



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout February 26, 2023: Celtic Symbols



St Patrick's Day Greeting card circa 1907

On March 17, 2023, everyone becomes Irish, or so it seems. We wear green, drink green beer, go to parades, sing, "Oh, Danny Boy" and celebrate the culture of the Irish and the American- Irish peoples. Since 2009, the White House has dyed the water in the fountain fronting the White House, green.



Like many other cultures of the world, the Celtic people have symbols that they honor and love. Today, the term 'Celtic' generally refers to the languages and cultures of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, and Brittany; also called the Celtic nations. One symbol in particular is most interesting. It is the Dara Celtic Knot.



The Dara knot symbolizes the intricate, magnificent, robust and incredibly powerful root system of an oak tree and is one of the key Celtic strength symbols.

The Celts revered trees and they believed that oak trees were sacred. The Celts believed that it held the spirits of their ancestors which is why it's one of the more popular Celtic symbols for family. The Dara Celtic Knot is one of a number of Celtic symbols for strength and inner strength. The symbol comes from the Gaelic word '*Doire*', which means '*Oak Tree*'.

Living up to 300 years, the oak is believed to represent strength, innate wisdom and immortality. The early peoples witnessed how the oak grew from tiny acorns and as

they grew withstood lightning strikes, wind, storms and battles amongst the various tribes.



The strength of the oak comes from its root system. The tap root is outgrown by an extensive lateral root system that spreads horizontally out from the trunk to and well beyond the drip line, sometimes as much as 90 feet. For a mature oak, this horizontal root system is the primary supporter of the tree for the rest of its life. It is no wonder the oak is an honored symbol of the Celtic peoples' strength and perseverance.

In T'ai Chi, strength, wisdom and immortality is represented mostly in the Yin Yang symbol, also known as "Taiji" or Taijitu". Dating back to ancient China before the 3rd century BCE Yin Yang represents the unity and duality of nature. The complementary forces interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts. Neither is static, and their interactions are thought to maintain the harmony and balance of the universe and to influence everything within it. It is a central



concept in Chinese philosophy, science, medicine, and martial arts. (Thank you Wikipedia)

As we perform our T'ai Chi or Qigong, we are reminded, like the mighty oak tree, we root and ground our energy in our feet, control the movement of our body with our hips and waist and express the beauty of each form in our hands and fingers.

We become the mighty oak

Peace and goodwill to all people of the world, may peace and love endure

Linda

