

Wild Goose Qigong and Taoist Principles

We had always been told by Grand Master Chen Chuan Gang that the roots of Wild Goose were in Taoist principles; but what does that mean in terms of our practice? The primary text of Taoist philosophy is the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu. The *Tao Te Ching* illuminates the principles of the universe and aligns those principles to individual self-realization, i.e., enlightenment.

Our Wild Goose practice then is at least some part of a path toward self-realization. Yang Meijun says it directly in her book *Dayan Qigong Volume II*, when she establishes wuwei (non-doing) as a foundational principle of Wild Goose. She counsels to “get rid of mind and practice in void”.

Her counsel indicates two levels of practice in Wild Goose, first with mind and then no-mind. As with all new body-mind work, we begin with mind, memorizing and thinking, trying to understand how we are to use what the system reveals. Getting to wuwei is more difficult than simply focusing the mind. The mind is entwined with ego, (our personal identity) and this ego construct acts as a barrier to wuwei. The ego incorrectly establishes itself as our primary identity. This false identity is in opposition to the natural true self that Taoist philosophy recognizes as the Tao. So long as we practice from the point of mind, we remain locked out of the greater potential of no-mind and self-realization. Taoist principles make clear that there is one source (Tao) at the heart of all creation and we humans manifest from that source. We are Tao, we are not the memories, fears and egoic fabrications of the mind. It is the base of Taoist philosophy (and all the world’s major philosophies / religions) that humans are confused about *what* they are. Removing this confusion leads to self-realization and living from the perspective of a whole rather than as an isolated ego-defined individual. It is this perspective that makes wuwei possible. It is the purpose of this initial mind and body work to prepare for the transition to wuwei and non-doing. This is a critical concept to take in.

Self-realization is the point where we begin to operate from our source. It is the point where we experience what we are. As Lao Tzu tells us, this cannot be described in words but can be experienced by and as awareness.

*“The Tao that can be described in words is not the true Tao
The Name that can be named is not the true Name.
From non-existence were called Heaven and Earth*

*From existence all things were born.
In being without desires, you experience the wonder
But by having desires, you experience the journey.
Yet both spring from the same source and differ mostly in name.*

This source is called "Mystery"
Mystery upon Mystery,
The womb giving birth to all of being."
From "Tao Te Ching" translation by John Mabry

As Yang Meijun tells us, we uncover the natural state of self-realization and wuwei by getting rid of the mind and residing in the void.

There are three principles of practice that lead to self-realization. The Chinese words are ting, (fang)song and wuwei.

- **Ting** (聽) / tīng/, to listen and to hear, indicative of a deep level of awareness
- **Fang Song** (放鬆) / fàngsōng/, to release and loosen (the body), to hang like the boughs of a pine tree. Often expressed as the single word **song**.
- **Wuwei** (無爲) / wúwéi/, non-doing, the Taoist doctrine referring to a state of being in which actions are effortlessly aligned with the Tao. Achievement comes from the state of emptiness. It is a situational response without effort.

Taking each principle in turn, you can see that ting can be applied in all practices. Indeed, you can consider that ting (awareness) is both verb and noun. You can be aware, and you can also rest in awareness. Likewise, song (release) applies mentally, physically and spiritually. Awareness and release work together cyclically in practice until there is an awareness breakthrough. This breakthrough occurs when we become aware that we are not the body or the mind, but rather a nameless awareness (Tao) that underlies and manifests all creation. That includes the individual ego identity. When "you" rest in the awareness of Tao, non-doing is possible. You = Tao.

It is my experience and my observation that it is self-realization that brings true internal energetic potential to the internal arts. I consider self-realization to be the "missing link" in internal practice.

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Thanks for reading, David Deich
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