

SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

# The Eternal Spring Tai Chi Program at Bryant Park, New York

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8:20 PM MST



Rob Hofman led the class

*Violet Li*

[Bryant Park](#) is a 9.6-acre privately-managed public park one block from Times Square and bounded by Fifth and Sixth Avenue to the east and west and 40th and 42nd Street to the north and south in [Midtown Manhattan](#), New York. Many New Yorkers consider it an oasis in the hectic city.

The park first opened to the public on September 14, 1934, has had a rugged history and once was a crime ridden dangerous place. But after a ten-year renovation effort started in 1988, [Bryant Park](#) became a classic French garden with a lush lawn with 100 species of woody shrubs and herbaceous perennials and 20,000 bulbs with many historical monuments scattered around it. The park has two restaurant pavilions and four concession kiosks. It also has a beautiful carousel, chess & backgammon and ping pong tables.. The park is a social place where families and friends meet, eat, chat, stroll, read, listen to music, work on wireless internet, or just sit, think and watch people and birds.

It was a mid-September morning. I arrived at the park around 7:35 am. From a distance, I recognized a group of people in front of the gorgeous pink granite fountain. I noticed there were about 20 people taking a [Tai Chi](#) class. Rob Hofman from the Tai Chi Chuan Center was the lead instructor for a Tai Chi program called Eternal Spring. The participants included men and women, young and old; some were in a business attire and some in casual clothing; people with different ethnic background practiced side-by-side; a Beagle sat quietly next to his master when the latter was attending the class. Gabor, also from the Tai Chi Chuan Center, walked slowly passing by participants and provided individual guidance as needed.

The Tai Chi Chuan Center is a non-profit organization funded by Master C.K. Chu and his students in 2000. Master C.K. Chu was born in Hong Kong in 1937 where, at the age of twelve, he began his [martial arts training](#). He has taught Tai Chi in New York for over 37 years and started his Studio by Times Square in 2001. He has demonstrated both [Tai Chi](#) and [Qigong](#) on network and [cable TV](#). Master Chu has authored [Tai Chi Chuan Principles and Practice](#), [The Book of Nei Kung](#), [Chu Meditation](#) and [Eternal Spring Chi Kung](#), and the instructional videos [Chu Nei Kung](#) and [Chu Tai Chi](#). The Tai Chi Chaun Center's mission is to help bring the benefits of Tai Chi to a wider population. They have provided free Tai Chi lessons through community services. In 2004, it started to offer free classes in Bryant Park on every Tuesday and Thursday from the beginning of May through the end of September. Valerie, another Center's volunteer, said the participants normally range from age 20 to 60. Each class would have over 50 people and of which some are regulars. On that day, there were two young ladies from Belgium and discovered the class from the Internet. It was a nice feeling to see people trickle in one by one and some were rushing in. But once they settled down, they followed the lead and enjoyed the solace of the practice. By the time the class ended, there were over 60 people there. In seven years, the Eternal Spring has trained over 10,000 people. CBS News in New York did [a special report](#) last year about this program and praised how Tai Chi can provide a multitude of health benefits.

The Eternal Spring Program is specially tailored for senior adults by [Master C.K. Chu](#). It focuses on two of the most essential exercises: Nei Kung (or [Qigong](#)) and the Tai Chi Short Form. Nei Kung is a series of internal exercises, in which specific postures correctly align the body to generate Qi (healing energy). Some of the movements require physical strength. The Tai Chi Short Form is a slow-moving solo exercise. Practice improves one's sense of balance and coordination, and develops flexibility and strength of joints and muscles. At Bryant Park, Gabor led the Tai Chi form practice. Both exercises are practiced in a relaxed and meditative manner, with attention to alignment of the body and deep breathing. According to Master Chu, there is no better exercise for reversing the effects of aging.

## **SUGGESTED LINKS**

- **Unveil the mystery of Medical Chi Gong by Dr. Kevin Chen**
- **A total Taichi experience with Anna Lum**



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Tai Chi Examiner