

太极

Tai Chi

胡秀娟 尹博◎编著



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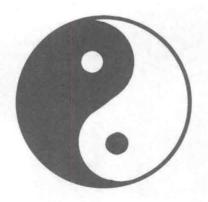
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中国的太极文化,源远流长,博大精深,是中华文明五千年的智慧结晶。 在中国传统文化中,太极既代表宇宙的本原,也暗含了天地万物产生、演变的过程,是中国古代哲学思想的重要观念和根源。

纵观中国数千年历史,太极文化影响着儒家、道家等中华文化的主要流派,几乎存在于养生、武术、兵法、体育等每一个领域。



Tai Chi plays an immensely important role in Chinese culture, and is the crystallization of wisdom in the past 5,000 years of the Chinese civilization. An integral part and also a significant source of ancient Chinese philosophy, it not only stands for the origin of the universe, but also implies the process of birth and evolvement of everything in the universe.

Throughout thousands of years' history of China, Tai Chi has profoundly influenced Confucianism, Taoism and other major schools of culture, and is omnipresent in fields such as regimen, martial art, art of war and sports.

Therefore, only by understanding Tai Chi, can one understand radically the Chinese culture and appreciate the great wisdom of ancient Chinese people.

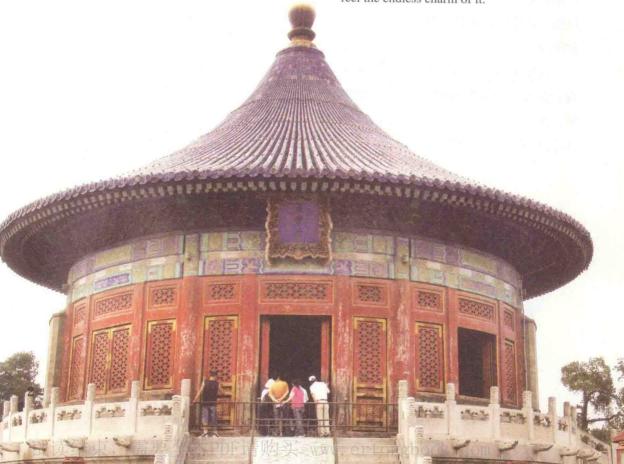
Both Tai Chi regimen and Tai Chi

所以,了解太极,才能从根本上了解 中华文化,领略古代中国人伟大的智慧。

近年来非常流行的太极养生、太极 拳术都是太极文化现象,均体现了中国 人崇尚"天人合一""物我合一"的世 界观。尤其是受到很多人喜爱的太极 拳,如行云流水一般的动作,刚柔并 济,能够调养生息,平衡阴阳,使人达 到一个平和的状态。

现在,就请走进太极亦阴亦阳、亦 刚亦柔、亦动亦静、亦虚亦实的世界 中,去感受它的无穷魅力吧! Boxing, which have been of great popularity in recent years, are phenomena of the Tai Chi culture. They embody traditional Chinese views on the world and harmony, i.e., "unity of man and nature" and "identity of object and self". Tai Chi Boxing, favored by many people, offers relaxation and balances *Yinyang* through its natural and smooth, soft and hard movements, allowing one to reach a state of peace.

Now, let's get into the Tai Chi realm of Yin-yang, softness and hardness, movement and stillness, emptiness and solidness, and feel the endless charm of it.





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博大精深的太极文化 Profound Tai Chi Culture

在中国的传统文化中,太极文化具有高度的概括性和深邃的内涵,它不但代表了宇宙的本原,也包含着天地万物产生、演变的过程。太极图通过直观形象的演示,揭示了万物矛盾对立统一的辩证关系。

In traditional Chinese culture, Tai Chi is of high generality and has profound connotations; not only stands for the origin of the universe, but also implies the process of birth and evolvement of everything in the universe. The visual Tai Chi Diagram unveils the dialectical relations between diversity and unity of all things in the universe.



