New materials. Reputable materials. Suspicious materials. You need to find the commonalities and develop the discernment for what is good advice and what is not.

Beyond studying materials, there are some things that are very much best learned from other practitioners. You need to learn to identify the good groups from the bad ones, the useful from the useless and get involved. There are especially body-oriented practices that are extremely hard if not impossible to transmit via text, and even video is questionable. For such, it really is best to seek good in-person alternatives, if possible.

Stay curious, stay grounded and keep going forwards.

Time: As much as you can stomach without getting burned out or abandoning your responsibilities.

3. Last Words

This has hopefully been a useful little introductory guide. Before we wrap up this document with an example schedule of practices, there's few things to mention here.

You Will Have To Let Something Go

The results you get from practice tend to be proportional to the time and energy you put into it. Presumably you have found some other ways to fill your 24 hours of a day before taking up these practices. This means inevitably that you will have to drop something else from your life.

For some of us, our days are generally filled to the brim with productive and necessary activities. In such cases it can be extremely difficult to find the time to practice, and it would be best to focus on relaxing, regenerative forms of practice like progressive muscle relaxation and meditation aimed at calming down. Body-oriented energy work can be very good if it's possible to squeeze out 10-15 minutes of garbage time from social media.

For those with more time on our disposal, it genuinely is a choice of what to do. Do we spend our time doomscrolling, endlessly playing videogames, hanging out on social media or Discord and watching porn, or do we carve out the time required? It ultimately boils down to sacrificing short-term enjoyment (or "enjoyment") for long term results.

This all might seem very self-evident, but managing to fit in the practice can be a genuine challenge. It's much easier if you make a firm decision to throw something away to begin with.

Wait, Nothing's Happening?

Some people will take up spiritual practice with very elevated expectations, and come off disappointed when they don't get strong results quickly. These kinds of experiences partly stem from overall degradation of attention span and ability to commit, and partly from how becoming aware of the results is an art of its own.

There is a reason why focused attention meditation is seen as the core practice, and I think if you build up a schedule of meditating 20 minutes daily you *will* inevitably get results. They can be very subtle, but they are there, and sometimes people only notice if they stop meditating.

As this is about a process of internal change, it takes time, and as you change, you constantly adjust to the new baseline. This can make it very, very difficult to perceive the progress. This is why journaling is recommended. Over time you will also become more capable at perceiving subtle changes, both in yourself, and in the world at large.

Ultimately, you need to take a kind of leap of faith and commit to practice. Not everyone finds every form of practice as suitable or fruitful, and what kind of practice is needed also changes over time. I am very fond of forms of practice that engage the body as they also have very noticeable coarse body benefits. Some might find them a better standpoint than meditation, as they force a point of focus.

Help, I Am Having A Really Bad Time!??

Sometimes people can have a really bad time with spiritual practices. There are several reasons for this: as the practice sensitizes you to different aspects of reality, you might also become more and more sensitive to some very dislikeable parts of it. These parts can be found in the external world,

or within you. If these negative aspects are within you and they are some kind of personal failings that you can reasonably work with, you should work with them. Sometimes these negative aspects are various traumatic experiences that you have not earned through your actions. As hard as it is, you will have to find ways to let go of them. Thankfully, these practices give you tools for emotional self-regulation.

Sometimes however people rapidly discover they are much more sensitive or skilled with these practices than expected. This can lead to a few challenging things. The first one is a kind of rapid ontological shock, an unexpected challenge to your sense of reality as unusual phenomena start unfolding. With these it's best to acknowledge to the largest extent possible that yes, this is all real, there are aspects of reality that the materialist paradigm refuses that nevertheless exist and yes, it is happening. Not everything extraordinary is either threatening or makes you special compared to the billions of spiritually sensitive humans that have come before you. Once again, the regulative techniques help with freakouts. Another good technique is remembering grounding, and forcefully, with full intent, focusing on feeling the pull of the Earth.

