

Get your 'inner peace' on with a Yejo Circle temple trip!



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ay from it all and live up a mountain like a monk? Well Yejo Circle offer you just that opportunity for a weekend break.

By: Roy Hanney 122007654 Class 1

There is a dim recollection of sound, sticks against each other, a woodpecker? I close my eyes. There it is again, tap tap... Tap tap tap! Quiet descends and I turn over, burying my head under the covers. The "tap tap tap.." continues to worry away at the edge of my dreams until "dongggggg"! A loud gong crashes the sleep from my eyes and I remember. I am in a temple, it's 5am and I will be staying here for two nights to sample an experience of temple living.

Stepping out into the dawn lights burn in the main temple building the gong beating it's refrain to a chorus of a thousand birds. A lone monk runs up the temple stairs robes flapping in the dawn. We assemble, all of us fellow travellers, bleary eyed and expectant, for an introduction to some gentle qigong. The 12 silk as it's called is a Daoist system of turning, stretching and breathing exercise designed to open the meridians, massage the organs and mobilise the joints. It's as ancient as China and we have all come here to learn this technique along with a little Taijiquan courtesy of [Yejo Circle](#) travel. Billed as an introduction to Daoism and an opportunity for a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of Shanghai we have come to renew ourselves.

This is a peaceful place of contemplation we are told as we begin our first session of seated meditation. It seems though that nobody has explained this to the old ladies who as devotees attend to the upkeep of the temple. As the holler across the temple at each other I consider the possibility that they are there to test the patience of the monks. To see if they can endure, perhaps this is Buddha's way. They are though a delight and the serve up a series of tasty vegetarian meals for us throughout the weekend and engage us all in banter seemingly unaware that few if us speak Mandarin. It doesn't matter though as even the Chinese speakers can't understand their thick local dialect.

During the weekend we all make new friends and exchange notes of our experiences as explorers of Dao and it's associated arts. We learn the 12 silk qigong, sit in quiet contemplation and learn a little of a Taijiquan long form. Even though we don't learn the whole form (there 108 movements) it doesn't matter and as the teacher explains it is the process that is where the enjoyment lies not the end result. It's the journey, a step on the path. I feel so energised by all this that by Sunday afternoon I can no longer bear the meditation, I can't sit still, it's an act of supreme will just to keep my eyes

closed. I want to do more Taijiquan I have the bug yet I know I won't practice.

Then it's time to climb aboard the bus and return to the manic pace of Shanghai with the hope we each carry a little of the peace we found at the temple with us. We exchange Weixin contacts and talk about how will do it again soon. Then we separate, following our own paths knowing that we all shared some peace together as brothers and sisters in silence.

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