

DAOIST MEDITATION STILLS AND CALMS THE MIND

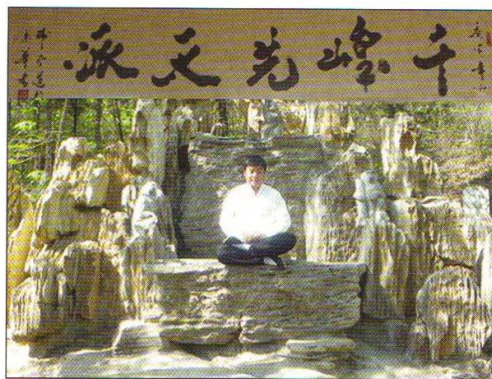
ORIGINAL CHINESE LANGUAGE ARTICLE BY:
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DAOIST SELF-CULTIVATION

For a long time Daoists have used seated meditation to still the mind, but many new practitioners find it very difficult to establish a good practice due to a lack of understanding and proper guidance, and become bad tempered and upset. This is why I am now going to explain the Qianfeng School's method of seated meditation that stills and calms the mind.

Since ancient times, Daoist masters have transmitted to their students the requirement of realizing the essential nature. Many students were not clear on exactly what this meant, and consequently relied upon their own limited interpretations in their self-cultivation efforts. These efforts unfortunately often led to failure in the practice of seated meditation, but this did not mean that the practice of meditation was not effective. On the contrary, when students received authentic and correct meditative guidance, the activity of the mind 'stilled' through the realization of a profound 'emptiness'. This transformation is the product of good, moral and virtuous thoughts in the mind, and pure conduct in the body.

When this state of (inner and outer) balance is achieved (through correctly applied discipline), then the practice of Daoist meditation becomes straightforward and productive. Meditation involves the crossing of the legs when sitting so that the left leg is placed over the right leg. This is the harmonizing of yin and yang. The qi energy points of the hand should



be pressed. The left-hand rests palm-up on the palm of the right-hand, with the thumb of the left-hand touching the tip of its middle-finger. Simultaneously, the thumb of the right-hand presses the centre of the left-palm. This connects the circuit of yin and yang energy in the body. The eye-lids are half-closed, and the eyes are focused upon the tip of the nose. Focusing upon the tip of the nose, concentrates the mind. Close the mouth to hide the tongue, and touch the palate with the tip of the tongue to complete the qi energy flow circuit.

Breathing should be relaxed and unlabored. Breathing should be dropped and fixed in the lower dan tian area—situated two inches below the naval. Spirit (*shen*) is developed by focusing the mind's intention on the Ancestral Cavity—which is the centre of the brain, situated behind and between the eyes. This quietness of mind unifies the upper, middle, and lower (*dan tian*) energy centres in the body, enabling the qi

energy to flow freely through the energy channels. Warm the body by stretching the arms, back, waist and legs, so that qi energy flows freely. The details are as follows:

Sit crossed-legged either in the half or full lotus position. The mind should be withdrawn from any attachment to the other five senses. Beginners should not be reluctant to use a natural crossed-legged position until their experience deepens. To sit well, the upper body should be naturally upright, without bending forward or backward. The 'Hundred Convergences' (*bahui*) pressure point (situated at the crown of the head), should align with the 'Converging Yin' (*huiyin*) pressure point, (also known as the perineum), situated between the anus and genitalia. The former is where all yang energy channels converge, and the latter is where all yin energy channels converge—when the shoulder girdle sits correctly over the pelvic girdle (via a naturally curved spine)—these two areas are effectively aligned. For this to happen, the musculature must be fully and naturally relaxed of any habitual tension, this in turn allows the qi energy to flow freely and unimpeded through the energy channels that run through and around the muscles.

If qi energy flow is impeded, then qi energy flow becomes stagnant and illnesses result. If qi energy flow is impeded, then blood flow is also impeded. The inside and outside of the body must be relaxed of all tension, if the conditions for good and effective meditation are to be established. Meditation involves the crossing of the legs when sitting so that the left leg is placed over the right leg. This is the harmonizing of yin and yang, but remember that this is not a strict rule. If you have pain in your legs, you can change position at any time—or sit in a less structured manner. The qi energy points of the hand should be pressed.

