



# Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism

*Cultivating Balance*



## Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism

### ***Taoist Tai Chi®* Arts Are Religious Activities**

We aim to demonstrate how the *Taoist Tai Chi®* arts are religious activities. All of the arts we teach, including chanting, rituals and ceremonies, meditation, and the 108 moves, provide a path for transformation by reconnecting each person to the Tao. This document is divided into the following four sections to support this goal:

- I. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism (FLKIT) is a charitable religious organisation; its purposes are to promote the teachings of the Taoist religion and the Taoist arts passed on by our founder, Taoist monk Master Moy Lin Shin.
- II. As a religion, Taoists worship the Tao, the underlying unifying principle of all things, and revere Taoist deities.
- III. Taoist principles describe the fundamental nature of the Universe, including its creation, as a manifestation of the Tao discoverable by all people through religious training that includes physical movements.
- IV. Taoism is a long-established, respected worldwide religion that encompasses training of the body, mind and spirit—the whole person. Taoist rituals and ceremonies include physical movements, and the religious symbolism in the rituals and ceremonies represent aspects of the body and are found in activities that train the body. Taoist principles are the foundation of the *Taoist Tai Chi®* arts, including the 108 moves. These principles are expressed in the arts themselves as well as in the ways the arts are shared with others. Each of these sections are expanded in detail below.

Registered Charity #11893 4371 RR0001

Head Office, 134 D'Arcy Street, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5T 1K3

Tel: (416) 656 2110 Email: [headoffice@taoist.org](mailto:headoffice@taoist.org)

[www.taoist.org](http://www.taoist.org)

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## I. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism (FLKIT)

1. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism is a recognised religious organisation, a Taoist organisation, and Taoism is recognised as an ancient and worldwide religion. These facts are readily accepted as they are self-evident.
2. As a religious organisation, Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism is charged with specific purposes:
  - (a) To establish, maintain and conduct Taoist temples and shrines following the teachings of the Taoist religion and to carry on the teachings and practice of Taoist religion;
  - (b) To conduct public and private meetings of a religious nature such as religious services;
  - (c) To establish, maintain and conduct classes on Taoist philosophy and religion, and related subjects, for the education of the general public; and
  - (d) To promote awareness and understanding of the Taoist philosophy and Chinese culture.

Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism takes these purposes seriously and works diligently to uphold and make them available for generations to come. All activities conducted by FLKIT fall within these stated religious purposes, and thus all activities conducted by FLKIT in its various buildings are considered religious.

3. Buildings owned by Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism are sacred places of worship.<sup>1</sup> The buildings are consecrated in Taoist ceremonies. The buildings have shrines dedicated to Taoist deities. The shrines are opened and closed daily following Taoist rituals; they are also the focal point of a variety of rituals and ceremonies that take place in accordance with the Taoist calendar of religious festivals.

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<sup>1</sup> The description of religious shrines and iconography in buildings owned by Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism is provided in "Expert Testimony of James Miller", July 2016, pp. 10, 14, and 18-20.

4. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism (FLKIT), and the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts it promotes, including the 108 moves, was founded by Taoist monk Moy Linshin (1931-1998).<sup>2</sup> In 1949, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Master Moy moved to Hong Kong and studied Taoism at the Yuen Yuen Institute, a Taoist organization affiliated with the Longmen (Dragon Gate) branch of Taoism. Master Moy studied under three teachers, integrating Taoist temple traditions, rituals and ceremonies with Taoist methods of training of the body as a religious practice for transformation. In 1968, Master Moy founded Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism in Hong Kong. In 1970, he emigrated from Hong Kong to Toronto, bringing Taoist teachings with him. FLKIT continues to promote the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts that Master Moy developed.
5. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism provides “a community that aims to remain faithful to its founder’s vision of promulgating Taoism beyond China.”<sup>3</sup> This shared religious community is open to anyone interested in practicing the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts. In keeping with the tradition of Taoist temples, all are welcome to come, and no one will be stopped if they choose to leave. FLKIT provides access to a path of religious transformation in keeping with the Taoist tradition and based on the teachings of its founder, Master Moy Lin Shin.
6. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism is unquestionably a religious organisation as demonstrated by the points above: it was founded by a Taoist monk, its activities take place in sacred spaces that function as places of worship, and all of its activities—including the 108 moves—are expressions of a rich religious tradition. This latter point is developed in detail in subsequent sections of this document.

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<sup>2</sup> See “Expert Testimony of James Miller”, July 2016, p. 8, for additional details on the history of Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism.

<sup>3</sup> “Expert Testimony of James Miller”, July 2016, p. 8.

## II. Taoist Worship

1. Taoism is one of the world's oldest and greatest religions. The *Daode Jing* is the second most translated religious text after the Christian Bible.
2. Worship is an act of religious devotion and dedication to, reverence for, a power greater than self. Taoism is about one's relationship to the Tao, and worship occurs with others in public gathering places. Because Taoism emphasizes returning to our Original Nature, to the Tao, it is a natural way of being in the world. Taoists work to see past the illusions presented to our senses and thus emphasize actions over form and people working together over the form of the gathering or type of gathering place.

Everyone comes to the teachings "as a child". We learn and teach by doing. The physical movements are the means of opening the body and mind and of gaining understanding. As a person grows in understanding through the movements, they are better able to grasp the meaning of the teachings. In the Taoist tradition, practice comes first and understanding emerges.

3. Taoist worship takes many forms as outlined in the liturgical practices described in the Taoist canon. These forms of worship include chanting, rituals and ceremonies, meditation, and internal arts (including Tai Chi, Hsing-i, Lok Hup Ba Fa).
4. Devotion in Taoism is to the Tao. Taoists dedicate themselves to the path of attaining the Tao. Tao (道) means 'way'.

The Tao is the underlying way or process of all things, the natural cycle of the Universe and all within it. Following this 'way', or attaining the Tao, means seeing the reality of the underlying nature of the Universe—its constant state of change and transformation.

5. There is no central authority that governs Taoism. Each school or temple tradition determines its methods of teaching and practice. Consequently, there can be a lot of variety and difference in focus from school to school.

However, the basic orientation among Taoist teachings is to return to harmony with the Tao.

Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism practises Taoism in accordance with the teachings of Master Moy Lin Shin and has a well-established history and tradition. Master Moy devoted his life to learning and practising Taoism and the Taoist arts. As a youth he suffered from serious health problems, perhaps partly due to the turbulent living conditions of China during the Second World War. Through the Taoist arts he was able to fully recover his health. Inspired by this, he spent his life helping others.

After the war, Master Moy was initiated into a Taoist temple and received training in meditation, rituals and ceremonies. His family moved from Guangdong province to Hong Kong after the Communist revolution in 1949. There he continued his temple training and also began learning from several teachers of the internal styles of martial arts.

Master Moy became a student of Master Liang Zipeng, or Leung Ji Pang in Cantonese (1900-1974), a prominent instructor in Lok Hup Ba Fa (Liuhe Bafa), Tai Chi and other arts. Master Liang had come to Hong Kong from the Jingwu Martial Arts Academy in Shanghai, where he was a respected practitioner of the Eagle Claw style of Wushu. In his later life Master Liang devoted his energies to internal styles such as Lok Hup. The visually elegant and internally powerful Lok Hup form played a special part in Master Moy's synthesis of *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts.

