

Pushing hands

This is a martial discipline for two. Face to face and standing, each participant tries to destabilize the other.

The art lies in sensing what one's partner wants to do, and in being not only attuned to the other, but if possible at one with the other.

This requires first of all great serenity and a state of harmony with oneself. It then calls for an ability to listen to, and be sensitive to, the other. And finally, it involves a capacity to release "Fa Jing" energy at the moment one directs a movement at one's partner, or reacts to one of theirs.

But all of this is possible only if we can let go of our fears sufficiently as to remain utterly calm and empty. It is this emptiness that enables us to fill ourselves with the intentions of the other. Letting go of one's fears... there lies the essence of pushing hands as I see it. And that is what makes me such a keen practitioner. It's a way of working on the self in depth... but also in relation to the other.

For me, pushing hands is the highest form of taijchi, as well as the most difficult and the most noble.

All the elements of the art are present:

- qi gong, to acquire more Qi (life-breath, energy);
- yi gong, to concentrate the Yi (mental energy, intention);
- arms, to increase bodily awareness, concentration and Fa Jing;
- the form, to cultivate the habit of circulating Qi;
- dynamic pushing hands, to reinforce body and mind;
- and nei gong, to maintain serenity and emptiness.

Clearly, pushing hands sets us on the road to the martial art. Firstly, by heightening our awareness of the other, it allows us to anticipate what is to come.

Secondly, and most importantly, it teaches us to relax everything - body and mind - including our fear. Without fear, and empty of all intention, no combat is possible, for there is no duality.

Pushing hands is a road towards the self and towards UNITY!