

Secret of the Golden Flower Meditation Programme 2023

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Responses to FAQs



The next meditation programme of the Secret of the Golden Flower (SGF) will be starting on January 3rd 2023 and continuing to 6th April 2023, the Thursday before Easter. Why these dates? I often run this programme to time roughly with the growing or declining light of the year. Since the text of the SGF makes frequent reference to the circulation of the light as an inner phenomena, then paralleling this with the seasons is helpful.

The suggestion of a 7am start applies to *your own* time zone - really to ones time of rising. So I am suggesting an early morning meditation. If you feel better doing it at another time, that's fine. If you prefer a time when you know some others will be doing it, then 7am (UK) is the hour I shall be doing it. It can be a powerful experience to begin the meditation in the dark of the pre-dawn hour and have the sun rise during the meditation.

The programme is free – as a gesture of spiritual unity.

We follow the text of the SGF – Richard Wilhelm's translation with Jung's commentary. If you can purchase a hard copy so much the better, otherwise you may find an online version at:

http://www.bahaistudies.net/asma/the_secret_of_the_golden_flower.pdf

We take a small part of the text each week and *slowly* work our way through it – that is outside the time of meditation. The SGF cannot be understood intellectually or done by rote. It can only be experienced.

I send an email every week by way of encouragement and this will have an attachment which summarises the part of the text we are studying. These have illustrations that are typically of taoist-type images of nature, perhaps scenes of mountains, birds, or of a meditator looking at tree. There will also be some mandala images especially when we reach Jung's commentary. These can be useful meditation aids.

We do not meditate continuously for one hundred days – you may be relieved to know! I am suggesting half an hour per day but you might do more or less. If you are a beginner or starting again then you may start with 10-15 minutes for the first week or so.

I am strongly recommending that we give up at least one addiction for this period. Addictions come in many forms, the obvious ones being alcohol, tobacco, recreational drugs, food obsessions, negative aspects of sexuality. Why? Because addictions cloud the spirit and destroy the connection to the higher self. Addictions also include obsessive, destructive, and repetitive states of mind often having their roots in trauma. It is very difficult to shift them. Spiritual practice can help.

Richard Wilhelm's comments at the start of the SGF indicate that the adepts in China accompanied their meditation with a yoga type practice. I believe this to be a form of Qigong. If you can do something similar then this can help. Of course, this is optional. There are excellent programmes, workshops, retreats and so on run by Andy Henry which can be an invaluable accompaniment to our efforts. See: <https://www.qitreehealing.com/andy-henry>

This 100 days programme is not the same as “classic” meditation practices such as those of Buddhism and Hinduism. The focus is not the destruction of the self. However, it certainly involves the displacing of the ego and its apparatus of cognitive control, at least for the time of meditation so that the deeper psyche can be experienced.

Richard Wilhelm sent the text to Jung in 1928 who was influential in introducing it to the West. Jung saw many parallels between the SGF and the psychology he was developing. I believe it is compatible with Jungian or transpersonal psychotherapy.

For those who want to listen to two podcasts on the subject of the SGF and Jungian psychology you may go to these two episodes:

<https://alanmulhern.podbean.com/e/the-secret-of-the-golden-flower-1/>

<https://alanmulhern.podbean.com/e/the-secret-of-the-golden-flower-2/>

For a lengthy series of other episodes on related and different topics go to:

<https://alanmulhern.podbean.com/>

Speaking personally, I am not a Taoist nor an Oriental practitioner. I am a Jungian therapist who discovered early in my work that there is a light within the psyche which is the source of its healing intelligence – actually it feels as if it is the source of everything. When I read the SGF I felt truth of its words. Nothing subsequently has convinced me otherwise – quite the contrary.

Individual meditation advice is not provided as part of the programme. However, I intend to offer some short group zoom meetings prior to the start of the programme, half way through, and at the end. There will be an opportunity to ask questions in these. The SGF is a meditation guide in itself.

This meditation programme has arisen out of the Quest lecture series - see www.alanmulhern.com - and the desire to accompany its intellectual demands with a spiritual practice. For those interested in these lectures and activities I attach a syllabus for the lectures that start in the New Year.

This meditation programme may not be for you. But you may know others, especially those of slender financial means, who may benefit from such a practice. Please let them know.

This meditation programme is a powerful practice and accompanied by the text of the SGF can make a deep and lasting impression upon participants. There is no charge for it. Nevertheless, out of respect for its spirit, please do not join lightly. It is serious commitment and requires dedication.

