



1.4. Considerations on Seating Positions

The first consideration concerns the sitting position in which we meditate.

In principle, you can experience enlightenment or resonance with the Holy Spirit in any posture - while walking, sitting or even lying down in a hammock.

Mystical experiences are spiritual states that can occur in any life situation.

Finding a supportive sitting posture

In our daily practice and prayer, however, we should find a suitable sitting position for ourselves.

It is about choosing a posture that best supports us.

There are numerous books and videos on this topic, so I will not describe the sitting postures in detail. I recommend instead watching some videos and trying different postures.

Basic considerations for sitting posture

The primary goal of sitting posture is to be able to sit as pain-free as possible during meditation. Additionally, there should be good contact with the ground to achieve a sense of grounding.

It is optimal if the hips can be tilted slightly forward, as this makes it easier to straighten the back. This occurs when the knees are located below the hip joints. The upper body should be as upright and relaxed as possible.

I will address the position of the hands in prayer separately later.

The traditional sitting position in the **lotus position** is considered the ideal position for meditation: The lower body is stable and connected to the earth, while the upper body remains upright and flexible like a blade of grass.

A good alternative is the kneeling position. Here, the tops of the feet and shins are on the floor, the knees are bent, and one sits on a meditation cushion at the appropriate height.

It is also possible to meditate on a chair.

When tradition becomes a hurdle

I myself have meditated in the quarter or half lotus position for most of my life. For several years, however, I had severe back problems and got a headache after ten minutes.

As I came from the Zen tradition, I stuck rigidly to this sitting posture and was convinced

that other positions were unsuitable. This fixation ultimately meant that I was unable to meditate properly for a long time.

Eventually, my menisci were torn, and I had to decide whether to meditate on the cushion or walk pain-free. I chose pain-free walking and attempted to meditate on a chair.

Initially, I was frustrated because it felt unfamiliar. The sitting posture on the cushion was like an anchor for me, immediately bringing me to a different mental state. On a chair, on the other hand, it felt like ordinary everyday life.

Over time, however, I learned to appreciate the pain-free sitting and was no longer distracted by physical discomfort. In fact, I experienced my deepest meditations on the chair - even while standing and during walking meditation.

So today I am grateful not to be bound by a strict external tradition.

The flow phenomenon in posture

There is a reciprocal relationship between posture and state of mind.

In Zen, the ideal posture attempts to support the desired state of mind.

However, there is another approach that is based on the flow principle. It somewhat reverses the principle:

When I get into the desired state of mind, my body will naturally search for the appropriate sitting posture on its own.

It's about adopting the posture that feels right at the moment - with respect for the current feeling. If I feel depressed or tired, my body is allowed to sit accordingly.

By remaining mindful of my body and emotional state, it gradually changes. The breath, initially perhaps shallow, becomes deeper. Tensions release, energy is freed, and the body naturally finds a healthy tension and the ideal posture on its own.

This approach has helped me personally more than the Zen approach.

My recommendation

Orientate yourself to the traditional sitting posture and find out which one supports you best in your meditation. If it's difficult, try the flow principle and discover what works best for you.

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