The left-hand rests palm-up on the palm of the right-hand, with the thumb of the left-hand touching the tip of its middle-finger. Simultaneously, the thumb of the right-hand presses the centre of the left-palm. Hold the hands at the lower abdomen level, as this connects the circuit of yin and yang energy in the body. However, it must be stated that connecting the energy channels in this manner is not the same as the method of hand positioning associated with mantra-recitation. This is because

the hand position within Daoist meditation is based upon medical knowledge, while mantra-practice is based upon magical thought. The hand positions as described above connect the yin and yang energy channels (and specific energy-points) that run through the body to the brain, and when these channels are connected, regulated, and relaxed, this reduces and removes any distractions the mind might otherwise suffer.

A mind that is not distracted can meditate effectively. The *Way Classic (Dao Jing)* states: 'Harmonizing the four limbs closes the four gates so that the centre can be clearly perceived.'

Generally speaking, the eye-lids are half-closed. If the eyes are wide open there is too much light (and spirit [*shen*] is scattered and unfocused), and if the eyes are fully closed, there is too much darkness (and qi energy and spirit [*shen*] are dim and unclear). Therefore an ancient said: 'Sun and Moon integrate, gold and wood harmonize, light returns and illumination manifests, and inner vision perceives this reality. The eye perceives light, the ear perceives sound—this is achieved through regulating the breath.' And: 'Inner vision perceives the mind as non-mind; perceives outer form as non-form; perceives far-off objects and non-objects; these three things are empty, but emptiness is not empty. This is because seeing the void as not empty is correct, and seeing the void as empty is incorrect.' An ancient said: 'A long life is only acquired through following the Way (*Dao*) for a long time.'

The eyes are focused upon the tip of the nose. Focusing upon the tip of the nose, concentrates the mind. In this way the spirit (*shen*) will be gathered and settled, and the attention of the mind will be fixed. The eyes concentrate on the nose as a means to settle and calm the thought activity of the mind. However, the essence of the mind is not found in the physical structure of the nose—but beyond the structure—as all form is in reality non-form. When focusing the mind upon the nose, the lower jaw should be gently closed so that the trachea pipe is straight, and the breathing smooth and natural.

Close the mouth to hide the tongue, and touch the palate with the tip of the tongue to complete the qi energy flow circuit. The palate is the area of the 'Divine-sky Lake' (*tianchi*) pressure point. This is an inch behind the upper

teeth which form a 'V' shaped-groove—this is where the tongue should be placed to touch the tianchi area. This connects the 'Mysterious Chest' (*xuanying*) pressure point on the surface of the tongue, with the tianchi pressure point situated in the palate. The tianchi is closed (to avoid injuring or the wasting true vital force), whilst the xuanying is opened—thus creating a free-flowing circuit of qi energy. Furthermore, beneath the tongue there are two areas that emit saliva, they are called 'Gold Well' (*jinjing*) on the left, and 'Stone Spring' (*shiquan*) on the right.

When tianchi is closed, it is easier to produce saliva. During meditation, the mouth often fills with a saliva that is sweet-tasting and clear-looking. The self-cultivation method states that this should be swallowed into the digestive tract and down into the abdomen. To do this the tongue touching the palate does not move or break contact, instead the accumulated fluid is sucked from under the tongue and swallowed as it builds-up. This fluid can then enter the different qi energy channels directly, and is transformed into yin essential nature (*jing*). This is a quick method for building jing and ensuring all-round health.

Breathing should be relaxed and unlabored. Breathing should be dropped and fixed in the lower dan tian area—situated two inches below the naval. The breath should be deepened so that the essential qi is developed—this is an important preliminary to developing essential nature (*jing*). At the beginning of the practice, the breathing cycle is shallow and too high in the chest. The breathing cycle needs to be deepened and lengthened through relaxing and aligning the body, and concentrating the mind.

