

## Essay II | The Art of Centering: Finding Dynamic Balance in a World of Flux

### 第二篇 | 执中的艺术：在变动世界中寻找动态平衡

Author: Zhenjiang Zhi

Affiliation: HanFlow Initiative

ORCID: 0009-0004-3176-4764

作者: 智振江

单位: HanFlow 发起项目

Version: 1.0

Year: 2026

License: CC BY 4.0

版本: 1.0

年份: 2026

许可: CC BY 4.0

#### Abstract:

Ours is an era torn apart by "either/or"—career or tranquility, logic or emotion, expansion or stability. This binary mode of thinking breeds a profound inner exhaustion, leaving us feeling that whichever side we choose, we betray another part of ourselves. This essay explores an alternative: the ancient wisdom of "centering." Drawing from somatic practices, it reveals the center not as a static midpoint or compromise, but as a dynamic axis—the fulcrum of perception and action itself. The essay traces how physical training in centering reshapes our mental patterns, cultivating panoramic awareness in the face of conflict and the capacity to hold contradictory truths in complex situations. It argues that the aim of centering is not to eliminate tension, but to sustain a creative tension between opposites—allowing ambition and contentment, empathy and reason to coexist and inform one another. To find one's center is to reclaim inner sovereignty: not as an object chosen by life, but as the subject creating its own rhythm. And this balance, it turns out, is not found through thinking—it emerges naturally, from the stability of breath.

2026 HanFlow. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

1st

Part of the HanFlow Series: Tai Chi for Mindful Movement

2026 汉风 HanFlow. 采用 CC BY 4.0 许可。

属于 HanFlow 系列: 太极正念运动模块

and the felt sense of the ground beneath our feet.

**摘要:**

我们的时代,被“或此或彼”所撕裂——事业或恬淡,逻辑或共情,扩张或安定。这种二元思维带来深刻的内耗,让我们无论选择哪一方,都像背叛了自身的另一部分可能。本文探讨另一种可能:古老的“执中”智慧。借由身体实践,它揭示“中”并非静止的中点或折中,而是一个动态的轴心——感知的支点,行动的枢轴。文章追溯身体上的执中训练如何重塑心智模式,培养面对冲突时的全景觉察,以及在复杂情境中容纳矛盾真相的能力。它论证执中的目标并非消除张力,而是维系对立面之间的创造性张力——让进取心与平常心、共情与理性共存互滋。找到自己的“中”,便是重获内在的主权:不再是被生活选择的客体,而成为创造自身韵律的主体。而这种平衡,原来并非来自思考——它从呼吸的稳定与脚下的感知中,自然涌现。

## Main Text

### 正文

#### Introduction

#### 引言

Ours is an era torn apart by “either/or.”

我们的时代，是一个被“或此或彼”撕裂的时代。

We are demanded to make clear choices: career success or a tranquil life? Rational logic or emotional resonance? Aggressive expansion or conservative stability? Our cultural narratives, career paths, and even self-identity are often built upon such either/or dichotomies, as if we must sever a part of ourselves to become a qualified “adult” or “success.”

我们被要求做出明确的选择：要事业的成功，还是生活的恬淡？要理性的逻辑，还是感性的共鸣？要进取的扩张，还是保守的安定？我们的文化叙事、职业路径甚至自我认知，常常建立在非此即彼的二元对立之上，仿佛我们必须切割自己的一部分，才能成为合格的“成年人”或“成功者”。

This mode of thinking breeds a profound inner exhaustion. It is like a ceaseless internal debate, leaving us hesitant at every crossroads, questioning the path not taken after every choice, and ultimately feeling that whichever side we choose, we betray another part of our potential. 这种思维方式带来一种深刻的精神内耗。它像一场无休止的内部辩论，让我们在每一个十字路口犹豫不决，在每一次选择后质疑未走的路，最终感到自己无论选择哪一方，都像是背叛了自身的另一部分可能。

What if another possibility exists? What if, instead of being forced to choose between two points, one could contain the tension between them and use that very tension as a pivot to generate new stability and freedom?

