

Master CK Chu, founder of the Tai Chi Chuan Center of New York and Author of Tai Chi Chuan Principals and Practice, The Book of Nei Kung, Eternal Spring and Chu Meditation responds to a question from student Amos Satterlee about the interrelationship between Eternal Spring Chi Kung, Tai Chi, and Nei Kung.

### **And what is the purpose of Eternal Spring?**

Hi Amos,

As far as *Eternal Spring Chi Kung* is concerned, you can say it was created to change Wu Chi to Tai Chi. Let me explain: Wu Chi means no polarity, static, big inertia. Our goal as teachers is to take people from a state of static inertia to the dynamic state of Tai Chi— “Supreme Ultimate” i.e., able to do something for themselves. This exercise experience is appropriate for people at any stage of their life—no upper age limit.

I would say that a great majority of the populace, perhaps 99% of the world population are in this category. The remaining one percentile of people are those who know the benefits of Tai Chi and Nei Kung and are committed to practicing these arts regardless of daily obstacles.

Tai chi, or Nei kung, as with any art, needs an introduction to open people to it— bring them to the doorway first, i.e., give them the opportunity to open their eyes, to appreciate this treasure and then motivate them to pursue it.

As I mentioned in the meditation book, many peoples’ lives are filled with trivial circumstances that are initiated through our relationships in society, the family and our own choices. Within our individual life challenges many people lose sight of what is good for them.

Eternal Spring's purpose is to bridge this gap. As I mentioned before we Facilitate the movement from Wu Chi to Tai Chi.

Eternal Spring Chi Kung is designed for the 99% of people who are capable of gaining benefit from this simple and very effective method for generating Chi- Life Force. The reason the name “Eternal Spring” Chi Kung was chosen was to avoid confusion. Chi Kung is a general category-it means exercise that cultivates chi (either externally or internally. Nei Kung is internal Chi Kung. Besides working on Chi, Nei Kung also works on aligning the body as correctly as possible, firming the overall body muscles, tendons, etc. And that to me is why Nei Kung is called internal power—the real deal. As many students have commented— No “B.S.”

When you do standing meditation in a quiet corner, emptying your mind, nothing bothers you. You do that to cultivate your self, both mind and body. It is a great routine, but as in any great routine, persistent self-discipline is needed to accomplish proficiency. Self-discipline in the sense that you know the discipline is good for you, that it's a treasured art, that you are lucky to know this, that it would be crazy for you to discard it. Many people hear about Nei Kung from their friends, read an article, but just can't get in the doorway.

As the Chinese expression has it: they are a "door-outside-fellow". Mun ngoy hawn. They take a few classes, but rarely practice. They become a mun ngoy hawn, never entering the door, always on the steps outside, never entering. Eternal Spring Chi Kung is designed to bridge this gap. To give them a push. To get them from outside into the Nei Kung & Tai Chi circle.

In short, Eternal Spring Chi Kung is a combination of Chi Kung, Nei Kung, and Tai Chi. In Chi Kung you don't have to be meditative, but you still use your mind

to command your body; “*push air down, breathe this way, breathe that way, rapid expansion and contraction of the abdomen*” —these are under the category of Chi Kung. While the “*Frog Stance, and Easy Horse Stance*”, are Nei Kung. “*Golden rooster, Tai Chi Opening, and Pivoting to Bow Stance*” are Tai Chi techniques. So Eternal Spring Chi Kung is a combination of these three. And we have stated that in the introduction of the book. *Eternal Spring Chi Kung* is just the name of the system. Hopefully this series becomes so popular that we can even drop the words chi kung in the future. It will be similar to Tai Chi in the sense that we often drop the word chuan from the name.

It seems to be a long way to answer your question but I just felt the need to pour out my thoughts.

Originally I called this Eternal Spring Tai Chi but the problem became that people asked “what style of Tai Chi”. That was confusing and if I called it Eternal Spring Nei Kung it would also confuse people, so Chi Kung serves as the best choice for a collective name for these three disciplines.

To summarize: Eternal Spring Chi Kung is a series of forms (exercise) to cultivate chi. And is a routine by itself that people can practice by themselves, an independent series of exercises. When they do it they will have a good foundation for Tai Chi and Nei Kung.

