

Bonsai Tai Chi

Tai Chi in Principle



Have your say: email theblog@bonsaitaichi.eu

Uploaded 20th May 2013

Tai chi chuan – the great ultimate – is part of the Chinese science of chi-gung. This comprises: meditation, breathing and exercise. I often describe it as Chinese yoga. Its aim is to improve and maintain health and it is also concerned to improve longevity – an obsession of the Taoists. It is a great stress-buster and it is known to improve confidence and balance.

Tai chi is a 'martial art' though this does not mean that practitioners fight or even that we 'spar'. It is entirely soft and based on weight shifting and turning. With practice it is an effective self-defence system. Many people use tai chi simply as a form of exercise.

Chi gung standing meditation

This meditation starts the class and is intended to relax and settle the student. Correct breathing – into the lower abdomen rather than the chest – sinks the 'chi' (energy) into the Tan-tien (lower chakra) and strengthens it. Over time this meditation will build up your stored energy which we use when practising the form.

It is a meditation which is intended to place you in the here-and-now so is great for developing concentration.

Warm-up exercises

Also chi gung based, these movements help to teach some of the of tai chi movements such a weight shifting, turning and working everything from your centre. They also help to develop balance and, of course stretch and loosen you ready for the form.

The form

This is the sequence of movements that everyone associates with tai chi. The form is the core of our practice. It moves the energy 'chi' through our body, it stretches and tones and strengthens our muscles and ligaments. It improves flexibility and balance.

We practise the Yang style of tai chi. This one of the oldest styles established by Yang Lu Chan around 200 years ago. He was shown the principles of tai chi by the Chen family who practised it as a martial art.

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Yang was the first person to teach tai chi to the public and this was continued by his sons and grandsons. The last Yang family member in our lineage, Yang Sau Chung, died in 1988. He was the fourth generation and the lineage passed to his first disciple Ip Tai Tak who in turn passed it on to his disciple (John) Ding Teah Chean now the 6th generation lineage holder.

Most of the other, more recent styles were developed from Yang style though there is no 'right' way to practise. All of the styles do the same job.

Further exercises

Sensing hands and dynamic push

Tai chi circles

Threading the nine-holed pearl

Reading

There are numerous books on the subject but as a beginner you cannot go wrong with *Tai Chi for Dummies* ☯