Master Moy trained for many years with Master Sun Dit, a fellow student of Master Liang, known in particular for his skills in Hsing-I (Xingyi) and push hands. During this time Master Moy also met a Qigong master who was a recluse and did not normally accept students. However the hermit master had compassion for Master Moy and began to teach him. Over the years, Master Moy's health continued to improve.

It was during this period of working daily for his health that Master Moy petitioned Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, for help, and vowed to

spend his life helping others. Master Moy worked hard to comprehend the health-improving essence of the internal arts he had been studying. He then incorporated these principles into the form of Tai Chi now taught by Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism.

Before Master Moy immigrated to Canada in 1970 he was involved in the activities of the Yuen Yuen Institute, a traditional three religions temple in Hong Kong. In 1968, he co-founded (with Taoist Masters Mui Ming-to and Mrs. Tang Yuen Mei) the Fung Loy Kok Taoist Temple in the New Territories in Hong Kong. After he arrived in Canada he founded the Toronto Tai Chi Association, the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Canada, the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism (with Master Mui Ming-to), the Gei Pang Lok Hup Academy, which is dedicated to the memory of his teacher, Master Liang, and the International Taoist Tai Chi Society. This was all done in order to introduce the benefits of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts to the public. The organisations that Master Moy founded in Canada are now under the umbrella of Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism.

6. As Taoist teachings expanded beyond China and into Western countries, they became muddled because the Taoist view of the world is quite different than most Western views. Taoist activities that are quite common in Chinese temples, such as various forms of physical training including Tai Chi, are not usually seen as religious activities because they have no counterpart in Western religions.<sup>4</sup>
7. Further, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China (1949) came the ideological orientation that religion should not have a large role in modern life. Taoists (as well as other religions in China) adapted to the times<sup>5</sup> and de-emphasized the religious nature of their practices in order to

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<sup>4</sup> "Expert Testimony of James Miller", July 2016, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> This is an example of the principle of *wuwei* described in the *Daode Jing*. In chapter 37, Lao-tzu wrote that the "Tao is nonactive, yet everything through it is done." In *Simple English Translation of Tao Teh Ching*, Fei Ngan Tung Buddhism and Taoism Society. Further, the nature of Taoism, as explained in section III of this document, illustrates that Taoism cannot be judged on outer appearance alone; the relationship between illusory appearance and reality is quite profound.

make the teachings more available to all.<sup>6</sup> These actions do not diminish the long, rich history of Taoist teachings as religious teachings that aim to help people transform, to return to their Original Nature and attain the Tao.

### III. Principles of Taoism

1. "Tao" means "way" or "path," and in the religious sense refers to the principle that governs all things, governing the Universe. Fundamentally the Tao is said to be indefinable and beyond description, although we are sometimes forced to talk about it, however inaccurately, in order to advance our training. Indeed, to emphasize this point, the first line of the *Daode Jing* says that "the Tao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Tao."
2. The Tao is the source of all things. In chapter 42 of Laozi's (Lao Tzu's) *Daode Jing*, the Tao

gave birth to the One;  
The One gave birth to the Two;  
The Two gave birth to the Three;  
And the Three gave birth to the ten thousand things.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See "Expert Testimony of James Miller", July 2016, p. 5, for a summation of why the religious significance of Taoist practices may not meet the expectations of a casual observer.

<sup>7</sup> Also, in chapter 25 of the *Daode Jing*, the Tao is described:

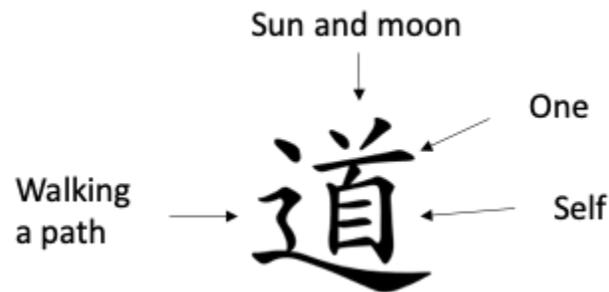
There was something undefined,  
Formless and inaudible,  
Coming into existence before Heaven and Earth.  
Silent and boundless,  
Standing also without change,  
While revolving ceaselessly.  
It is worthy to be the Mother of the World.  
I do not know its name;  
But I called it 'TAO'.

Making an effort further I gave it another name called 'The Great'."

Zhuangzi wrote: "The Way has its reality and its signs but is without action or form. You can hand it down but you cannot receive it; you can get it but you cannot see it. It is its own source, its own root. Before Heaven and earth existed it was there, from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth. It exists beyond the highest point, and yet you cannot call it lofty; it exists beneath the limit of the six directions, and yet you cannot call it deep. It was born before Heaven and earth, and yet you cannot say it has been there for long; it is earlier than earliest time and yet you cannot call it old. In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, p. 81.

The One in Taoism is Wuji, a unified force of creative potential. The One created the Two, Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang, two opposing forces, unified and became the third level of existence, giving rise to all things in the natural world.

The character for 'Tao' represents many layers of its meaning.



The two strokes at the top represent the sun and moon, which also represent Yin and Yang, heaven and earth. In the human body, they represent the two eyes, like the two candles on a Taoist shrine. The single horizontal stroke represents the One, oneness or wholeness, the Source. In human beings, it is the Original Nature.

The remaining strokes represent the self, the whole person, and the path to the Tao. Walking a path is a fundamental Taoist metaphor because it symbolizes the ongoing effort required to cultivate oneself. It denotes constant movement forward, toward a closer relationship with the Tao. Worshiping in Taoism is about movement and change in all aspects of life.

The Tao as described in chapter 1 of the *Daode Jing*<sup>8</sup> is nameless and formless and yet is present in all things:

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<sup>8</sup> Also, chapter 13 states:

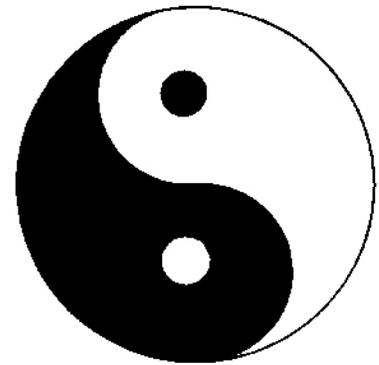
“Look at TAO (WAY) but you cannot see it,  
Its name is ‘without appearance,’  
Listen to it but you cannot hear it!  
Its name is Soundless.  
Grasp it but you cannot get it!  
Its name is Formless.”

As for the Way, the Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way;  
As for names, the name that can be named is not the constant way.

The Tao is always good. Bad times and bad things arise when people go against the natural flow of the Tao. Accessing the Tao is done through actions that are natural and in harmony with the natural rhythms of the Tao. Actions that impose one's will on the Tao or actions that attempt to control the Tao are not natural:

Act on things and you ruin them.  
Grasp for things and you will lose them.  
Therefore the sage acts with nonaction and has no ruin,  
Lets go of grasping and has no loss.<sup>9</sup>

3. Yin and Yang are the two balancing forces in the Universe. Yin and Yang cannot be solely understood as separate mutually opposing forces, and they cannot exist independently of one another.<sup>10</sup> Yin and Yang are not fixed and stagnant. They are in constant motion. Yin and Yang transform into one another in keeping with a continuous cycle. For example, day with the brightness and heat of the sun is Yang, while cool and dark evening is Yin. Day transforms into night, which transforms into day.