Whether practicing 'natural' or 'correct' breathing techniques, the abdominal area is extensively used and the habit of deep breathing should be developed early on in the practice. Breathing can become so refined (and pure) that even the practitioner cannot hear the process. Breathing has to be long and drawn-out so that the entire respiratory mechanism is used. This focuses the mind and returns the awareness to its own root, which is accessed through the lower energy centre (*dan tian*) situated three-inches below the navel. It is important to remain relaxed when training or the

breath will not deepen and qi energy will not be accumulated. Breathing must be even and at the same pace. The stability of the mind and the pace of the breath are inherently linked. Do not become attached to the breath, and do not push the breath away.

Breathing deeply strengthens the entire body including the inner organs and the digestive systems. Focus the mind to develop peace and tranquillity in the advanced stages so that the empty essence of all things is realized. At this point, the breath becomes so slight and verified that it appears to cease. However, beginners should use natural breathing to expand the lung capacity through deep, refined, smooth, uniform and precise breathing techniques. This strengthens the entire body, but particularly the inner organs and the digestive system.

The mind must realize the 'Ancestral Cavity' (*zu qiao*). The Ancestral Cavity is situated between and behind the eyes in the centre of the brain. When the ten thousand thoughts are quietened, the awareness can perceive the Ancestral Cavity, but the practitioner must first step off of the hundred foot pole to get beyond the sense of vague emptiness that is not yet all-embracing. The key factor is the 'stilling' of the mind through intense concentration, and the withdrawing of attention from externals, so that even the physical body becomes like dead-wood.

The surface of the mind becomes still like water—or unmoving like cold ashes. There can be no disturbing thought, if the mind and body are to fall away to reveal the unified reality. This is a distinct state of mind (and body) that is beyond attachment to all external and internal activity. When the practitioner moves beyond vague emptiness, the mind becomes all-embracing. This is experienced as being peaceful, deep, and very profound. There is the experience of a powerful force (like electricity) travelling through the body, and a sense of 'roaring', but it is a wonderful experience that is beyond words. This is exactly the marvellous relationship between physical form (*xing*) and spirit (*shen*), and after experiencing this reality, the vision becomes clear and the mind becomes bright.

The spirit (*shen*) is clear and the qi energy is cool. Essential nature (*jing*) and spirit (*shen*)

道家养心求静 道家修性

很长时间以来,新入门修炼的人对收心求静总是不理解,总是找不到入静的办法,而心烦急躁,下面我介绍一下千峰派的收心求静法。

自古道家就有性靠自悟命由师传之理,修性要靠自己的思想之念,如真的能修得真性,达到静空那是你的德善之心以成,就修性之法很简单,盘膝端坐,脚分阴阳,手掐子午,二目垂帘,眼观鼻,鼻观心。闭口藏舌,舌顶上腭,呼吸绵绵,微降丹田。心神意念守祖窍,三花聚顶秋月圆。下座拂面熨双睛,浑身上下搓一遍。伸臂长腰舒筋气,静极而动一阳现。要领详解如下:

盘膝端坐:盘膝有单盘、双盘、五心朝天之分。初学者可采用自然单盘膝,不要勉强。所谓端坐,是上体自然正直,不前俯后仰,百会与会阴成垂直一线,但务必放松自然。须知松则气顺,经脉舒畅;僵则气滞,有碍气血流通。只有全身内外放松,才能给入静创造条件。

脚分阴阳:盘膝时左脚属阳在外,右脚属阴在内,为阳抱阴,但不是绝对的,如感到不舒服可改换,对此不要太拘泥。

手掐子午:左手拇指掐本左手中指午位,右手大拇指进入左手内掐住左手无名指的根部子位,两手相抱放在小腹前,此为阴抱阳。但必须说明:掐子午不等于掐诀念咒。因子午这两道脉通寸、关、尺、而寸、关、尺之脉通心,心通脑,掐子午是为减轻动脉撞心的力量,使其少生杂念,有助于入静。丹经云“手脚和扣连环,四门紧闭守正中”是也。

二目垂帘:即是二目似闭非闭,微开一线同观鼻尖,看似对眼。太闭则神气昏暗,太开则神光外驰。故古人有云:“日月合并,金木和合,回光返照,返观内视。含眼光,凝耳韵,调鼻息”,“内观其心,心无其心;外观其形,形无其形;远观其物,物无其物;三者既悟,惟见于空;观空不空,是乃真空;观空乃空,是为真空。”这是古人的所谓“长生久视之道”。

