Longevity Potion of Seven Magical Herbs
and Nana Kusa Gayu

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In 7\textsuperscript{th} January (\textit{Today}), people in Japan take special rice porridge with seven herbs, Nana Kusa Gayu 七草粥.
In 7th January (Today), people in Japan take special rice porridge with seven herbs, Nana Kusa Gayu 七草粥.

- The seven plants can make human beings immortal.
- This traditional custom was Originated but vanished in China.

Jingchu Suishi Ji 荊楚歲時記, dated in ca. the 6th century, states: “正月七日以七種菜為羹.”

- This was traditional custom in middle China (荆楚).
- It doesn’t tell actual ingredients, benefits, nor purposes.

Recently, I found an earlier and more detailed original story, probably connected with Nana Kusa Gayu.
七禽食方
*(the Longevity Potion of Seven Magical Herbs)*

- The whole story of *Qi Qin Shi Fang* remains only in *I shin po*, in 984.
  - In the Heian period of Japan, Tamba Yasuyori referred to massive classical Chinese texts for *I shin po*. *I shin po* contains worthy fragments from many early medical texts.

- Recorded *seven medicinal plants for immortal*.
  - According to this description, seven kinds of animals respectively eat corresponding plants so that they can live from *800 to 2000 years old!*
  - *You can live forever! Wow!*
醫心方·卷廿六·延年方
1. *Qi qin shi fang* 七禽食方

《金邁錄》云。黃帝所受真人中黃直七禽食方。今案、《大清經》號七禽散。黃帝齋於懸圃，以造中黃直。中黃直曰："子何為者也。" 黃帝曰："今棄天下之主，願聞長生之道。" 中黃直曰："子為天下久矣，而復求長生之道，不貪乎?"

*Jin gui lu* states: [this is] *Qi qin shi fang* taught to Huang di by the master Zhong huang. Huang di did a purication ritual in the wonderland, and met Zhong huang Zhi. Zhong huang Zhi asked him *what he were doing*. He replied: `Now I would desert my Imperial Throne of the World for acquiring the way of longevity.'

Zhong huang Zhi said: `you have reigned the world for such a long time, and now you want to know of the way of longevity. How greedy you are!'
1. *Qi qin shi fang* 七禽食方

黃帝曰： "有天下實久矣，今欲躬耕而食，深居靖處，禽獸為伍，無煩萬民。恐不得其道，敢問治身之要，養生之寶。" 中黃乃作而歎曰： "至哉，子之問也，吾將造七禽之食，可以長生，與天相保。子其秘之，非賢勿與之。"

Huang di said: 'I’ve reigned the world indeed for a long time. Now I to plough [the soil] for feeding myself, seclude in a calm place, accompany by animals to refrain troubling the people. I’m afraid not to obtain the way. So, I plucked up my courage, and would ask the essentials how to control myself and the secret of nourishing of life.'

Zhong huang Zhi made out it right away and said with a sigh: 'that is an apt remark! You asked about it. I created the [longevity] potion consisting of seven [herbal plants which were given to respective] animals. It can make you live longer, and support each other with the world. You must keep it a secret. You may not tell anyone unless sages.'
1. Qi qin shi fang 七禽食方

- 常以七月七日採澤寫，澤寫者，白鹿之加也，壽八百歲。
- 以八月朔日採柏實，柏實者，猿猴之加也，壽八百歲。
- 以七月七日採蒺藜，蒺藜者，騰蛇之加也，壽二千歲。
- 以八月採菴蘆，菴蘆者，駏驊之加也，壽二千歲。

- 泽泻是白鹿的代表草本植物。
- 柏实是猴子的代表。
- 蒺藜是蛇的代表。
- 菘薦是駏驊的代表。

Juxu is an imaginary animal looking like a mule.
1. *Qi qin shi fang* 七禽食方

- 以八月採地衣，地衣者，車前實也，子陵之加也，壽千歲。以九月採蔓荊實，蔓荊實者，白鵝之加也，壽二千歲。以十一月採彭勃，彭勃者，白蒿也，白菟之加也，壽八百歲。
Dry all herbs in the shade. Fill an earthware pot with them, and seal it to keep it airtight. In the first Chen day of the first month, grind and sift them. Collect the same amount of each herb, the triple amount of fine jujube compared to that of each herb, and one fen (approx. 3 grams) of fine cinnamon. Put it into a leather bag and keep it airtight. Pinch it with your three fingers, and take it after every meal. After that you keep on doing in hundred days, your ears and eye sight get clearer, and you can see [weak] light at night. Improving your vitality increasingly. If you constantly take it, your life overcome the world.