

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT WORDS AND TERMS

Here are a few special words, simply defined, that we will be using in our study of T'ai Chi. You will refer to and contemplate the meaning of these words often.

- **Alignment** – The aligning of the head, sacrum and heel in a plumb line perpendicular to the ground.
- **Balance** – (1) The equalizing of energy in the body; (2) The stability of the body as it moves from one position to another.
- **Blocking and wasting** (chi) – Misaligned structure causing the flow of chi to be blocked (interrupted and/or obstructed) or wasted (expended uselessly).
- **Body mechanics** – The physical principles which govern the movements of the body.
- **Bow stance** – The basic stance in the Golden Flower form
Feet hip-width apart, back foot turned out 45 degrees, the other foot extended forward, knees bent, weight distributed 60% on the back leg and 40% on the front leg.
- **Bubbling Well** – A natural depression in the center of the sole of the foot, just below the ball of the foot.
- **Burning in** – Holding a position long enough so that the major muscles supporting the weight of the body move beyond discomfort to full relaxation.
- **Center** – The torso of the body
- **Centering** – The experience of seeing everything in yourself, i.e., realizing that everything you experience is your reality and that you are responsible for it.
- **Chi** – The energy of physical life, taken into the body by breathing and eating. Chi is the second of the “Three Treasures”.
- **Chi Kung**, qigong, chi gung – Standing meditation
- **Ching** (jing) – The store of energy that each person receives at conception. Ching is the first of the “Three Treasures”.
- **Concentration** – The act of focusing specifically in one area or on one thing.
- **Cultivation** – The nurturing of one’s development.
- **Dantian** – The point three finger widths below the navel and midway into the center of the body.
- **Double weighted** – Standing with the weight distributed on both legs.
- **Embody** – To have something become a part of you.
- **Empty mind** – Calming the mind so that it is concentrated on one’s present experience without being distracted by one’s thoughts.
- **Essential** – That which is basic and integral to the existence of a person.
- **Fa jing** – Chi (energy) propelled from the body at full power.
- **Flow** – A constant and balanced streaming of movement or energy.
- **Focus** – Concentration on the present task and/or experience.
- **Folding** – The flexing of the body at the joints, especially the hip joints.
- **Gathering** – Collecting one’s energy so that it flows within and without.
- **Grounding** – The feeling that you are fully present and in your body. Your legs are like the roots of a tree connecting it to the ground.
- **Hip width** – Each foot planted in line (but not necessarily directly underneath) with the respective hip.
- **Hui yin** (perineum) – The area between the anus and the posterior part of the external reproductive organs.
- **Intention** – One’s desired result.
- **Internal** – The effect that you produce in reality is generated from the depths of your awareness.

- **Internally connected** – The energy connection between parts of the body as they move in relation to each other.
- **Li** – The physical body.
- **Meditation** – The art of simply being, but being no one in particular.
- **Meridians** – The channels in the body along which energy flows.
- **Microcosmic Orbit** – The circulation of chi in the upper body
- **Pai wei** (crown point) – The energy point on the top of the head
- **Perineum** – See “Hui yin”. The area between the anus and the posterior part of the external reproduction organs.
- **Principle** – A principle is something that can be described, demonstrated and applied but not fully explained.
- **Relax** – To release any tension or tightness within your muscles.
- **Scattering** (energy) – A dispersing or diffusion of one’s energy so that it cannot be used in a focused manner.
- **Self-cultivation** – The process of unfolding and refining ones natural energies and capacities.
- **Shen** – The energy of “Spirit” or awareness. Shen is the third of the “Three Treasures”.
- **Shoulder width** – Feet planted on the floor in a line (but not necessarily directly underneath) the shoulders.
- **Sinking** – Relaxing into the body so that the chi settles into the dantien.
- **Sticking energy** – A sense of connectedness, especially when practicing with a partner.
- **Substantial / Insubstantial** – The duality of fullness and emptiness; analogous to yin and yang.
- **T’ai Chi Chuan** – A comprehensive system of total self-integration, unifying the spirit, mind and body. T’ai Chi is most often expressed by means of slow, conscious, precisely executed movement-set. T’ai Chi exercise functions on principles discovered and refined since Chinese antiquity. Internal martial art
- **Taoist** – An ancient Chinese philosophy which stresses non-aggression and simplicity.
- **Three Treasures** – The three forms of energy – Jing, Chi and Shen - which together make up one’s life force.
- **Three-point alignment** – See “Alignment”. The aligning of the head, sacrum and heel in a plumb line perpendicular to the ground.
- **Tiger’s mouth** – The area of the hand between the index finger and thumb.
- **Virtue** – The highest attainment of purity and benevolence in thought and action.
- **Yi** – The mind.
- **Yin yang** – The concept of duality or opposites.