

SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

In Tai Chi, Qigong and Meditation, You Are What You Practice

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Lorie Dechar, Keynote, author of *Five Spirits: Alchemical Acupuncture* and *Yi – intention*, drawn by Er Cai feng
Zhi Dao Guan

The Seventh Annual Taoist Gathering had a very important message, “You Are What You Practice,” for anyone who practices [Tai Chi](#), [Qigong](#) or simply cares about his/her physical or mental fitness.

The Gathering was hosted by [Zhi Dao Guan](#), the Taoist Center in Oakland, California. It took place at Samuel Merritt University (Oakland, CA) on Oct 22 – 24. 135 attendees from California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Maine, Hawaii, Ohio, Washington, and Texas participated in it.

Generally speaking, Chinese culture has been heavily influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and [Taoism](#) (both the philosophical and religious aspects) throughout history. During last year’s International Tai Chi Symposium, many of the Tai Chi masters agreed that the philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism play an important role in shaping the theory and practice of Tai Chi and Qigong.

Zhi Dao Guan means “The View, Vision, or Perspective of the Ultimate/Supreme Path” The name was coined by Grandmaster Wei Ren Feng. Grandmaster Feng formalized the teachings of his family’s multiple generations of Daoist scholars, priests and practitioners and founded Zhi Dao Guan in China and moved it to the United States in 1963. Upon Grandmaster Feng’s death in 1988, **Master Alex Feng**, who was ordained as a Daoist priest in 1972, became the lineage holder of Zhi Daoism.

Master Feng built his martial arts institute and medical practice on a foundation of Zhi Daoism. He created Zhi Dao Guan, The Taoist Center, that opened in 2002, to fully actualize the Daoist principles of the integration of the spiritual, medical/healing, and physical aspects for a healthy life.

According to Dr. Charlene Ossler, the co-founder of the Gathering, the goals of this year’s conference were:

- Encourage a more in-depth understanding of Taoism by providing a forum for discussion of provocative, reference-based presentations on Taoist philosophy and approaches to studying Taoism.
- Demonstrate the multiple aspects of Taoism – spiritual, physical, ceremonial, alchemical, and medical.
- Continue the development of an international community of Taoists with common goals of sharing Taoism and promoting Taoism as a spiritual and healing path.

To make this event more inclusive, **Steven Abell** of *The Troth*, Rev. Jean Elyse Adams, of **Pacific Central District of the Unitarian Universalists**, **Liu Ming** of Dayuan Circle, and **Robert Rosenbaum**, PhD. were invited to provide Heathen, Christian, Taoist, and Buddhist perspectives during the panel discussion of *You Are What You Practice*.

Lorie Dechar, Lac, Mac, of **Tri-State College of Acupuncture** of New York, delivered a keynote speech which she emphasized the importance of Yi (intent) in practice. She also explained why Yi can incubate of a Sage. **Hirsh Diamant**, PhD, of the Evergreen State College of Washington talked about *Chinese Narrative Painting and Arts of Self Cultivation*. **Ted Cibik**, PhD and Executive Director of Inner Strength of Pennsylvania highlighted *the Energetics of Food*. Musician and Editor of **The Empty Vessel Solala Towler** introduced *Chuang Tzu with Commentary*.

There were multiple Qigong and **Meditation** workshops and practices lead by masters and experts: **David Wei** of Wudang Wen Wu (Wudang, China) on *Walking in Circles – Fundamentals of Wudang Bagua Zhang* and *Fundamentals of Healing Qigong*, **Dr. Alex Feng** of Alta Bates Integrative Medicine Center (Oakland, CA) on *Integrative Medicine – Pioneering the Way*, **Christina Bijergo** of Sacred

Serpent Spiral Qigong (Vancouver, WA) on *The Tao of Qigong Dreaming*, [Ted Cibik](#) of Inner Strength (Leechburg, PA), Master Yo Hoon Kim on *the Dao of Zen: meditation and Mindfulness*, Dr. Brady Chin of [California State Oriental Medical Association](#) on *Moral Lessons of Medical Practice*, [Dr. Anita Marshall](#) of Sequoia Healing Center on *Sleep – The Critical Ingredient for Practice*, musician Gary Davila (Berkeley, CA) on *Trance Drumming Meditation*, and [Dr. Carl Totton](#) of [the Taoist Institute](#) (North Hollywood, CA) on *You Are What You Practice*.

One special feature of this Gathering was that there were some young participants in the conference. They attended some of the meetings as well as performed for the event. Naomi Sagan did a Tai Chi Performance while a few students from Washington Manor Middle School, San Leandro, CA, performed the Five Animal Play Qigong movements. A 10-year old participant even wrote a poem about Taoism which was really heart-warming for Charlene.

With the continuous success of this event, Zhi Dao Guan funder Dr. Alex Feng announced that next year's conference will be on Oct 21 – 23 in Samuel Merritt University with a theme of *Immortality*.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- [Wu Dang Tai Chi Master Chen Shares the Secret of Fa Jing](#)
- [The first Qigong Conference in Italy](#)



Violet Li

Tai Chi Examiner