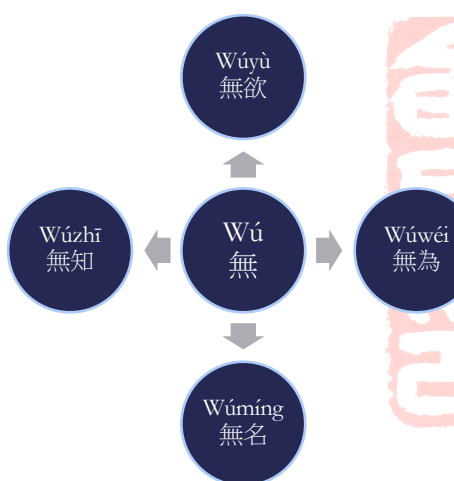


BLUE PAPERS

Wúwéi 無為

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Wúwéi 無為 (“**non-action**”), more literally meaning “without doing,” is a key Daoist principle, practice, and state. While conventionally indicating negation (“not/ without”), here *wú* 無 refers to absence of and freedom from the associated quality or condition. *Wúwéi* is thus one in a lexical series and family designating various “beyond” or “**non-states**.”



These include desirelessness, namelessness, non-knowing, and the like. *Wúwéi* indicates the absence of contrived, planned, manipulative and similar types of behavior. It refers to **effortlessness**, including non-imposition, non-interference, and non-intervention. Letting go and letting be. Natural and relaxed responsiveness.

Although frequently misrepresented as “philosophy,” *wúwéi* is rooted in Daoist **contemplative views**, practices and experiences. Specifically, it is informed by and informs **Daoist apophatic and quietistic meditation**. This is a form of emptiness- and stillness-based meditation in which

contemplative silence and energetic listening are primary. It is contentless, non-conceptual, and non-dualistic. Through quietistic meditation, we decondition ourselves. We overcome the trifold distortions of social conditioning, familial obligation and expectation, and personal habituation. Then we recognize that any tension, stagnation, and apparent obstruction may be released. “Loosen the tangles and untie the knots.” Undoing leading to inaction.

Appear plain and embrace simplicity;
Lessen selfishness and decrease desire.

Wúwéi is thus an approach and method for “returning to the root(s)” (*guīgēn* 歸根). This relates to innate nature (*xìng* 性), our original and inherent connection to the Dao. The ground of our being as stillness (*jìng* 靜), which is the Dao-as-Stillness.

From a Daoist perspective, such practice is the precondition and foundation for understanding and applying *wúwéi* in a larger context. Just as quietistic meditation involves disengaging from any and all forms of agitation and distraction, *wúwéi* inspires us to do **nothing extra**. “Through non-action, nothing is left undone” (*wúwéi ér wú bùwéi* 無為而無不為) We cease doing everything that prevents us from being who we are. This is pure being and experiencing.

So, in addition to a Daoist contemplative approach, principle and practice, *wúwéi* refers to an associated **contemplative state**. A psychospiritual condition characterized by energetic connection, numinous pervasion, and mystical abiding. From a more comprehensive and integrated Daoist perspective, *wúwéi* relates to a variety of realized states referred to as “**fruits of the Dao**” (*dàoguó* 道果), or “Way-Fruits” for short. In addition to non-action, these include non-dissipation (*wúlòu* 無漏), being carefree (*xiāoyáo* 逍遙), and independence (*zìzài* 自在).