Their relationship is also one of unity for in Yin there is Yang and in Yang there is Yin. For example, day is Yang. Morning is Yang within Yang. Afternoon, however, as the sun descends, is Yang moving into Yin or Yin within Yang. Likewise, after midnight, the Yin night is transforming into Yang

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter 64, *Daode Jing*.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter 77 of the *Daode Jing* states:

"The TAO (way) of Heaven may be likened to the bending of a bow.

The upper part comes down while the lower part goes up.

If the bow-strong is too long, it is cut short.

If too short, it is added to.

It is the way of Heaven to diminish where there is great abundance and to supplement where there is deficiency."

day so there is Yang within Yin. The mutual and continuous wax and wane of Yin and Yang—the process of constant change and transformation—creates unity (dynamic equilibrium).

4. The Tao is in each person. This process of cosmic creation is mirrored in each human being.<sup>11</sup> The One, primordial creation, is the Original Nature all living beings receive from the Tao. This state of unity, of wholeness, is in each person during the embryo and infant stages of life. As people grow up, the oneness is lost, and the body declines.<sup>12</sup>

Blockages in the body arise due to age, the stresses of daily life, not taking care of the body, and a heart (mind) attached to cravings and desires.<sup>13</sup> These blockages prevent the internal alchemical transformation of the Three Treasures (the jing, qi, and shen) from taking place. The gathering and

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<sup>11</sup> Liezi wrote: "Your body is the shape lent to you by heaven and earth. Your life is not your possession; it is harmony between your forces, granted for a time by heaven and earth. Your nature and destiny are not your possessions; they are the course laid down for you by heaven and earth." *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Immortal Lü Dongbin, one of the Eight Taoist immortals and patron of Taoist internal alchemy, wrote that the six senses are also known as the six robbers because they hide our primordial or Original Nature from us: "What are the six organs? One is the eye; this eye organ looks at color and form and produces various states of mind that obscure the primordial. Another is the ear; this organ listens to sound and produces various states of mind that obscure the primordial. Another is the mouth, which utters judgments that produce various states of mind that obscure the primordial. Another is the nose; this organ smells odors and produces various states of mind that obscure the primordial. Another is the tongue; this organ tastes flavors and produces various states of mind that obscure the primordial. Another is the body; this experiences situations and produces various states of mind that obscure the primordial." In *The Taoist Classics* (vol. 3), "Vitality, Energy and Spirit," translated by Thomas Cleary, p. 92.

In chapter 12 of the *Daode Jing*, Laozi similarly mentions the six robbers:

Colours can blind our eyes,  
Sounds can deafen our ears,  
Flavours can dull our tastes.  
Racing and hunting can madden our mind,  
Lust for rare and valuable goods tempts persons to do wrong.

Therefore, the Sage cares for the inner true self and not for the outer look of appearances."

Also in chapter 52: "To maintain vitality, energy and spirit one who cultivates TAO must keep closed the six doors of sensation."

Zhuangzi wrote: "Hold on to all that you have received from Heaven but do not think that you have gotten anything. Be empty, that is all. The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing." In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, Burton Watson, trans., Columbia University Press, 1968, p. 97.

<sup>13</sup> In chapter 55 of the *Daode Jing*: "One who has the highest virtue is like a child...His bones are soft, his tendons being tender but his grip of the fist is tight and strong." Similarly, in chapter 70 Lao Tzu states: "When man is born, he is supple and soft. At death he is firm and stiff...one who keeps hard and strong forever is on the way to death. On the contrary one who keeps soft and supple is on the way to everlasting life."

purification of the Three Treasures is essential to the return to our Original Nature, our original health, and our return to the Tao. Taoists seek to regain that oneness by training their bodies and their minds. One who reaches this stage of cultivation is called a sage.

The Tao inside of each person is the energy that keeps us alive, the sacred fetus of immortality, the source to which a person can return and achieve immortality. This Tao in each person is honoured and cared for in Taoist practices.

5. The Tao is also found in our social interactions. The harmony that is cultivated within oneself flows outward in interactions with others. Self-cultivation makes one a better person, more tolerant and open and able to get along with others. A person on a path of seeking harmony with the Tao will seek harmony with others and work to create harmony in their household, community, and the world at large.
6. The teachings of Taoism are complementary to those of Buddhism and Confucianism. Together, these are considered to be the “Three Religions” of China. There is a long tradition within Taoism of viewing the three religions as complementary paths to the same end, and Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism observes teachings from all three traditions. Taoists have historically been willing to learn from and embrace wisdom and even individual models from other religious traditions.

What we believe or where we come from is not important. Rather, what we do and who we are is the focus of Taoism. For this reason, although Taoism is one of the oldest religions of the world, people from any religious tradition or those without religious belief are welcome and can fully participate in a community of Taoist cultivation.

7. The Taoist principles of the underlying Tao in all things and of the mutual interdependence of Yin and Yang forces are manifested in all Taoist activities. Thus all Taoist activities are expressions of deep religious teachings. They are the way that the body is renewed and heart (mind) is freed from

attachments; the whole person, body and mind, is united and returns to the Source. The Tao cannot be attained without training the body.

#### **IV. *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> Arts as Taoist Worship**

1. Training the body is an integral part of Taoism; it features prominently in the Taoist canon. Opening the body is necessary to allow the internal circulation to flow as it should, to return to our Original Nature, our original health, and return to the Tao.

All of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts train the whole person, body and mind. There is no separation. Our rituals and ceremonies are not only forms of devotion, but also arts of cultivation and transformation of the entire person, including the body. This means that the principles of circulation, interaction and purification of these energies that we see in the practice of arts of movement such as the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice are also a central focus of ritual.

Chanting and ceremonies are often done in a kneeling position, where the participant remains on his or her knees for part or all of the ceremony. This position strengthens the muscles, tendons and bones and provides the proper alignment of the body for internal energy to circulate in the process of alchemical transformation. In much the same way the 108 moves strengthen the body to promote this circulation of internal energy.

2. Tai Chi is closely associated with the Wudang Mountain Monastery in China.<sup>14</sup> Later, lay forms also developed. However, even lay schools generally acknowledge the Taoist sage and hermit Zhang Sanfeng as legendary founder. Zhang is said to have developed Tai Chi as an art of cultivation for his students.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Even today, Taoist temples still exist on Wudang Mountain, and individuals in residence practice tai chi and other physical movements as part of their spiritual cultivation.

<sup>15</sup> See "Expert Testimony of James Miller" July 2016, p. 7.

3. In all training, monks were expected to go through a series of steps in their training, each serving as the foundation for the next. The beginning steps often included physical work intended to create discipline and develop good habits of behaviour, as well as physical training.

This approach to accessing the Tao through the training of the body has a long history in Taoism, and is often associated with the Northern School of Complete Reality Taoism, whose founding figure, Wang Chongyang, was active in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century CE. This is the root of all of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts, including the 108 moves.