> 太极的内涵

太极文化是数千年中华文明的宝 贵财富,它既是关于宇宙万物的理论 思想,也是解释天地万物演化模式的 形象图形,将八卦、阴阳五行融会贯 通。那么,究竟什么是太极?它所代 表的深刻内涵又是什么呢?

何为太极

什么是"太极"?从字面上理解,"太"即代表大,大之最;"极"则代表极端,是最初的意思。所谓"太极",古人解释为"太有至""极有限",即达到极限,没有相匹之意,也包含了至大、至小的时空极限的道理;大到无穷之大,但不会超过一定的空间;小到无穷之小,却不等于零或没有,这就是"太极"的根本含

> Connotations of Tai Chi

A treasure of the Chinese civilization in the past thousands of years, Tai Chi is not only a theoretical thought about all things in the universe, but also a visual symbol used to explain the evolving modes of everything in the universe, which is a perfect fusion of *Bagua* (the Eight Trigrams), *Yin-yang* and *Wuxing* (Five Elements). So, what on earth is Tai Chi, and what are profound connotations of it?

What is Tai Chi?

Literally, Tai means "great, supreme", and Chi means "ultimate". Explained by the ancients as "Tai has the end" and "Chi has the limit", Tai Chi has the meaning of the arrival of the limit and having no match, which also means the truth of time-space limits of maximum and minimum. The fundamental implications of Tai Chi are infinity within

义。两字相合解释了宇宙的起源以 及天地万物产生、演变的过程。

中国古人早已对宇宙有了朦胧的认知与思辨,他们认为"太极" 是天地混沌之气的原始状态,并将 "太极"视为宇宙的本原,是易学研究的重要基础。 a certain space, and infinitesimal but not zero or nothing. And Tai Chi denotes the origin of the universe as well as the process of the birth and evolvement of all things in the universe.

The ancient Chinese had a hazy knowledge and speculation of the universe, believing Tai Chi to be the original state of the chaos of the universe and viewing it as the origin of the universe. This is an important foundation for *I Ching* (Book of Changes) studies.



• 宇宙中的旋涡星系

宇宙最初处于混沌状态,是具有阴阳之气的原始形状。太极图所表达的对立统一思想,与宇宙的根本存在方式相吻合。宇宙中的星系有三种运动模式,即棒旋星系、螺旋星系、椭圆星系。除后一种外,前两种星系就像是一个无限大的"太极图"。

A Spiral Galaxy in the Universe

The universe was originally in chaos with an original shape featuring *Yin-yang*. The thought of unity of opposites which is conveyed by the Tai Chi Diagram coincides with the universe's radical mode of existence. Galaxies in the universe are divided by their patterns of movement into barred spiral galaxies, spiral galaxies, and elliptical galaxies. Except for the third type, the other two look like an infinite "Tai Chi Diagram" respectively.

中国有关太极学说最早的经典是《周易》。《周易》是一部中国古代研究宇宙运动变化发展规律的自然哲学典籍,又称为《易经》,它分为《经》和《传》两个部分。"太极"一词最早见于《易传》。中国古人用《周易》来预测未来,决策国家大事,反映当前现象。《周易》具有不同,是倡自强不息、厚德载物,是中国各统文化的精髓。几千年来,《周易》的基本思想融入到中华民族的方方面面,武术、军事、建筑等各个领域,构成了中国传统文化的基本格调。

Zhouyi

The earliest Chinese classic about Tai Chi theory is Zhouyi, also known as I Ching, an ancient Chinese classic of natural philosophy about the movement, change and development rules of the universe. Zhouyi comprises two parts, Jing and Zhuan. The term Tai Chi was earliest found in I Ching. The ancient Chinese used Zhouyi to divine future events, decide on state affairs and mirror current phenomena. The essence of traditional Chinese culture, Zhouyi has profound cultural connotations, stressing the interplay between yin and yang and the tempering of force with grace, and advocating self-discipline and social commitment. In the past thousands of years, the basic thoughts of Zhouyi have been omnipresent in all aspects of the Chinese nation, such as astronomy and geography, calendar, occurrences in human life, medicine, martial art, military affairs, and architecture, forming the fundamental style of traditional Chinese culture.