眼观鼻,鼻观心:二目垂帘,眼看鼻尖,神定则心定。两眼同看鼻尖,活动的思维,

纷纭复杂的意念就能安定下来。眼观鼻而心不在鼻,由观而达到忘观,外观其形,形无其形。所谓鼻观心,是为了下颌微收,使气管调直,呼吸自然流畅。

闭口藏舌,舌顶上腭:上腭是天池穴,在上牙肉寸许凹陷处,口念“儿”字时,舌尖所触部位。闭天池,一方面是开玄膈(玄膈穴在舌舌之后),使真息往来畅通无阻;另一方面则是闭口免伤真炁。再则,舌根下有生津两穴,左为金井,右为石泉,闭上天池易于生津。静坐往往津液满口,并有清而甜之感,此时应用吞津法将津液吞入腹内。即舌顶上腭不动,将津液吮至舌根,待欲喷时引颈吞下。这样引吞,可直接入任脉,化为阴精,是造精之捷径,健身之妙法。

呼吸绵绵,微降丹田:调理呼吸,又谓调息,是初步入静的重要环节。用功时既然是闭口,无疑要用鼻呼吸,要求深、细、长、匀。不论是顺呼吸还是逆呼吸,都要求腹式呼吸,这样才能深。所谓细,即连自己也听不到呼吸声。长,是将呼吸拉长,要息息归根,下降丹田,不要憋气,要放松自然。匀,即快慢均匀,务要心息相依,不即不离,达到息不调而自调。甚至,至虚极,守静笃,会出现呼吸顿断。初学者,要用自然呼吸。呼吸绵绵,深、细、长、匀,能扩大肺活量,促进和加强内脏各个部位的功能,尤其对消化系统功效更为显著。

心神意念守祖窍:祖窍,在二目中心只有守定祖窍,才能使瞬息万变的活动思想安静下来。百尺竿头再进一步,做到心静念止,身如槁木,心若止水,意似寒灰,一念不起,一意归中,万籁俱寂,身心两忘,恍恍惚惚,杳杳冥冥,此时感到一股电流在身上奔腾咆哮,犹如触电,全身酥麻,其舒服感妙不可言。这正是形神俱妙,了在其中。此景过后,但觉眼明心亮,神清气爽,精神振奋。如能得到五分钟的真静,足能消除一天的疲劳。如能每日坚持坐功,即使得不到真静,有时也会感到手脚出汗、丹田发暖、脸似蚁爬、头顶气旋。这些现象,都是坐功的收获,日积月累,祖炁修足自然玄关出现。

三花聚顶秋月圆:三花即精花、炁花、神

花。只有精炁神修足,才有三花聚顶秋月圆的现象。秋月即玄关。玄关与祖窍同样都是过去道家三口不说、六耳不传之秘。玄关与祖窍往往连在一起,实际玄关是玄关,祖窍是祖窍。可以说:祖窍是玄关出人的门户。玄关不在身上,祖窍不在身外。玄关者乃玄妙之机关也,不在身上,离身难寻。

下座拂面熨双睛:每逢坐完功后,先将两手搓热,趁热用手捂住两眼,热敷后两手猛然向两侧分开,两眼同时随之使劲一睁,如此三至五次,再左右转睛。左转9周,再向右转9周。经常坚持,不但保持眼球灵活不得眼疾,还使通眼脑气筋通畅,保持眼睛不花。拂面是用两手搓拂两颊,使脸色滋润,推迟生长皱纹及老斑。

全身上下搓一遍:全身干搓,又叫干沐浴,是非常行之有效的健身方法。紧接拂面熨眼转双睛之后,两手从头部开始搓起,继而由前额、两太阳穴、迎香、两耳前后,大脑、小脑、风池、风府、两臂内外至两手背,再由胸前肺部、两肋,两手并行搓小腹两侧、肚脐、两腰眼、两腿外侧内侧、膝盖、脚心。两手搓时必搓热,最后再揉睾丸。以上各点,搓时最好用数字来约束,以免点到从事。干沐浴倘能持之以恒,定有意想不到的功效。重点是鼻窝、脖颈、腰眼、睾丸、尾抵涌泉。搓完后舒筋气。