4. Taoism has a wide range of teachings related to the body rooted in the origins of Chinese medicine as written by the Yellow Emperor, Huangdi, in the *Huangdi Neijing* (Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine). The Yellow Emperor is a famous ruler honoured by Taoists for his attainment of the Tao.
5. Taoists believe the human body is a universe, a microcosm of the external Universe.
  - a. The sun, moon and stars contain the primordial vapor or essence of the Tao, which is carried in their light. The sun holds Yang energy and the moon Yin energy. These energies help nurture the fetus of immortality and strengthen the guardians of the body. The North Star and Big Dipper are home to the deities who control longevity.<sup>16</sup> These deities, and others, are honoured in Taoist rituals and ceremonies because they aid Taoist practitioners in attaining the Tao.

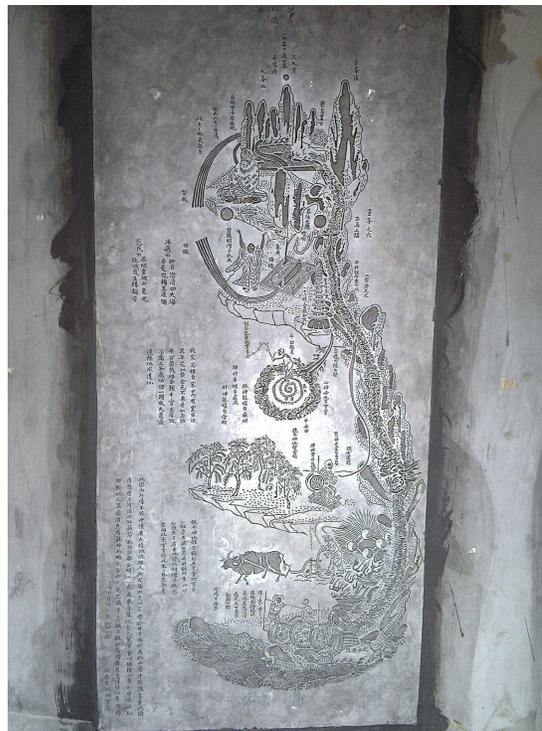
Nurturing in the body these energies found in the Universe unites the microcosm of the body with the macrocosm of the Universe. The division between the body and Universe, the Tao inside the body and the Tao

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<sup>16</sup> As described in *Lao Tzu's Sutra of Inspiration*: "There are the Gods of the Three Altars of the North Star who watch over our heads and record our evil deeds. They have the power to take away years of our lives according to the seriousness of our deeds. There are also three (evil) Guards residing in our bodies. During the times of Keng and Shen they ascended to heaven to report our evil deeds."

external to the body, is erased; the Tao inside and outside unite. The practitioner gains immortality.

- b. Hanging in the White Cloud Monastery<sup>17</sup> in Beijing, China, is the famous Neijing Tu (內經圖), a stone carving depicting the Taoist map of the internal body. This carving reflects the body as a microcosm of the Taoist Universe and shows the essential connection between spiritual transformation and physical transformation.



When viewed as whole, the map resembles a landscape, complete with mountains, a river, fields and trees. Representing the body as part of the natural environment is in keeping with Taoist teachings. The outer world and the inner world are the same.

The map also resembles a fetus in the womb. This representation is purposeful; Taoist literature describes internal alchemy as the process that nurtures the immortal fetus. The process of Taoist immortality is returning the body to its Original Nature, the state of a fetus, which is the pure potentiality or the pure energy of a fetus at conception.

Taoists believe that there are three energies residing in reservoirs called dantians (or energy or elixir fields) in the body.<sup>18</sup> Jing or generative energy

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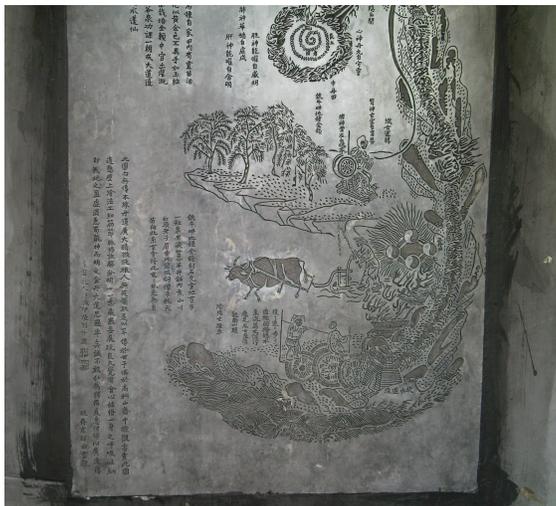
<sup>17</sup> The White Cloud Monastery is a famous Taoist monastery, home to the Complete Reality (or Complete Perfection) School of Taoism that is in the lineage of Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism and the *Taoist Tai Chi*® arts.

<sup>18</sup> These energies are also referenced in texts of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* (Huangdi Neijing) is a main text in Chinese medicine, and the Yellow Emperor is revered by

resides in the lower dantian, just below the navel. The qi or vital energy resides with its guardian in the middle dantian near the heart. The shen or spirit energy resides with its guardian in the upper dantian located on the lower forehead between the eyes. These energies are circulated through the various meridians, or energy pathways, in the body.

In particular, the map of internals shows the circulation along the Du and Ren meridians<sup>19</sup> that run up the spine and down the front of the body, making a circuit the length of the torso. This circuit is known as the “microcosmic orbit”.

Energy flows from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Looking more closely at the bottom of the image, the lower cinnabar field, there is a water wheel depicting the circulation of jing energy in the lower dantian. The image of the bull plowing represents the planting of the golden seed that will grow into the immortal fetus.



This energy flows up the spine, is refined in the triple burner, and is woven into the chi energy cultivated by the maiden weaving.<sup>20</sup>

The energy continues to flow up to the middle dantian in the heart area. In this area is a spiral; in the spiral is a young boy and the Northern Dipper stars. The reference to the Northern Dipper is

part of Taoist tradition; there are specific sutras honoring the dipper constellations. The North Star is the fixed star around which everything else

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Taoists for attaining the Tao. Also, with the Taoist emphasis on becoming immortal through training the physical body, Taoist texts have been integrated into the body of literature of Chinese medicine.

<sup>19</sup> The Du and Ren meridians are two of the eight extraordinary meridians. The extraordinary meridians are responsible for circulating and balancing Yang and Yin energies in the body.

<sup>20</sup> This image of the maiden alludes to the move “Fair Lady Works at Shuttles” in the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*® practice. The weaving maiden is the daughter of the Jade Emperor and the Celestial Queen Mother.

revolves, symbolizing the nature of the Tao, which is both fixed and ever changing. The North Star, too, represents a guide for Taoist training, the sign of the true direction a person should follow to attain the Tao.<sup>21</sup> The North Star is also home to the palace of the Jade Emperor, honoured in many Taoist ceremonies.

Qi is cultivated in the middle dantian, mixing with the jing energy, and moves up the spine to the upper dantian. The mountains on the top of the head represent Mount Kun lun, a sacred mountain in the Taoist tradition. Seated near the mountains is Laozi, who authored the famous Taoist text, the *Daode Jing*.



