

Zuowang View and Method

Old Oak Taiji School (www.oldoakdao.org)

Daoist meditation is a practice of letting the agitation settle from the mind so that we can directly experience our original nature. Zhuangzi called this practice Zuowang (坐忘), which simply means to sit and forget. In Zuowang, we settle into our posture, breathe naturally, and just let the mind rest. That's it - we are not trying to accomplish anything or create any special experience. We are not deliberately guiding energy, controlling the breath, or trying to transform ourselves. We are just sitting, forgetting, as the 10,000 things rise and fall. This practice embodies Laozi's teaching of wuwei and is the core method of Daoist cultivation.

Zuowang is based on the view that our nature is inherently united with all things, and when we settle down, we can experience this unity. In the Daoist tradition, this is called embodying the way – Dao De (道德). Even though the water in a little pool may be hundreds of miles from the sea, it has never lost its true nature. Similarly, when we settle into Zuowang, we find our true nature already present.

Because human beings accumulate many unhealthy habits of body, breath, and mind, we experience various difficulties in settling into this simple practice. There are many elements of proper posture which are essential for enabling the breath to be easy and natural and allowing the agitation to settle from the mind. These include keeping the spine upright and relaxing everything into a stable base. When the body is aligned and comfortable, the qi can sink and the proper cultivation can arise naturally.

To practice Daoist meditation, sit down and relax. Align your body, keep your spine upright, and let your posture be stable and comfortable. Fold your hands in your lap or rest them on your legs. Let the tongue rest against the upper palate, and let your eyes rest half open. Breathe in, breathe out, naturally. Let the breath be smooth, easy, and quiet, as the belly rises and falls. Just forget everything and let go of all concepts. Simply remain present as thoughts come and go. Let the cultivation happen naturally. Gradually, the mind will settle, the energy will stabilize, and the spirit will become bright. It's a natural process.

To sit in Zuowang, establish and maintain these nine points of posture:

- Place sit-bones securely on edge of bench, no pressure on perineum
- Extend tailbone gently downward, piercing through ground
- Extend occiput gently upward, dropping chin slightly
- Keep spine upright, aligning 3 dantian vertically
- Relax belly and chest, solar plexus open, not collapsed
- Relax shoulders & arms
- Form comfortable mudra with hands at lower dantian
- Let tongue touch upper palate
- Let eyes rest open