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Students of St. Thomas school with Tai Chi practitioner Kiran Sawhney at a training session

Tai Chi: Meditation in harmony with body

Vidhi Bhargava
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KUNG FU is passé. Tai Chi is in for the Gen Next. Though the north is still catching the fever, Tai Chi is already a rage in the west and south India.

It is not just an exercise of the body, but of the mind too. An ancient Chinese martial arts form, it is meditation in motion.

There are three basic aspects of Tai Chi: Qi Gong (breathing slowly and deeply as you concentrate below the navel), Tai Chi (coordination of the mind, the inner and the outer body), and Pushing Hands (throwing your partner off balance without using any muscular force).

There are different styles of Tai Chi too, which like the Indian musical gharanas are named after the family or school that developed it. The most popular of these is the Yang style. Its long form has 108 movements while the short form

has 64 movements.

Says a Tai Chi instructor Rajneesh, "Tai Chi is meditation in harmony with your body. It is all about controlling your movements and the centre of the control is your navel."

Tai Chi involves gentle and graceful movements and is somewhat akin to Yoga in slow motion. But it really isn't as simple as it sounds, for it involves quite a bit of exercise for the leg and the arm muscles.

Rajneesh adds, "Unlike Yoga where one closes his eyes to meditate, in Tai Chi you meditate with your eyes wide open. It is really tough, with all the distractions around. But then Tai Chi is more about mental strength than physical."

Says another Tai Chi expert Kiran Sawhney, "Tai Chi heals from within. With regular practice, every organ of your body improves."

It is also known to improve cardiovascular, respiratory and digestive disorders, besides posture.