From the top of the head, the energy travels down the front of the body through the Ren meridian. The two dots represent the eyes—sun and moon, Yang and Yin in the body. Taoists believe that the shen energy in the body shines out through the eyes and that energy from outside the body, from the sun and moon, enters the body through the eyes. Down the face, bridging the mouth, then down the throat area (the twelve-storied pagoda) and all the way to the lower dantian.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> This part of the carving is reflected in the move “Step Up to Form Seven Stars” in the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*® practice.

<sup>22</sup> In “The Secret of Opening the Passes,” Taoist monk Zhang Boduan described this alchemical process in this way, following the path as depicted in the picture of the internal body:

“The human body has three posterior passes and three anterior passes. The three posterior passes are in the coccyx, at the base of the spine; in the midspine, where the ribs join the spine; and at the back of the brain.

“The pass in the coccyx, at the bottom end of the spine, connects with the channels of the genital organs. From this pass ascends the spinal cord, which is called the...Waterwheel Course, or the Mountain Range up to the Court of Heaven, or the Ladder up to Heaven.

This is the road by which positive energy ascends; it goes right up the point opposite the center of the chest, the pass of the enclosed spine, where the ribs join in the back, then it goes straight up to the back of the brain, which is called the pass of the Jade Pillow.

Three gates are located along the spine in areas correlating to the three dantians. These gates must be open in order for the internal energies to flow and complete the microcosmic orbit. Opening the gates requires physical training in addition to training the heart and mind.

6. Taoists also believe that the body is filled with deities who guard the body and protect it from illness (introduced in Taoist texts beginning in the Chin dynasty (265-420 ce). If these guardians weaken or leave the body, the body will weaken or die. The practices of Taoism keep the guardians strong and within the body.<sup>23</sup>
7. The three internal energies—the jing, the qi and the shen—that flow through the body also have guardians. If the energies of these guardians are high and strong, the guardians will be bright, and the body will have good health and longevity. If the energy of these guardians is low, the guardians will be dull; the body will weaken, and illness will set in.

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The three anterior passes are called the Nirvana Center, the Earth Pot, and the Ocean of Energy. The Nirvana Center is the so-called upper-elixir field. It is a spherical opening 1.3 inches in diameter and is the repository of the spirit. That opening is three inches behind the center of the eyebrows, right in the middle...

Below the eyebrows is what is called the Pillar of the Nose, the Golden Bridge...

The windpipe has twelve sections and is called the Multistoried Tower; it goes to the openings of the lungs, and reaches the heart. Below the heart is an opening called the Crimson Chamber, where the dragon [Yang energy] and tiger [Yin energy] mate.

Another three inches below that is what is called the Earth Pot, which is the Yellow Court, the middle elixir field. In the center of the torso...is an opening 1.2 inches in diameter where...the refined elixir is warmed and developed...

Behind the navel and in front of the kidneys, right in the middle, is the place called the Crescent Moon Jar, or the Ocean of Energy. And 1.3 inches below that is what is called the Flower Pond, the lower elixir field.

This is where the vitality is stored..." See *The Taoist Classics* (vol. 3), translated by Thomas Cleary, p. 132.

In "Introduction to the Four-Hundred Character Treatise on the Golden Elixir," Zhang Boduan described the result of this alchemical process as the point when "...a breeze arises between the eyebrows, the moon shines in the heart, fire burns in the lower abdomen, the midspine is like a cartwheel, the limbs are like boulders, the pores are like they are after emerging from a bath, the bones and blood vessels are like when they are in a deep sleep, the vitality and spirit are like husband and wife in joyful embrace, the celestial and earthly souls are like mother and child hugging each other. This is a real state, not a metaphor." See *The Taoist Classics* (vol. 3), translated by Thomas Cleary, p. 123.

<sup>23</sup> Each major organ in the five organ systems also has its own guardian. If these guardians are strong, their colors are bright. If these guardians become weak or leave the body, the organs will not function as they should and the body will weaken and die. Many other lesser deities reside in the body to protect each part, down to the pores on the skin.

8. In addition to the deities in the body, Taoists also believe there are harmful spirits (demons or monsters) in the body. These harmful spirits live near the three gates of the body located on the spine and the corresponding three dantians. These harmful spirits can lock the gates so that energy does not flow through the body. These harmful spirits thrive on our desires. When a person is not aware that these spirits are harmful, the spirits can be attractive in their form. They cause the person to be attracted to material things, fame, and power and to act unethically. Seeing the harmful spirits in their true ugly and misshapen forms a first step in nurturing the guardians of the body and promoting health and longevity so the body can return to its Original Nature.<sup>24</sup>
  
9. Returning to the Tao is inherent in all *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts, including the 108 moves. The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice were developed by Master Moy, a Taoist monk, to promote internal circulation of energy and transformation. This is the same alchemical transformation referred to in Taoist teachings, restoring the health of the body, allowing it to return to its Original Nature and reconnect with the Tao.
  - a. “Tai chi” (or taiji) translates to “grand ultimate” or “supreme ultimate”. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism does not teach tai chi chuan (grand ultimate fist), a martial art.<sup>25</sup> FLKIT teaches “the grand ultimate”, a path that allows each person to transform their bodies and return to the Tao.
  
  - b. There are 108 moves in the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice. The number 108 has religious significance in Taoism. The number was divined by Zhang

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<sup>24</sup> As stated in *Lao Tzu's Sutra of Inspiration*: “The Evil Guards in our bodies are also called the Three Worms. They are responsible for illness...The Evil Guards or Worms are delighted to report our evil deeds to the Jade Emperor because as a result of our wrong doings the days of our lives are taken from us. The sooner we die, the sooner these Worms are liberated from our bodies to become wandering spirits, stealing offerings from temples, graves, and shrines. To eradicate the Worms from our bodies we need to accumulate good deeds and regain health. As our internal organs strengthen and the Three Treasures are purified, the Worms are destroyed and they can no longer plague the body with illness or create havoc in the spirit world.”

<sup>25</sup> In his treatise *Tai Chi Ch'uan Lun* Wang Tang-yueh explained that the origin of the set of movements referred to as ‘tai chi’ refer to the grand ultimate: “*Tai Chi* comes from *Wu Chi* and is the mother of *Yin* and *Yang*. In motion it separates; in stillness they fuse.” In *The Essence of Tai Chi Ch'uan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo *et al*, p. 22.

Sanfeng, the Taoist inventor of tai chi, representing the 36 Celestial Deities and 72 Terrestrial Deities.<sup>26</sup>

- c. The number 108 represents the combined yin and yang essences in our body. The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice symbolizes the union of the 36 yang and 72 yin elements of our bodies. It is a number of completeness representing the harmony of yin and yang in the body. The union of yin and yang in the body is necessary for alchemical transformation to take place so the body can return to its original state, to the Tao.
- d. In every move, there is expansion and contraction, Yang and Yin.<sup>27</sup> The body, particularly the spine, extends and pushes out and then contracts. This expansion and contraction has the benefit of loosening muscles, tendons and fascia and strengthening bones, which transforms the physical body. Expanding and contracting also gather and release energy and move it along the Du and Ren meridians as pictured in the Taoist map of the internal body. This is a deeper level of transformation that changes the whole person, body, mind and spirit. This deeper level of transformation comes from nurturing the immortal fetus, the Tao in each person.
- e. In every move there is also the connection to equal and opposing forces. For example, one arm may push up, the other down, again reflecting the

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<sup>26</sup> The body has six major yang channels, each controlling six minor yang channels, for a total of 36. These are the 36 Celestial Deities and represent the yang elements of our bodies. These six major yang channels are associated with the Six Bowels: large intestine, small intestine, gall bladder, stomach, and “three burning spaces” (the upper, middle and lower cavities in the body in which alchemical transformation takes place).

