

european school of t'ai chi

NEWSLETTER JAN 2022

Tao Te Ching No 6

The Valley Spirit is deathless
It is called the Dark Mare.

The door of the Dark Mare
is called the root of heaven
and earth.

Continuous, it seems to exist
yet in use it is inexhaustible.

E M Chen



The Tao is called the Great
Mother:
empty yet inexhaustible,
it gives birth to infinite words.

It is always present within you
You can use it any way you
want.

Stephen Mitchell



Welcome

We start another new year with huge appreciation of our t'ai chi family and the support it keeps offering. The Zoom 'dojo' continues on Wednesday evenings and gives us a wonderful range of personal insights into the warrior path. The new year online meditation with Tew, Sue and Rodney was even oversubscribed - a testament to the value we all place in this now familiar, and valued, connection. When we chant we send out energetic vibrations beyond our smaller spaces to the greater universe - we can feel connected wherever we are.

The committee continues to work hard in finding ways to facilitate our group practice. Plans are in place for Tew to come and teach at Springhead over the third weekend in May - fingers crossed!

Meanwhile Sue Webber is teaching on 19th Feb at Egham, Surrey when we will have the AGM and, all being well, a group meal. There are spaces arising on the committee this year - perhaps you would like to join? Do get in touch if you think you might wish to help our family in this way. Be well,

Jos Hadfield

Embrace Tai Chi and Return to Springhead October 2021

And we did!

Led by Jos Hadfield's skilful teaching in the sensuous surroundings of our Dorset retreat.

There had been uncertainties along the way; was this the right time, would people feel safe, would it rain? The week before, only 5 people had officially signed up, the roof of the main building at Springhead was leaking and we had no caterer.

The committee worked hard to devise ways to ensure that people with a broad range of views would feel able to attend, the roof was mended; numbers grew, the weather looked up and we found a caterer.

There was an air of nervous excitement as people arrived and assembled for the first time in 2 years.

We practised by the lake whose reflections cleared and deepened as the sun rose on Saturday morning. We revised both short and long forms of tai chi, paying attention to some key details; foot placement in the Still the Monkey section and considered some of the differences between the forms. We then enjoyed the flow of the forms in the elements of wood, water and energetic fire.

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Jos was most imaginative in her use of the grounds of Springhead: we were invited to step the tai chi walk around the lake and back to the house. At dusk, we also chanted the Metta, spaced along the lake side. Our individual sounds merged and sounded across the water and beyond to the darkening garden and up the hillside, as if honouring the sacred space. The tangible connecting with the intangible, from the yu to the wu and back again.

There was great camaraderie and relief as we came together after the dark time of separation. Our daily reflections and meditation provided a precious time to talk, listen and commune with each other. We named those who had asked during this time in order to connect across distance. Thank you to Jos for her skilful and imaginative teaching, to all who attended and Springhead for hosting us. Already looking forward to our return next May.

Sue Beecraft Dec 21



A lovely experience - especially following the long lonely months of covid restrictions: I really welcomed this opportunity to reconnect with tai chi and our tai chi family. It was so good to meet up and catch up with people I deeply respect and to encounter people new to our retreats.

I really appreciated the focus given to the Forms - especially the Long Form which, for me, seems to provide a much more profound means of engaging with Tai Chi and the Dao, than does the Short Form. As always, I felt really at home with Jos' style of teaching - the depth of her connection with the work, her sensitivity to the group and her lightness of touch. And the setting was stunning - my first experience of Springhead in the sun! Very pleased to have my own room and very happy with the catering arrangements. Nothing comes to mind about what could have been different / better on this retreat Many thanks to all involved. John

T'ai Chi'ing in real alive space and time surrounded by elemental beauty. Lu

This was my first time in any sort of group since early 2020 and I was finding the concept unsettling. But I decided to give it a try! To be with friends and like-minded people (just being with people) and see what happened.

And what happened was :

I had lovely hugs

It was lovely and sunny

I could still more or less remember the short and long forms

We had talkative ducks for company

I was more or less old-style normal for a couple of days

It gave me some time and space away

I chatted to people about big and small topics Alan

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SO lovely to be with my T'ai Chi family in person again, after such a long time – a healing experience. Rich teaching from Jos – I take away a new approach to Calming the Monkey. Yielding more, yet with greater stability. My students love the grace of it. Anne

A thought that stayed with me from the retreat was the friendship and warmth of the meditation room that was special, peaceful and a pause. Ian

This was my first time at Springhead and my second venture into a weekend of Tai Chi. The long form was something completely new and if I thought about it too much then it was too daunting to commit to a weekend of form. However it was great and I was amazed how the practice works at different levels. I was supported and held throughout, included and valued and at the same time I could see and feel that those who had been practising for 20 odd years also were enriched. The walks round the lake were part of my settling back into myself and at the same time connecting to space and the elements. Healing sounds outside, in a place of beauty is magical. It was a challenge to be part of a group after the past 18 months but also felt special and a privilege . Kathy



THE TEN PARAMIS

The Pali word Parami means 'excellent' and refers to the ten excellent qualities of the heart that grow out of Loving Kindness.

*Dana Parami Sampanno

Dana Upa Parami Sampanno

Dana Paramatta Parami Sampanno

Metta Karuna Mudita Ubbekha Parami Sampanno

Itipiso Bhagava

*His/her Parami of * (dana/generosity) is impeccable*

His/her higher generosity is impeccable

His/her highest generosity is impeccable

His/her loving compassion, forgiveness, sympathetic joy, openness are impeccable

Such is a Holy One

** replacing Dana with the following Paramis through the chant*

Dana (generosity)

Sila (morality)

Nekkhama (sacrifice)

Pañña (wisdom)

Viriya (energy)

Khanti (patience)

Sajja (honesty)

Addhitana (commitment)

Metta (loving kindness)

Ubekha (openness/courage)

Buddham Saranam Gacchami Nahamiham

I go in homage to the Buddhanature that is within us

These Paramis are the marks of a Bodhisattva, a spiritual being, a person whose life is rooted in a commitment to the well being and liberation from suffering of others. This practice is a form of contemplation on the qualities of a Bodhisattva, the Buddhist archetype of a spiritual warrior, a being whose total commitment is the wellbeing of others. As we chant the Paramis our intention is to awaken each quality in our hearts and to consider their different levels.