Here's to less mun ngoy hawn, less people on the doorstep.  
Sifu

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Tai Chi Practice  
Keeping the Passion Alive  
By C.K. Chu

Many people hear about Tai Chi and sign up for classes at some point or another, knowing deep down in their hearts it is good for them. Only a small percentage of these people, make it a permanent part of their lives. They take lessons in Tai Chi much as they might take up the guitar, practicing it one week, casually discarding it the next. Enjoyable as the guitar is, it is not vital to one's health.

What inspires people to make Tai Chi a lifelong practice? Some Tai Chi and Chi Kung practitioners began their study of the internal arts because of illness. They had to practice daily, but welcomed the routine because of their strong desire to get well. After a while, because of their improved health, they would begin to enjoy and look forward to practice. Some eventually became masters.

### **Plowing the Earth**

Without such strong motivation, how does a student keep enthusiasm alive? For the beginning student, the key is in pacing oneself. It is essential that after each class or practice session one's body and mind feel good. This personal, positive feedback may be lost if one pushes to learn everything in one day. Before learning a new move, students should be certain that they've attained a certain degree of proficiency in the previous move. As each individual's ability to absorb new information is limited, being greater at some times than at others, pushing to take numerous classes without allowing time to absorb what one has learned will dampen enthusiasm for learning. Martial arts training is often compared to a

farmer plowing a field - a slow and steady pace is ideal. Students should remember that this is a routine to continue for the rest of their lives. One needs to eat, to sleep, and to do Tai Chi. There is no need to rush.

### **Journeying to the Moon**

Advanced students should strive to capture the essence of each move. For example, after one has learned to execute a kick, one may emphasize increasing speed, maximizing power, rooting, etc. One may work on how to use that same kick to respond to opponents by neutralizing, by focusing its power on the target, and by defending against multiple attacks. One may coordinate this kick with other moves, apply it spontaneously or naturally. One may approach and derive benefit from basic moves on many levels such as application, response, coordination, focusing on power, speed of execution, timing, and on the level of relevant Tai Chi principles and spirit as a whole. Successfully using four ounces to deflect 1,000 pounds - the ultimate Tai Chi principle - is a level of ability analogous to going to the moon. How does one get to the moon? The process involves mastering many layers of technique, of dealing with the nitty-gritty. The end result amazes people, yet the long journey to the moon is successful merely because of a combination of theoretical and technical achievement plus a lot of work.

There is much, then, that an advanced student can work on to prevent practice from becoming boring. Professional athletes in all fields must practice basics. Boxers train with repetitive punches; tennis players and swimmers practice variations on elementary strokes. In terms of kung-fu, "high-level" means how well one executes each form, not how many varieties of kung-fu are learned. If practice feels like an obligation, if repetitive moves become boring, then something is not understood, and it is time to ask questions. Again, every practice session should leave you feeling good. This positive feeling will ensure that you maintain your enthusiasm for the art. Practice, Practice, Practice

There is no substitute for practice. It is the only way to fully experience the subtle beauty and tremendous power of Tai Chi. There is a saying in China: "*I hear and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand.*" Use the principles of Tai Chi as I've listed them in my book to guide you. A student should always pursue knowledge on his or her own, with the teacher serving merely as a guide. That is true for science as well as for Tai Chi. A science student or Taoist seeks to understand the reason behind the way things are done. Tai Chi, as a science, has specific laws and principles. Merely copying a teacher's moves or memorizing certain facts is not learning Tai Chi. Another saying is that "*the teacher shows only one corner of a table - the student deduces the other three*". What one figures out for oneself is more valuable than the same bit of information received from a book or teacher. Tai Chi is good for everybody; but even with the best of intentions, one person cannot force another to do Tai Chi. A student can be made to do pushups, but forcing someone to do Tai Chi is like compelling that person to sing. The result is worthless. The desire to practice Tai Chi must come from within. One can say we are successful in the study of Tai Chi when we look forward to practice and find it gives us pleasure. The bottom line is - be happy and keep practicing.

Sifu Chu~

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