The 72 Terrestrial Deities refers to the yin elements in our body. There are six major yin channels in the body, each controlling twelve minor yin channels, for a total of 72. The six main yin channels are associated with the Five Viscera: heart (which has two channels), liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys.

<sup>27</sup> In his treatise *Taijiquan Jing*, Zhang Sanfeng, Taoist monk and originator of the art of tai chi, wrote: “If there is up, there is down; if there is forward, then there is backward; if there is left, then there is right. If the *i* (mind) wants to move up, it contains at the same time the downward idea.” In *The Essence of Tai Chi Ch’uan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo et al, p. 22.

dynamic equilibrium of Yin and Yang in the Universe and within the body.<sup>28</sup>

- f. The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice flow from one to the next so the expansion and contraction are continuous. Just like the Universe seeks to maintain a dynamic equilibrium of Yin and Yang, so too does the body; it is a microcosm of the Universe. By continually moving in the practice of the 108 moves, the whole person must maintain dynamic equilibrium that includes physical and mental balance. Finding balance and flow in our 108 moves is meditative in the deepest sense; it is manifesting the balance of Yang and Yin energies in the body and harmonizing with the balance of Yang and Yin in the greater Universe.<sup>29</sup> Completing the 108 moves is the act of becoming one with the Tao.
- g. The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice is practised with eyes open, level and looking out to the horizon. Keeping the eyes open and level helps maintain physical balance, improve awareness of surroundings, and connect with others. Keeping the eyes open and level also helps with internal circulation by ensuring the spine is properly aligned, allowing energy to flow more easily along the Du and Ren meridians as described in the Taoist map of the internals so that the process of internal alchemy can take place. Keeping the eyes open allows light energy to enter the body and for the shen energy in the body to radiate outward.
- h. Practicing the 108 moves requires a process of “letting go”. Superficially, this means relaxing the body and allowing internal energy to circulate. At a deeper level, letting go is necessary to open the three gates along the

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<sup>28</sup> Liezi wrote: “Equalising the give and the pull is the ultimate principle of dealing with the world. The same applies to the things in it.” He then tells the story of Chan Ho who “made a fishing line from a single thread of silk...a hook from a beard of wheat, a rod from one of the pygmy bamboos of Ch’u, and baited it with a split grain of rice. He hooked a fish big enough to fill a cart, in the middle of a swift current in waters seven hundred feet deep. The line did not snap, the hook did not straighten out, the rod did not bend, because he let out and drew in the line following the pull and give of the water.” *The Book of Lieh-tzu: A Classic of Tao*, A.C. Graham, University of Columbia Morningside Press Edition, 1990, p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> Wang Tang-yueh wrote with regard to balance: “Stand like a balance and rotate actively like a wheel.” To avoid being off-balanced, “one must know *Yin* and *Yang*. *Yin* and *Yang* mutually aid and change each other.” In *The Essence of Tai Chi Ch’uan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo et al, p. 38.

spine so energy can flow along the Du and Ren meridians as depicted in the Taoist map of the internal body and complete the cycle of transformation.

Opening these gates requires much more than just relaxing the muscles. “Dropping” is a term that is used to describe the internal letting go, sinking all of the weight of the body and connecting to the ground energy through the meridians (energy pathways) that open on the bottoms of the feet.<sup>30</sup> This energy flows through the 8 extraordinary meridians, helping the body circulate Yin and Yang energies and complete the internal alchemical transformation.

Letting go refers to the heart, as well. Taoism teaches that the most fundamental value is compassion and helping others, and that this is an expression of our Original Nature.<sup>31</sup> When we learn to let go of anxiety created by attachment to gain and loss, our minds become quiet and our bodies relax.<sup>32</sup> Many buildings owned by Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism include a shrine to Guanyin, the Buddhist deity of compassion, to serve as an example in our training.

- i. Timing is another Taoist principle that is expressed in the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts. Timing is integral to Taoist religious practices. There is a cyclical calendar of festivals, many of which honor events that occur at specific

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<sup>30</sup> In his treatise *Taijiquan Jing* Zhang Sanfeng, Taoist monk and originator of the art of tai chi, wrote: “The motion should be rooted in the feet, released through the legs, controlled by the waist, and manifested through the fingers.” In *The Essence of Tai Chi Ch'uan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo *et al*, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> In chapter 13 of the *Daode Jing*, Laozi writes of worry:

“What does this mean:

“What we value and what we worry are within ourselves?”

We have worries because we have selfish selves or bodies.

But when we are enlightened to know our spirit and soul as our true selves,

What else we have to worry?

Therefore if one values the people on earth as his self, he can be trusted to manage the world.

And if one loves the world as his self, he can be entrusted with the world.”

<sup>32</sup> As stated in *The Scripture of Clarity and Stillness*:

“Constantly responding, constantly still, this is constant clarity and stillness. With this clarity and stillness, one gradually enters the Tao.”

times of the year in accordance with the cycles of nature. For example, chanting ceremonies take place on the full and new moon each month.

Taoism teaches people to be in tune with the flow of natural energies as they wax and wane over the course of a day, a month and seasonally.

In the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice, each move has its own natural timing because the expansion and contraction and letting go are different in different bodies. Each person has to take the time needed to allow each move to be completed. And yet, the moves should flow together continuously, as if all 108 moves are one move. In the ending of one move is the beginning of another. This is another expression of the dynamic balance Yin and Yang energies. Though beginning and ending are opposites, experiencing the flow of the 108 moves helps people understand that in beginning there is ending, and in ending there is beginning—that there is separation, but that there is also unity.<sup>33</sup>

In Taoist rituals and ceremonies, roles are prescribed for leaders and chanters. The leader represents the intention of the group, and the group comes together to fulfill the purpose of the ceremony. Chanting is done in harmony. Voices unite together in a way that ensures the chanting is continuous, with no breaks.

When the 108 moves are practised in a group, a unity emerges from the gathering of individuals. There is respect for a group timing, a sense of taking part in something greater than oneself. People learn to move in harmony with others.

- j. Circularity is another principle in Taoism that is expressed in the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice. Energy flows in the body along the Du and Ren meridians in a circular pattern; this energy flow is stimulated by the 108 moves. One superficial example is that the position of the

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<sup>33</sup> In his treatise *Taijiquan Jing Zhang Sanfeng*, Taoist monk and originator of the art of tai chi, wrote: “Let the postures be without breaks or holes, hollows or projections, or discontinuities and continuities of form. In *The Essence of Tai Chi Ch'uan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo et al, p. 20.

arms in each of the movements is rounded so as to not lock up the joints and impede energy flow.