《周易》书影
 A photograph sheet of Zhouyi

阴阳五行说

"太极"最初大都与阴阳五行学 说联系在一起。此外,八卦学说也常 常作为解释其意义的手段。这些形成 了中国古人最初的自然观念。

中国古人认为,太极就代表了 宇宙,解释了万物演变、生化的过程,是天地混沌、阴阳未分之前的 状态。《周易》中说,太极分阴、 阳两仪,宇宙间的一切,都包含着



• 苏州木渎古镇的太极八卦纹石子铺地

太极文化对中国的影响十分深远,体现在人们生活中的很多方面。

A cobblestone pavement with a Tai Chi Diagram pattern in the ancient town of Mudu, Suzhou

The Tai Chi culture has a far-reaching influence in China and is embodied in many aspects of people's lives.

Yin-yang & Wuxing Theory

Tai Chi are largely connected with the *Yin-yang* & *Wuxing* theory originally. In addition, the Bagua theory is also usually used as a means to explain it. These formed the initial natural beliefs of the ancient Chinese.

The ancient Chinese believed that Tai Chi represented the universe, the process of the birth and evolvement of all things in the universe, and the state of chaos before the division of *yin* and

yang. According to Zhouyi, Tai Chi can be divided into Liang Yi (Two Instruments), namely yin and yang, and everything in the universe comprises two sides, namely yin and yang, outside and inside.

The ancient

Chinese believed that all things in the world arose from the interplay between yin and yang. The Yin-yang theory played a key role in ancient Chinese philosophy and blended with other

阴和阳、表和里两个方面。

中国古人认为, 世间万物都是 由阴阳互动产生的。阴阳学说是中 国古代哲学理论的关键点, 它与其 他理论思想相互交融。古代哲人在 观察世界的时候,发现万物总是生 生不息、不断变化、轮回生长的, 这一点与现代哲学中矛盾的对立统 一观点极为相似。古代哲人还认 为,万物由五种基本元素,即金、 木、水、火、土组成,它们相生相 克, 往复不休, 互相滋长、互相消 亡。"相生"是指五种元素相互滋 生和助长的关系,即金生水、水生 木、木生火、火生土、土生金。 "相克"是指五种元素相互排斥和 制约的关系,即金克木、木克土、 土克水、水克火、火克金。

theories and thoughts. Ancient Chinese philosophers observed all things on earth as generative without ceasing, in flux. and growing in the eternal cycle of birth and death, a point quite similar to the unity of opposites in modern philosophy. They also believed that all things were comprised of five basic elements, namely Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, and that these elements generated and overcame each other and moved in ceaseless circles. "Generating each other" means that the five elements generate and promote each other, that is, Metal carries Water, Water nourishes Wood, Wood feeds Fire, Fire creates Earth, and Earth bears Metal. "Overcoming each other" means that the five elements exclude and restrict each other, that is, Metal chops Wood, Wood parts Earth, Earth absorbs Water, Water quenches Fire, and Fire melts Metal.



007 Profound Tai Chi Culture 中大精深的太极文化

自然万物的五行归属表 Wuxing Matrix of All Things in the Universe

	木	火	±	金	水
	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
五季 Five seasons	春 Spring	夏 Summer	长夏 Changxia(The 18 days at the turnings of spring, summer, autumn and winter)	秋 Autumn	冬 Winter
五方	东	南	中	西	北
Five directions	East	South	Center	West	North
五化	生	长	化	收	藏
Five energies	Generative	Expansive	Stabilizing	Contracting	Conserving
五气	风	暑	湿	燥	寒
Five climates	Windy	Hot	Damp	Dry	Cold
五色	青	赤	黄	白	黑
Five colors	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
五味	酸	苦	甜	辣	咸
Five flavors	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Hot	Salty
五谷	麻	麦	稷	稻	菽
Five grains	Hemp	Wheat	Millet	Rice	Beans