

TAI CHI: GODS DANCE

by Lamont Preston McPheron III

Tai Chi is renowned as a healing art, moving meditation, and as a means of self-defence. It is seen as a way to increase vitality and overcome illness and injury. This is all-true, yet one overlooked seminal property of Tai Chi is that from its roots to its symbol, it is a profound and powerful spiritual practice.

What is a spiritual practice?

A spiritual practice is a method of becoming closer to God. Tai Chi is based on the Tao Te Ching, a book written approximately twenty-five hundred years ago by Lao Tzu. This book gives valuable insight on how to be in harmony with the Tao (God). It does not attempt to describe the ineffable nature of God, but prescribes the way to synchronise ones self with the Tao. Tai Chi is based on these principals, therefore, to properly practice the art of Tai Chi is to practice the art of divine synchronicity. Ultimately, this synchronicity or harmony is manifest as vitality, health, and confidence.

The Yin/Yang symbol can also be viewed from a spiritual perspective. Yang represents the body, while Yin represents the soul. This symbol can therefore be seen as representative of a spiritually balanced individual. Physical, mental, and spiritual balance are all realities of the Tai Chi experience.

What is the soul?

The soul is the spirit inside of the body. The soul can be likened to a light on a dimmer switch. This light can vary from very dim to very bright. The calmer our

minds and the more fluid our movements, the brighter our souls become. This light, the soul, is our direct connection with God. When our souls are bright a feeling of serene happiness naturally occurs.

When our connectedness with God is strong, a practitioner will also notice a dramatic increase in their Chi or vital energy. This will be felt as a soothing and healing warmth that originates in the Tan Tien (lower abdomen) and flows throughout the body. This warm energy heals aches and pains, and as it bathes the brain, it evokes a transcendent state of consciousness. This uplifted state of consciousness helps us to realise the subtleties of spiritual understanding.

It is also of interest to note how the circular and flowing movements of Tai Chi mimic nature and the cosmos (i.e. orbiting planets and atoms, the rotation of day flowing into night and night into day, the cycle of the seasons, the circular grace of animals movements, a leaf falling from a tree). Nature is a reflection of God. Tai Chi is a reflection of nature. Therefore, tai Chi is a reflection of God.

Tai Chi is one of many spiritual practices such as prayer, yoga, zazen, and chanting. What differentiates Tai Chi from these other practices is the component of continual, circular whole body movement. The nature of this movement is very specific, yet subtle and typically difficult to grasp. Mastery takes an average of twenty years of practice, but the rewards are great along this path. Truly, to make progress with



Tai Chi is to move closer to an essential understanding of the Tao (God). So practice diligently and enjoy the rewards of vitality, health, and well being as you become more and more proficient with Gods Dance.

About the author

Lamont McPheron III obtained his BA degree in psychology from UW Milwaukee and has been practising Tai Chi for 11 years. His teachers include George Xu and Susan Peters (student of grand-master Yin). Apart from Tai Chi, he is also a practitioner of yoga, zazen, chanting and prayer. The author is an accomplished musician and poet and can be heard at www.cdbaby.com group name (Liquid Mama and Co - founder of The Art Centre (intentional community)). For more information, please contact him by email : lamontmcpheeron@yahoo.com