More deeply, though, the movements are expressions of the dynamic equilibrium of Yin and Yang as depicted in the Yin-Yang symbol. The Yin-Yang symbol is a circle to signify that there is no beginning and no end, only continual transformation, continual harmonizing of Yin and Yang energies in the Universe and in the body.

10. The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice consist of only those 108 moves, and these moves are practised for a person's lifetime. This is the same as chanting a scripture during a religious ceremony. The same words are chanted every time; they are sung with the same reverence every time. Likewise, the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice are ritually practised over and over, with reverence, as they, like a sutra, are sacred.
11. Bowing is an important ritual in *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts. Before making any offering at the altar and at the start and end of Taoist ceremonies, participants bow to the altar to show their respects for the deities and the aspects of the Tao they represent. This bow is done with the fingers of both hands intertwined to form the Tai Chi (yin-yang) symbol. This particular way of bowing reflects the Tao within the individual and the Universe.

In the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice, the bow before commencement and upon ending symbolizes deep commitment to the Taoist tradition and teachings. It signifies that the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice are done with the same reverence for the Tao as is present in a Taoist ritual or ceremony.

12. The foot movements, the steps, of the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice are rooted in Taoist religious practices.

- a. Moving the body and patterns of footwork have been part of Taoism since it emerged from early Chinese shamanic practices.<sup>34</sup>
- b. Monks from the famous White Cloud Temple in Beijing attended the opening of the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism Temple on D'Arcy Street, Toronto. As part of the ceremonies, the monks laid on the floor a bagua (pa-kua) diagram and began walking a series of ritual steps.



Master Moy commented that Fair Lady Works at Shuttles, one of the moves in the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice, mirrored that ritual stepping.<sup>35</sup>

The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice spread in all eight directions indicated by the pa'kua map.

13. The names of 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice reflect the Taoist map of the internals, which depicts the process of internal energy circulation. For example, on the map the move “Fair Lady Works at Shuttles” refers to the maiden weaving, spinning jing and qi energies together. The

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<sup>34</sup> The Legend of Yu states that Yu, an ancient shaman, was able to travel to the heavens to learn from the star spirits. The Steps of Yu is the dance he used to ascend in the sky. His movements have been danced by Taoist priests ever since, and are the foundation for the Chinese internal arts, which include Tai Chi.

The Legend of Yu also states that Yu witnessed a turtle emerging from the Yellow River that had the Luo-Shu (Later Heaven) bagua pattern on its shell. This pattern describes the nature of change in the Universe. It is also the pattern discussed in the *Yi Jing*, the book of changes that is an essential part of the Taoist canon. There is also a Hetu (Earlier Heaven) bagua that was inscribed on a horse that emerged from a flooded river witnessed by the sage Fu-hsi. The Earlier Heaven bagua is especially important to teaching and learning the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice. It describes a state of existence where everything is in harmony and connected with the Tao. The Later Heaven bagua describes the state of existence that is not harmonious. The return to the Tao is thus a transformation from Later Heaven to Earlier Heaven and to our Original Nature.

<sup>35</sup> See *Motions of the Tao*, 18:00,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzu53qg86Vs&list=UUsx3G9xtky2FJlJlucZaiWiA>.

young boy in the spiral pointing to the North star and Big Dipper constellation references the move “Step Up to Form Seven Stars.” This naming of the moves is a reminder of the Taoist religious tradition from which the moves originated.

14. Leaders are selected to teach the 108 moves in the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice because of their commitment to their religious training.<sup>36</sup> Master Moy selected individuals to lead based on their open heart and willingness to learn and grow, and the elders of Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism have continued this approach.

A leader in the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts performs the key role of sharing the teachings of Master Moy, manifesting the collective intention of the group, and helping transmit good intentions to the Taoist deities. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism elders choose leaders who have consistently demonstrated virtuous character over a period of years.<sup>37</sup> It takes a long time to become a leader in the FLKIT Taoist tradition, and there are many avenues of apprenticeship.

15. Practice of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts, including the 108 moves, helps people see the true reality of the underlying Tao of all things.<sup>38</sup> According to Taoist teachings, each person is born with an Original Nature that is in harmony with the Tao. Once born and as we age, our nature becomes corrupted by our wants and desires. In practicing the 108 moves, the emphasis is not on

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<sup>36</sup> Immortal Lü Dongbin wrote: “The Tao is entered by way of sincerity.” See *The Taoist Classics* (vol. 3), “Vitality, Energy and Spirit,” translated by Thomas Cleary, p.113.

Zhuangzi wrote: “Assign offices so that no abilities are overlooked, promote men so that no talents are neglected. Always know the true facts and let men do what they are best at.” In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, p. 137. Though talking about governing people, this advice applies to how we cultivate individuals as volunteer leaders to help in sharing Master Moy’s teachings.

<sup>37</sup> In his treatise *Tai Chi Ch’uan Lun* Wang Tang-yueh wrote: “From familiarity with the correct touch, one gradually comprehends *chin* (internal force); from the comprehension of *chin* one can reach wisdom. Without long practice one cannot suddenly understand it.” In *The Essence of Tai Chi Ch’uan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo *et al*, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Practice that includes moving the body is the way to understand the principles of Taoism. As Zhuangzi wrote: “No-Beginning said, ‘...The Way cannot be described; described, it is not the Way...He, who, when asked about the Way, gives an answer does not understand the Way; and he who asked about the Way has not really heard the Way explained. The Way is not to be asked about, and even if it is asked about, there can be no answer.” In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, p. 244.

the external form that observers can see, but rather on the feeling. The external form is an illusion. The feeling is the reality because it indicates the alchemical transformation taking place inside the body.

Leaders are also taught that the best way to teach is by quieting their minds<sup>39</sup> and, per Master Moy's guidance, "sharing in the joy and suffering of their students."<sup>40</sup> With quiet minds, they are not distracted by the external appearance of the movements. This is a far more effective and compassionate way of helping others than simply following a formula or checklist and encourages leaders to begin to discover their own connection to the Tao so they are better able to help others do the same.

16. Practicing the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts together, including the 108 moves, establishes a religious community essential to each person's ongoing process of transformation.

In Taoism, the Confucian virtues<sup>41</sup> are considered to be the foundation for spiritual progress. They offer guidance to those who want to create

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<sup>39</sup> Zhuangzi wrote: "The sage is not still because he takes stillness to be good and therefore is still. The ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his mind—that is the reason he is still. Water that is still gives back a clear image of a beard and eyebrows; reposing in the water level, it offers a measure to the great carpenter. And if water in stillness possesses such clarity, how much more must pure spirit. The sage's mind in stillness is the mirror of Heaven and earth, the glass of the ten thousand things." In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, p. 143.

Zhuangzi also wrote: "It is the nature of water that if it is not mixed with other things, it will be clear, and if nothing stirs it, it will be level. But if it is dammed and hemmed in and not allowed to flow, then, too, it will cease to be clear. As such, it is a symbol of Heavenly Virtue. So it is said, To be pure, clean, and mixed with nothing; still, unified and unchanging...moving with the workings of Heaven—this is the way to care for the spirit." p. 169.