以上是收心求静的功法不难吧?但是难就难在我们的识神上。总是静不下心来,有的人在守祖窍时会感受到很多,静不下心来,一打坐满脑子都是所思之事。就守祖窍而言,有的说看到光了,有的说看到神仙了等等不一。那都是[着象了]真正的求静是知而不守,才能达到求静的目的。

在修炼中要多参学儒、佛、道之理,心以至善地,有到是东为木老,南为火老,西为金母,北为水老,中为土老,天上地下都是善神,神、人、鬼是自己修出来的,所以我们修炼之士要以修心开始。

北京千峰赵避尘文化艺术交流中心

道家千峰先天派

千峰草堂:赵明旺

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are now fully aroused and stimulated. In fact, if you can meditate in this state for just five minutes, you can eradicate a day of fatigue. If you can dedicate yourself to a daily practice of meditation, even if you do not immediately realize reality and essential nature (*jing*), you will experience on occasion, sweaty hands and feet, the energy centre (*dan tian*) will become warm, and there will be a sense of ants crawling over the face area, as well as a building-up of qi energy around the top of the head that appears to rotate. All these experiences are the product of successful meditation over a long period of practice, and indicate that the entrance to ancestral essential qi will eventually be achieved.

Three flowers gather around the autumn

moon. This refers to the flower of essential nature (*jing*), the flower of qi energy, and the flower of spirit (*shen*). When these flowers are seen circling the autumn moon—know that the moon is the ‘Mysterious Entrance’ (*xuanguan*). In the past, Daoist teachers kept it a closely guarded secret that the ancestral cavity can be accessed through any or all of these three pathways. The mysterious entrance is the mysterious entrance, and the ancestral cavity is the ancestral cavity. It can be said that the ancestral cavity is the mysterious entrance that humanity must pass through during self-cultivation, but the mysterious entrance is not inside the body, and the ancestral cavity is not outside the body. Furthermore, the mysterious entrance is difficult to find because it is not located in the body.

Dry bath: It is very beneficial for the health of the body to be vigorously rubbed before and after periods of seated meditation. The palms of the hands should be rubbed together to make them warm, and with the eyes closed, the area should be rubbed in a circular manner. It is the same for the face, forehead, temples, ears, nose, as well as the top and back of the skull. This should be repeated for the shoulders, arms and hands, as well as the kidney area of the back, the chest and the abdomen.

The upper and lower legs—as well as the soles of the feet—should also be treated in this manner. Finally the genital area should also be rubbed in this manner. This action simulates the pressure points around the body. If you persist in this practice, it will have unexpected health benefits. Concentrate on the nose area, the neck, muscles of the groin, testes, the top of the head and the ‘Bubbling Springs’ (*yongqing*) pressure point on the soles of the feet (below the toe area). This practice stimulates and distributes the qi energy.

These methods of meditation are not difficult, right? The problem lies in our knowledge and experience of spirit (*shen*). This is because

the activity of the mind—with its myriad thoughts and feelings—obscures the empty essence, and prevents the ancestral cavity from being perceived. Until the mind is stilled, some people imagine that they see different deities, and glimpse the light of the ancestral cavity. It is only when the mind is really stilled that all these things will become apparent, and insight will be genuine.

Effective practice of the Way (*Dao*) can make use of the Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist principle of ‘reason’ (*li*), as this always benefits the mind. To the east is the wood god, to the south is fire god, to the west is the golden mother, and to the north is the water god. In the centre is the soil god. The deities of the divine-sky and the broad-earth are good, but humans must make their own efforts in self-cultivation so that the mind is stilled and calm, and Immortality is attained.

Beijing Qianfeng Zhao Bichen Cultural Arts and Exchange Centre.

Daojia, Qianfeng Prenatal School Lineage Inheritor.

Qianfeng Hermitage: Zhao Ming Wang ■



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