如果，存在另一种可能呢？如果不是在两点之间被迫选择其一，而是能够容纳两者的张力，并以此张力为支点，生发出新的稳定与自由？

### Section 1 | “The Center” : A Misunderstood Pivot

#### 第一节 | “中”：一个被误读的轴心

In Eastern wisdom, “the center” is a core concept. It is often superficially understood as “compromise,” “taking the average,” or “a vague middle ground.” Yet, in an ancient somatic practice, “the center” manifests as a wholly different, dynamic quality — “standing centered, upright, relaxed, and comfortable.”

在东方智慧里，“中”是一个核心概念。它常被肤浅地理解为“折中”、“取平均数”或“含糊其辞的中间派”。然而，在一种古老的身体实践中，“中”呈现为一种全然不同的、充满活力的品质——“立身中正安舒”。

Observe a practitioner versed in this way: in slow, cloud-like movements, their center of gravity is not static in the middle of their feet, but flows like liquid mercury, moving seamlessly and continuously between them. Their spine is straight, but never rigid; their posture is stable, yet full of a readiness to turn in any direction at any moment. This “center” is not a fixed point on a map; it is the axis of perception and the fulcrum of action. It is the system of dynamic balance itself.

观察一位深谙此道的习练者：在缓慢的、如云般流动的动作中，他的重心并非静止于双脚中间，而是如液态的水银，在两脚之间流畅、不间断地移动。他的脊柱是直的，但绝非僵硬；他的姿态是稳定的，却充满随时可以转向任何方向的灵动预备。这个“中”，不是地图上一个固定的点，而是感知的轴心与行动的支点。它是一个动态平衡的系统本身。

## Section 2 | From Bodily Homeostasis to Mental Space

### 第二节 | 从身体稳态到心智空间

This physical training in “centering” subtly reshapes our mental patterns. It cultivates an ability to maintain a clear frame of reference amidst dynamics.

这种身体上的“执中”训练，潜移默化地重塑着我们的心智模式。它培养的，是一种在动态中保持清醒参照系的能力。

In perception, “centering” means not fixating on a single source of information. Just as in a sensitive two-person interaction practice, attention cannot be solely on the partner’s pushing hand; one must simultaneously perceive one’s own foundation, the partner’s overall structure, and the field of energy flow between them. In life, this translates into a panoramic awareness: when faced with a heated debate, one can simultaneously hear the other’s viewpoint, notice one’s own emotional reactions, and sense the energy flow of the entire conversation, rather than being immediately “pulled” or “pinned” by one side’s argument. **This awareness is not arrived at through thinking; it emerges naturally from the stability of one’s breath and the felt sense of the feet on the ground.**

在感知上，“执中”意味着不偏执于单一信息源。就像在一种敏感的双人互动练习中，注意力不能只放在对方推来的手上，而必须同时感知自身的根基、对方的整体结构、以及两人之间能量流动的场。在生活中，这转化为一种全景式觉察：在面对激烈争论时，能同时听到对方的观点、觉察自己升起的情绪反应、并感知整个对话的能量流动，而非立刻被某一方的论点“拉跑”或“钉住”。**这种觉察并非通过思考获得，而是从呼吸的稳定和脚底的抓地感中自然涌现。**

In judgment, “centering” rejects black-and-white simplification. It acknowledges that contradictory truths often coexist in complex situations. The “center” in this philosophy is not a midpoint that can be arithmetically calculated, but a “sweet spot” requiring continuous fine-tuning. This asks us to relinquish the attachment to an “absolutely correct” answer and instead seek the “most appropriate” response in the given context — one that respects all facets of the situation to the greatest extent, maintains systemic integrity, and points toward a creative next step.

在判断上，“执中”拒绝非黑即白的简化。它承认复杂情境中往往并存着相互矛盾的真理。这种哲学中的“中”不是一个可以算术计算的中点，而是一个需要持续微调的“甜蜜点”。这要求我们放弃对“绝对正确”答案的执着，转而寻求在当下情境中“最适宜”的响应——一个能最大程度尊重各方事实、保持系统完整、并指向创造性下一步的响应。

## Section 3 | Dynamic Balance: The Creative Tension of Opposites

### 第三节 | 动态平衡：对立面的创造性张力

Therefore, the ultimate aim of “centering” is not to eliminate contradictions or reach a once-and-for-all static point of balance. On the contrary, it aims to sustain a creative tension. 因此，“执中”的终极目标并非消除矛盾或抵达一个一劳永逸的静止平衡点。恰恰相反，它旨在维系一种富有创造性的张力。

In a perfect physical expression of this philosophy, forces of upward and downward, forward and backward, expansion and contraction coexist and support each other, forming a full, poised inner buoyancy. This state is not a dead compromise; it is the pinnacle of vitality.

