

SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

Zoe Siytangco: a 13-year-old Grand Champion

August 24, 2011

5:37 PM MST



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Nimble Dragon

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At the recent [2011 Legendsof Kung Fu & Taiji Legacy World Martial Arts Championship](#) in Plano, Texas, the criterion for Advanced Grand Champion of Internal [Martial Arts](#) competitors is that they must be ranked number one in all three categories as below.



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- First in one the 5 major [Tai Chi](#) Barehand events (Chen, Yang, Wu (Hao), Wu, Sun)
- First in one Internal Barehand (other Tai Chi, other internal form, or another one of the 5 major styles of Tai Chi not used for first criteria)
- First in one Internal Weapon.

There is no gender or age division. After hundreds of games, a few finalists qualified for the final championship competition, in which all competitors have to do a straight sword demonstration. The Tai Chi Saber, embodying both internal strength and external complexity requires high-level skills.

Zoe Siytangco was the last to perform. She appeared calm and mature. Her form was beautiful yet powerful. She dazzled the judges and audience with her lightness and agility, not to mention her precision in executing the complicated form. There was no surprise that she was bestowed with the title of grand champion for the Internal Martial Arts category. Prior to the final, Zoe already won 7 gold medals, one silver medal and one bronze medal in the Tournament. What shocked most people was when they learned that Zoe was only 13 years old.

As a second child of [Shifu Blue Siytangco](#), Zoe started her Tai Chi training at age 7 and she fell in love with it right away. Aside from attending her Dad's classes, she practices on her own. On average, she practices between 90 – 120 minutes on a weekday and 2 – 3 hours on Saturdays and Sundays. In her Tai Chi journey, she has practiced at least 4,000 hours. She has studied mostly Chen Style Tai Chi. She has learned almost all the barehand forms, saber, double saber, spear, Push

Hands, and many other forms.

When asked what kind of benefit she gains out of practicing Tai Chi, Zoe said that Tai Chi makes her healthy and strong. It also gives her self-confidence in life, and helps her to focus. At school, she is a straight-A's student. Zoe is a loving sister. During the tournament, when she wasn't competing, she would carry and play with her two-year-old brother.

She trains solely with her dad. However, she attended Master [Chen Huixian's](#) workshops when Master Chen was invited to Houston last year. Shifu Blue commented that Master Chen had a significant influence on Zoe. Shifu Siytangco said Master Chen is a great role model for Zoe and showing her that a woman can also be a highly accomplished martial artist. And at [2011 Legendsof Kung Fu & Taiji Legacy World Martial Arts Championship](#), Zoe helped to reinforce the idea that neither gender nor age matters, and she has become a new role model herself.

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