

deputy principal at the College of Chinese Physical Culture. "They are using the stances, postures and movements of our system. It's a way in which two people can make contact and the movement between them is improvised. One person might lead and the other follows. Nothing is fixed. What they do will depend where their energy takes them.

There is no music, except when we have special performances, and no rhythm as such. It can involve moving each other off balance as well.

"When I performed in London with Wai-Yii (a female college teacher), the Head Daoist, Abbot, from China was watching. He described our dancing as Heaven and Earth being connected together. Wai-Yii being Yin and me being Yang"

Yin and Yang are the two sides of Daoism on the sea horse Daoist symbol. Yin is internal energy and Yang is external. When performers dance the Yin physical arts they are usually connected all the way through. In the more dynamic Yang physical arts, performers move away from each other and then come back together. In Yin physical arts a performer will wear a blue



shirt and move like water. In Yang arts he or she will wear yellow and move like the wind.

Daoist philosophy seeks to get a person's body and the mind in harmony with the natural universe. Wushu movements help in this. Everyone has their own qi energy.

Qi, pronounced *chi*, is the body's internal energy and is replenished from food and the earth. The physical body is seen as a window into that body's internal qi energy. Wushu exercises help make the body as good a conductor of energy as possible, so that the body is relaxed and supple and a person's qi can flow easily through many different channels in the body.

What about the martial content? Isn't that a little aggressive, a touch Bruce Lee? "Some movements are certainly derived from a warrior tradition," admitted Boyd. "But our focus is about developing energy. We have to make the body very much like water and able to flow. Not hard and strong in the Western way but flexible and able to flow. Any competitive or aggressive thoughts or tensions in the body will impede the flow of qi. We can relax under pressure".

**D**ancing in China developed from the need to keep fit and from martial exercises, or keeping fit for war. A traditional story tells of a great flood. The people suffered from the damp and cold and they were numb and stiff. A dance was created to help them recover and gain their health. There are stories of warriors dancing with swords and shields and then in peaceful times dancing with feathers and their shields.

The College of Chinese Physical Culture teaches a form of wushu called Weihai Lishi Quanfa. It is a Daoist whole body breathing system. It was conceived and developed by the Li family who lived in the town, now the city, of Weihai in north east China. They used traditional movements and many of the movements go

## Famous Names in Wushu

**Jet Li** - China's national wushu champion and star of many films including *Hero* and the *Once Upon A Time In China* series.

## Websites

[www.lishiarts.org](http://www.lishiarts.org)  
[www.cpc.ac.uk](http://www.cpc.ac.uk)  
[www.journey-film.co.uk](http://www.journey-film.co.uk)  
[www.seahorsearts.co.uk](http://www.seahorsearts.co.uk)  
 google "lee' or 'li' family" to find other organisations teaching the system and to find out more of the life of Chee Soo.  
 Books and videos are helpful but Chee Soo described the Lishi arts as "a doing art".