在一个完美的、体现此哲学的身体表达中，向上与向下、向前与向后、展开与合拢的力量同时存在，相互支撑，形成一种饱满的、蓄势待发的内在支撑力。这种状态不是僵死的妥协，而是活力的顶峰。

Mapping this onto our mental world: We need not choose between “ambition” and “contentment.” We can simultaneously hold a grand vision (the tension of ambition) while maintaining peace and focus on each present step (the foundation of calm). We need not be divided between “emotional empathy” and “rational analysis.” We can allow emotion to provide rich material and connective warmth, and reason to provide clear frameworks and cautious boundaries, both serving a more complete understanding and decision-making.

将此映射到我们的精神世界：我们不必在“进取心”与“平常心”之间二选一。可以同时怀抱远大的愿景（进取的张力），又对当下的每一步保持安然与专注（平静的根基）。我们不必在“感性共情”与“理性分析”之间分裂。可以让感性提供丰富的素材与连接的温度，让理性提供清晰的框架与审慎的边界，两者共同服务于更完整的理解与决策。

This state of dynamic balance is “centering.” It gives you a clear inner reference point in the storm, preventing you from being easily blown over by any gust; simultaneously, it allows you to move with the wind, act according to the situation, and incorporate the storm’s energy into the melody of your own movement.

这种动态平衡的状态，就是“执中”。它让你在风暴中有一个清晰的内在参照点，不被任何一阵风轻易吹倒；同时，它又允许你随风而动，顺势而为，将风暴的能量也纳入自己运动的旋律。

## Section 4 | Conclusion: Becoming Your Own Axis

### 第四节 | 结语：成为自己的轴心

The art of centering, in the final analysis, is the art of reclaiming inner sovereignty. It frees us from passive reactions to external standards, binary options, and others' judgments, allowing us to make autonomous calibrations based on clear awareness and systemic integrity.

执中的艺术，归根结底，是重获内在主权的艺术。它使我们从对外部标准、二元选项和他人评价的被动反应中解脱出来，转而基于清醒的觉察与系统的完整，做出自主的校准。

It does not provide simple answers, but offers a steady-state process that generates answers. When you begin to practice constantly finding that dynamic, inclusive, vital “center” amidst inner turmoil and external change, you cease to be an object chosen by life and gradually become the subject creating the rhythm of your own life.

它不提供简单的答案，而是提供一种生成答案的稳态过程。当你开始练习在内心的纷扰与外界的变迁中，不断寻找那个动态的、包容的、充满生机的“中”，你便不再是被生活选择的客体，而逐渐成为创造自己生活韵律的主体。

This practice of continuous fine-tuning, grounded in the present, naturally leads to another understanding of the nature of time—not as linear consumption, but as cycles and sedimentation, like breath, seasons, or the practice itself. And this will be the starting point for our next conversation.

这种持续微调的、扎根于当下的平衡实践，自然而然地引向对时间本质的另一种体认——不是直线般的消耗，而是如呼吸、如季节、如练习本身般的循环与沉淀。而这，将是下一次对话的起点。

*(This essay explores the wisdom of maintaining core stability amidst change. The following reflection will flow from this, asking where this stable state comes from and how it is sustained—hinting that perhaps true strength and growth are precisely within those seemingly repetitive, slow, endless ‘processes’ themselves.)*

(本篇所探讨的，是在变动中保持核心稳定的智慧。接下来的思考将顺流而下，追问这种稳定的状态从何而来，又如何维系——它提示我们，或许真正的力量与成长，恰恰蕴藏于那些看似重复、缓慢、无终点的「过程」本身。)

This work is archived at Zenodo.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1864012>