Getting harassed by local garbage entities is another possible cause for bad experiences that is caused by people getting "lit up". These beings ultimately are very powerless, but they will try to scare you with noises or apparitions. Sometimes these apparitions even appear outside the mind's eye. Spiritual hygiene and cleansing practices keep them at bay. You need to cultivate a certain kind of spiritual backbone and learn to ignore them. You must avoid getting sucked into some kind of spiral of fear, which will only empower them. If all else fails, turn to higher powers. Attracting a drove of parasitic local entities is usually a good lesson in why taking care of negative energies is really important.

I would say that sporadic brush-ins with unpleasant entities is part of our existence, just as brush-ins with unpleasant people are. You might come to realize that you've occasionally been having such experiences, but lacked the ability to recognize them for what they are. The vast majority of such encounters are completely meaningless and you should not get too scared of such.

Oh Yeah, It's All Coming Together

This document cannot promise some kind of astonishing instant results from what will probably round out to 40-60 minutes of daily practice. Instead, it will help you cultivate a baseline of mutually supporting practices that will allow you to progress further on your chosen path later on. You might find that you want to focus on divination, or perhaps meditation, or perhaps you discover you want to focus on more traditional forms of religion. Maybe you will do something out of the left field, like become interested in conventional martial arts via qigong.

At some point of doing these practices you should start noticing this mutually supporting aspect. Meditation will make you more present when you do energy work, body practices or divination. Body practices should have an impact on your meditative experience. Visualization and energy work can directly feed into each other, as can body practices and energy work. Divination and study will open you up to symbolic systems and new perspectives to reality, which you will find in your other practices and dreams. Dreamwork can improve your visualization skills. And these are only some of the potential connections.

There is probably a near infinite amount of connections between these practices, and none of the work you put into developing these skills will go to waste even if you emphasize some form of practice more than the others.

At some point you will have to go forwards on your own. This is merely an introduction, although a comprehensive one. There are much more advanced techniques and approaches out there, especially

when it comes to meditation and energy work, If you have any access to legitimate and reputable local groups or resources, I encourage to seek them as soon as you get a feel for it. You can use the other things in this document to support these practices.

Hopefully this document has been a useful starting point or source of supplemental practices for you.

4. Example Practice Schedule

Here is an example of how you can put these modules into action, presuming you start with no previous experience.

Week 1:

Buy dream journal and meditation journal and start journaling.
Start studying divination system of your choice.

Dream journaling: Daily

Meditation: 5 minutes a day, every day

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Abdominal breathing check: Do this 1-2 times and see if you are breathing deeply and relaxed during meditation or not.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination

Purification: Start paying more attention to your personal hygiene and cleanliness of your living environment. Before the first divination, do a major cleaning of your dwelling and wash yourself before committing to it.

Week 2:

Dream journaling: Daily

Meditation: 10 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Boxed breathing: Do this for few minutes daily to get a feel for it, compare with how you breathe during meditation

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination.
Keep studying the system.

Purification: Try to regularly clean yourself and your dwelling. Buy an incense stand and incense if possible. Besides doing the big cleaning and showering before starting the divination session, light up some incense.

Week 3:

Dream journaling: Daily

Meditation: 10 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Boxed breathing: 5 minutes a day

Visualization: Pick exercise and do it for 5 minutes

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Keep taking care of yourself and your environment. Before any divination session, clean your dwelling, shower and burn incense.

Week 4:

Dream journaling: Daily

Meditation: 10 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Boxed breathing: 5 minutes a day

Visualization: Do chosen exercise for 5 minutes

Body check: Once a day, do a body check.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination

More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Keep taking care of yourself and your environment. Before any divination session, clean your dwelling, shower and burn incense. Get salt you will use explicitly for spiritual cleaning purposes.

Reflection: What have you noticed within this month?

