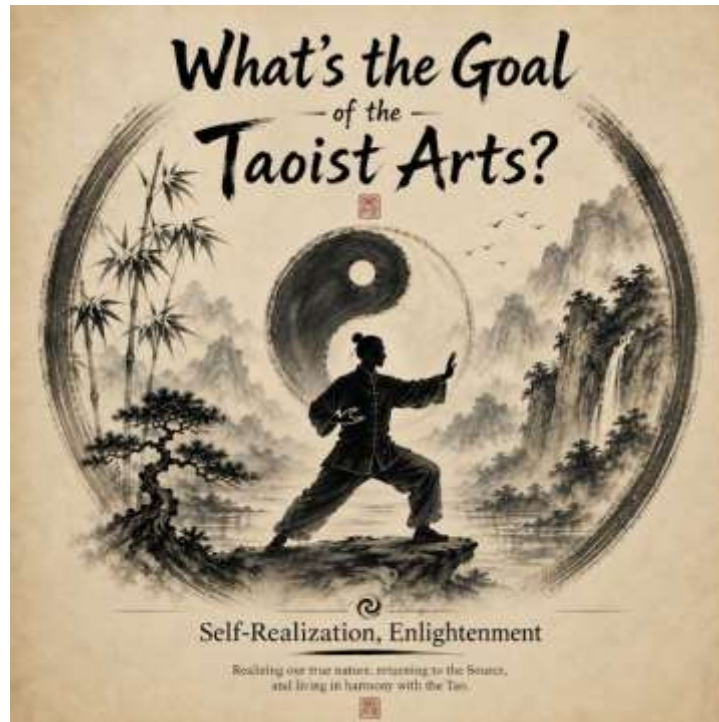




**"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."
— Yogi Berra**

As the great sage Yogi Berra tells us, it's important to know something about where you're going before you begin the journey. This is certainly true of the Taoist internal arts. The intended destination shapes your Taoist practice. The destination? It is self-realization, aka enlightenment. To be correct, the word destination implies moving from where you are to someplace else. However, the Taoist masters tell us that we are already there, we just don't realize it yet. So, the Taoist path is one of awakening to the existing truth.

There are three principles at the heart of internal practice; ting (awareness), song (release) and wuwei (non-doing). Practice is typically characterized as development of the body, mind and spirit. The beginner experiences much physical repetition that requires mental focus, so the body and mind components are immediately evident. That spirit part is going to involve the last principle – wuwei. Here's where the deep dive into self-realization (enlightenment) comes in.

Self-realization is the experience that you are NOT the ego, your memories, goals, fears, or emotions. You are an infinite unbounded something that cannot be described in words. This is the existing truth. Everything is one. You are the whole of everything. And your human experiences play out on this infinite unbounded field. Self-realization is the realized awareness of this infinite unbounded something. It is self-realization that opens the full potential of the internal arts.

The movement work (dong gong) must be accompanied by stillness work (jing gong). Stillness work is critical; it is the door to self-realization. Without self-realization there is no access to the true self or to true internal power. The point of stillness work (meditation) is to recognize that mind and thoughts are an impermanent experience that play out on the infinite field of awareness. You are that awareness. The process of meditation is to be aware of the mind and thoughts and to realize there is a deeper stillness that exists before mind and thoughts. And, that this stillness is always present. And you are that.

How do we describe that stillness? Awareness, spirit, God, consciousness, Tao ...

**“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 the Tao Te Ching
Translated by John R. Mabry