

Bonsai Tai Chi

The Blog



December Have your say: email theblog@bonsaitaichi.eu

I was at Master Ding's self-defence seminar at the Limehouse centre. We practised different responses to punches. Ways to overcome and disable an attacker.

I have to ask: "What is the real lesson here?"

Tai chi is about softness. The *Tao de Ching* says that the soft defeats the hard. It also requires sensitivity. You have to become sensitive to other people's energy. The object is to be able to 'read' your attacker, to know what he is going to do – almost before he does.

We spend hours training to get the form right. Our weighting, learning to sink, to respond softly to a push and everything else - the core principles of tai chi chuan.

When it comes to self defence we practice using the positions of the form to deal with a punch. But tai chi is not rigid, it is adaptive. Sure, the form teaches us how to stand and move but if you get into a situation you have to react to it as it happens, not work out whether you need to use ward-off or hold-the-ball to deal with it.

So in reality is the training designed to get us to react softly. To be counterintuitive and move towards an attack instead of ducking or backing off? Tai chi always goes forward, even when it is retreating, your action is dictated by the attack not by the requirement to use the form.

If you are attacked you don't engage in a fight. As master Ding says - "You just finish it". ☯