Week 5:

Dream journaling: Daily

Meditation: 15 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Energy work - Qigong: 5 minutes a day. Apply lessons from box breathing and abdominal breathing check to take deep, but not labored breaths. Do your best to visualize the "vibrant qi".

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after Qigong

Visualization: Pick a new exercise and do it for 5 minutes

Body check: Once a day, do a body check.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Keep taking care of yourself and your environment. Before any divination session, clean your dwelling, shower and burn incense. Start rubbing salt on your body while showering before divination.

Week 6:

Meditation: 15 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Energy work - Qigong: 5 minutes a day.

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after Qigong

Visualization: Do chosen exercise for 5 minutes

Body check: Once a day, do a body check.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination

More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Keep taking care of yourself and your environment. Before any divination session, clean your dwelling, shower and burn incense. Rub salt on your body while showering before divination. Experiment with sprinkling salt into the corners and removing it after 24 hours. Does it make a difference?

Week 7:

Meditation: 15 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Energy work - Qigong: 10 minutes a day.

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after Qigong

Visualization: Hand rubbing energy visualization. 5 min a day. Pay attention: which feels more energetic – this or qigong?

Body check: Once a day, do a body check.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Continue established practices.

Week 8:

Meditation: 15 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping

Energy work - Qigong: 10 minutes a day.

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after Qigong

Visualization: Hand rubbing energy visualization. 5 min a day. Pay attention: which feels more energetic – this or qigong? Other visualizations 5 min a day. Involve sense other than sight.

Body check: Once a day, do a body check.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Continue established practices.

Reflection: Do you feel like you can sense and move energy better with physical processes (qigong) or your mind's eye (visualization)?

Start doing body checks whenever something emotionally stirring happens.

Start doing progressive muscle relaxation whenever you feel like you need it.

Week 9:

Meditation: 20 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping or when needed

Energy work: Qigong OR Tree Exercise 10 minutes a day. If qigong works, start looking into Five Animals or Eight Silk Brocades.

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after energy work.

Visualization: 5-10 minutes if not doing Tree Exercise.

Breathwork: If you are doing Tree Exercise, research and practice alternative techniques for 5-10 minutes a day.

Body check: Whenever needed.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Continue established practices. Buy specifically cleansing-oriented incense and fumigate your surroundings as an experiment. Does it make a difference?

Week 10:

Meditation: 20 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping or when needed

Energy work: Qigong OR Tree Exercise 10 minutes a day. If qigong works, start looking into Five Animals or Eight Silk Brocades.

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after energy work.

Visualization: 5-10 minutes if not doing Tree Exercise.

Breathwork: If you are doing Tree Exercise, research and practice alternative techniques for 5-10 minutes a day.

Body check: Whenever needed.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Continue established practices.

Week 11:

Meditation: 20 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping or when needed

Energy work: Qigong practices of your choice, 10-15 minutes or Tree Exercise 10 minutes

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after energy work.

Visualization: 5-10 minutes if not doing Tree Exercise.

Breathwork: If you are doing Tree Exercise, research and practice alternative techniques for 5-10 minutes a day.

Body check: Whenever needed.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Continue established practices.

Week 12:

Meditation: 20 minutes a day, every day.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: 5 minutes a day after work or before sleeping or when needed

Energy work: Qigong practices of your choice, 10-15 minutes or Tree Exercise 10 minutes

Energy sensing experiment: Before and after energy work.

Visualization: 5-10 minutes if not doing Tree Exercise.

Breathwork: If you are doing Tree Exercise, research and practice alternative techniques for 5-10 minutes a day.

Body check: Whenever needed.

Intentional dreaming: Once during the weekend.

Divination: Compare last week's divination with events of the week.

On last day of the week, perform "What will the coming week bring?" divination
More if desired or necessary. Keep studying the system.

Purification: Continue established practices.

Reflection: How have you changed over these past three months? What were the rewarding and frustrating aspects? How do you want to proceed with your practice from here on out?