<sup>40</sup> In a dialogue between Confucius and Laozi, Laozi states: "If the Way could be presented, there is no man who would not present it to his ruler. If the Way could be offered, there is no man who would not offer it to his parents. If the Way could be reported, there is no man who would not report it to his brothers. If the Way could be bequeathed, there is no man who would not bequeath it to his heirs. But it cannot—and for none other than the following reason. If there is no host on the inside to receive it, it will not stay; if there is no mark on the outside to guide it, it will not go. If what is brought forth from the inside is not received on the outside, then the sage will not bring it forth. If what is taken in from the outside is not received by a host on the inside, the sage will not entrust it." In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, p. 161. This passage means that the teachings of the Way are transmitted from the heart (mind) and received by the heart (mind).

<sup>41</sup> Emphasis is placed on the traditional Confucian values embodied in the Eight Virtues (Filial Piety, Sibling Harmony, Dedication, Trustworthiness, Propriety, Sacrifice, Honour and Sense of Shame). Further, Master Moy taught the traditional Chinese view of the five major organs (heart, lungs, spleen, liver and kidneys) and their corresponding virtues. The liver is associated with kindness; the heart, self-sacrifice; the lungs, propriety; the kidneys, wisdom; and the spleen, trustworthiness. Master Moy said that you can cultivate your internals by

compassionate, harmonious communities where people will be challenged yet also supported in their spiritual development. In an oral tradition such as Taoism, the relationship between teachers and students, and between fellow students, is considered crucial for learning, as Taoist training requires tremendous trust and mutual support. A community based on these virtues helps people to focus and relax without distraction and will help them to continue moving forward in the right direction even when they encounter difficulties and challenges.

Taoism encourages us to reflect on our motivations and patterns of thinking and more deeply understand why we respond to situations with anger, fear or other negative emotions or why we behave in ways that are not healthy or create suffering. The *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts help people better understand their own thinking so that they can open their hearts. Taking part in the religious community that Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism provides, and worshipping and volunteering together helps us overcome parts of ourselves that are obstacles to spiritual growth. FLKIT provides a community of religious practice that supports practitioners of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts so they can transform and continue on a path of stillness and harmony that leads the Tao.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism was founded by a Taoist monk. Is FLKIT currently led by Taoist monks?

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practicing the virtues associated with the five major organs. Strengthening these organs shows reverence for their guarding deities and aids in the flow of energy in the body. See *Path of Dual Cultivation*, Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism, pp. 26-27.

In *Zhuangzi*, Confucius is quoted as saying: "Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat—these are the alternations of the world...Day and night they change place before us...Therefore, they should not be enough to destroy your harmony; they should not be allowed to enter the Spirit Storehouse [the mind]...Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony." In *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, pp. 73-74.

The Taoist history of religious practices includes what might be typically referred to as monastic life, where individuals live in seclusion away from the busy world. It also includes lay traditions, where individuals come together to follow a shared spiritual path but live in the world, usually working in day-to-day jobs and often with spouses and children. These lay practitioners live a life in the secular world that mirrors monastic life in its discipline and activities (which include training of the body) and connection to a spiritual community. Even in Hong Kong and other locations around the world where Taoism thrives, it is rare to see monks living in temples; most practitioners are lay practitioners. Taoism emphasizes one's actions rather than the outward appearances.

FLKIT is led by a council of elders who received training directly from Master Moy. All of these individuals provide wisdom and guidance based on their years of spiritual development and training and train others in the *Taoist Tai Chi*® arts as passed to them by Master Moy.

2. Taoism sought to make itself appear less religious. Does that mean it isn't really a religion?

Taoism is a religion that is well-respected and well-established around the world. Taoism teaches that we have to be flexible, adaptable to the times, and the religion of Taoism itself embodies those same qualities. Its deepest roots trace back to the early Chinese shamanic religions, and it has evolved ever since, bringing together Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist religious and philosophical teachings. Taoism and other religions had to adapt to the changing culture in China in the 20th century as they did in centuries before. As Taoism spread to the west, it also adapted to fit into the cultures of other countries. The flexible nature of Taoist teachings doesn't make them less religious. On the contrary, it makes Taoism a more practical religion, one that is able to be easily adhered to by practitioners no matter where they live.

We share and practise the *Taoist Tai Chi*® arts, including the 108 moves, as a path to ultimate transformation and returning to the Tao. The *Taoist Tai Chi*®

arts as we practise them are an expression of our religious worship of the Tao.

3. How is *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice, specifically the 108 moves, a religious activity?

A substantial portion of this document addresses this question. In Taoism, such distinctions do not exist. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of Taoist cultivation are in every Taoist activity, be it chanting, meditation, rituals and ceremonies, or body movements.

However, to reiterate our response to this question, Taoism requires training of the body to make it stronger, more flexible, and more elastic so that the natural energies—the jing, the qi and the shen—in the body can flow unobstructed through the meridians or pathways throughout the body. The circulation of the internal energies produces the internal alchemical transformation of the body and allows practitioners to attain the Tao.

Further, practicing the 108 moves shows respect to the body and the service it provides in our spiritual development. It also shows reverence to the deities within our bodies, the divine representation of aspects of the Tao that are in every person.

4. How are the 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice different than other forms of tai chi?

The 108 moves of the *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> practice are taught by Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism as a form of religious worship. Opening the body and making it more flexible, elastic, and youthful lets the internal energies flow and opens a path to the Tao. We share the 108 moves with all who are interested, and we consistently tell our practitioners that they are not just doing a set of physical movements. As pathways in the body open and the energy begins to circulate, uniting Yang and Yin within, our practitioners experience physical, mental, and emotional changes that bring them closer to the Tao.

5. What is the difference between Taoism as a religion and Taoism as a philosophy.

In Taoism, philosophy and religion are not seen as opposed to each other. Instead, these terms describe slightly different aspects of the same tradition. In particular, it can be useful to associate Taoist philosophy with the sages such as Laozi, Zhuangzi and Liezi who were active during the classical period (roughly 6th to 3rd centuries BCE) and the texts attributed to them. Taoist religion is often used to describe the organized ecclesiastical tradition and lineage first established by the Heavenly Master, Zhang Daoling in the second century CE, which continues to the present day. Both of these streams are valued as important sources of wisdom and teachings for practitioners of Taoism.

## **Conclusion**

Taoism is a respected, long-standing, worldwide religion. As a charitable religious organization, Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism takes seriously its charge to share the Taoist teachings of its founder, Master Moy Lin Shin, and to promote understanding and awareness of the traditional teachings of Taoism.

Taoism teaches that there is an underlying unity of all things, the source of all things called the Tao. We are born with an Original Nature that is in harmony with the Tao. Once born and as we age, our connection to the Tao weakens. Our minds become cluttered with worry and desires, and our bodies become tight and rigid. Our natural internal energies—jing, qi, and shen—cannot properly flow and our health and emotional well-being decline.

Taoism offers a way for all to return to the Tao through physical and spiritual training. The *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts, including the 108 moves, train the whole person, body, mind and spirit, in keeping with the rich history of Taoist religious practices and the teachings left to us by our founder, Master Moy. The *Taoist Tai Chi*<sup>®</sup> arts, in keeping with Taoist tradition, offer a path to the Tao for all who practise.