

# Moving Meditation

Tai chi, spirals, Tao Yin, sword form are usually referred to as moving meditations. The idea is that meditation does not have to be limited to sitting still. We can cultivate a meditative state during moving practices. This may be very helpful because we spend much of our day moving. Through these practices we can nourish meditative qualities - balance, harmony, peace - while physically moving through our day.

The last few months have expanded my definition of moving meditation. I've been attending a very advanced intensive months-long workshop in finding, cultivating and remembering meditation while moving home and work to a new location. This is another form of meditation while moving. It has been an interesting workshop. All previous moving meditation experience has been so helpful. I'm learning much in the process.

**Things Change.** I had the good fortune to spend 18 wonderful years at Savier St. The location and unique space allowed a place to cultivate and develop what I had learned in the previous decade while traveling and studying in Asia. When moving in there, my plan was to stay for one year and then find something else. Plans change.

After 17 years I found myself very settled at Savier St., someone used the word *entrenched*. It fits. Simple routines and comfortable habits. Easy walking in the neighborhood. As I began to notice signs and signals forecasting a move, a distinct resistance arose. Curious. Resistance to change.

Once into this new house, lots of change becomes apparent. Routines, habits, conditioned ways of getting the daily activities and chores done all changed, like throwing a deck of cards up into the air. The comfort of familiar ways changed to feelings of challenge, disruption and the unknown. Again, resistance to change surfaces. Trees have changed, from chestnut and recently departed silk tree to bay laurel. Morning practice evolves. Neighborhoods change from trendy boutique NW 23<sup>rd</sup> to simple, bicycle-heaven SE. Views, neighbors and food stores change. Lots and lots of change. If, as Taoists point out, we recognize change as the only real constant, can we bring this resistance, curiosity and reaction to change into our meditation practice?



**Suffering.** Throughout this marathon of a move, I frequently encountered an experience of familiar suffering. Long hours, heavy boxes, too much driving and too many trips to the hardware store, and... cleaning, lots of cleaning.

In themselves, these are just the ongoing activities of daily life. Somehow, moving compresses and intensifies all of these activities with predictable results: suffering.

This familiar process was quite noticeable as I haven't moved in so long, never had so much stuff (pharmacy = 100 boxes!) But what was quite unusual was noticing the experience of suffering without denial, pushing it away or distracting. I often felt the overwhelmed-too-much-feeling and just sat with it.

It didn't take long or much effort to see a regular pattern. Suffering was strongest when I felt I was doing this move by myself, when I felt alone and separate. As soon as I remembered the support, friends, phone calls, offers of help, the aloneness faded, separation shifted, suffering decreased. The frustration, fatigue and overwhelmed remained - they're just a natural part of the moving process. The suffering part, though, isn't mandatory. A deep bow of appreciation to everyone who helped in this process, not just physically moving, but also support in letting go of separation and suffering.

**This 2.** Approaching this move as meditation does not mean every moment was a slow, relaxed, thoughtful experience, like sitting at some mountain retreat. Nope. This was a very urban, hectic, detail-and-chore-filled marathon, like any move. At various points I felt familiar pain and suffering. So many boxes. So much to clean. Where *is* that special pot, pen, file and book?

Bringing moving into the meditation process can become a way of recognizing when frustration, push, exhaustion and overwhelm arise (and... they *will* arise) and notice how we relate to each. Is there a way to bring kindness to just this human response to moving - whatever it is: worry, obsessive lists and planning, too much to do in too little time.

Whenever I bump up against these, which happens often, I can more easily recognize the story - it's all very familiar - take a deep breath, pause and say... this, too. This frustration, it too can be related to kindly. This overwhelmed, it too can be brought into the fullness and spaciousness of meditation. This late night/early morning, this unable to sleep, this "I have no idea what this unmarked jar of herbs is," can also be related to with acceptance rather than resistance. It's a different approach, some might say radically different.

Of course, as I write this, I'm still moving. Half the boxes are still sealed. Compost, water filter and Internet still need to be set up, etc. etc., etc. So, I have plenty more time to practice moving as meditation. And with each day, each practice, the meditative qualities of harmony, balance and flow become more and more a part of daily life, even while moving.

I'm out of space to write and this is just the first layer, there is always more. We'll continue the discussion in future newsletters, books, classes and our ongoing conversations together.



*Keep up the good work*



*veranda*

*lazy taoist*

*evening courtyard stillness*

*rays of setting sun*

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