



English edition

DINAMICA

A.S.D.

TAI CHI CHUAN E ARTI ASSOCIATE

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太極拳





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Dinamica - Tai Chi Chuan and Arti associate A.S.D has been established by people who are willing to activate and share their potential through Tai Chi Chuan, arts and psychophysical disciplines as: meditation, breathing techniques, Qi Gong, Taoist Yoga (Tao Yin).

Dinamica is affiliate to the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association (IYFTCCA©). Its aim is to promote Tai Chi Chuan and give the opportunity to know and practice traditional Tai Chi Chuan following the methodology and teachings of Master Yang Jun, 5th generation lineage holder from the creator of Yang style Tai Chi Chuan.

Dear Readers, here is the first issue of  **DINAMICA** the magazine.

Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan e Arti associate is now one year old. Celebrating together with the warmth, lights and colours of spring, we are ready to start our adventure, which is already eagerly welcome.

Many members contribute to realize this project. I thank the whole editorial staff for the energy they invested right from the very beginning.

A special thanks to the 'Pencils', the authors of the front cover, who will each time give us original creations, expressing the artistic nature of our association.

In this issue you will find: a poetic approach to the Yin Yang theory as a view of the world, nature and life; a detailed study of the annual wormwood, a healing herb already known in China and rediscovered today by Noble prize Youyou Tu; you will understand why is Tai Chi Chuan healthily and why it is also known as the art of long life; finally you will read about the art of pottery, the connection between human beings and matter, or elements.

In the last page you will find an update on the activities of the associations and events; if you wish you can support our projects becoming a member of Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan e Arti Associate a.s.d.

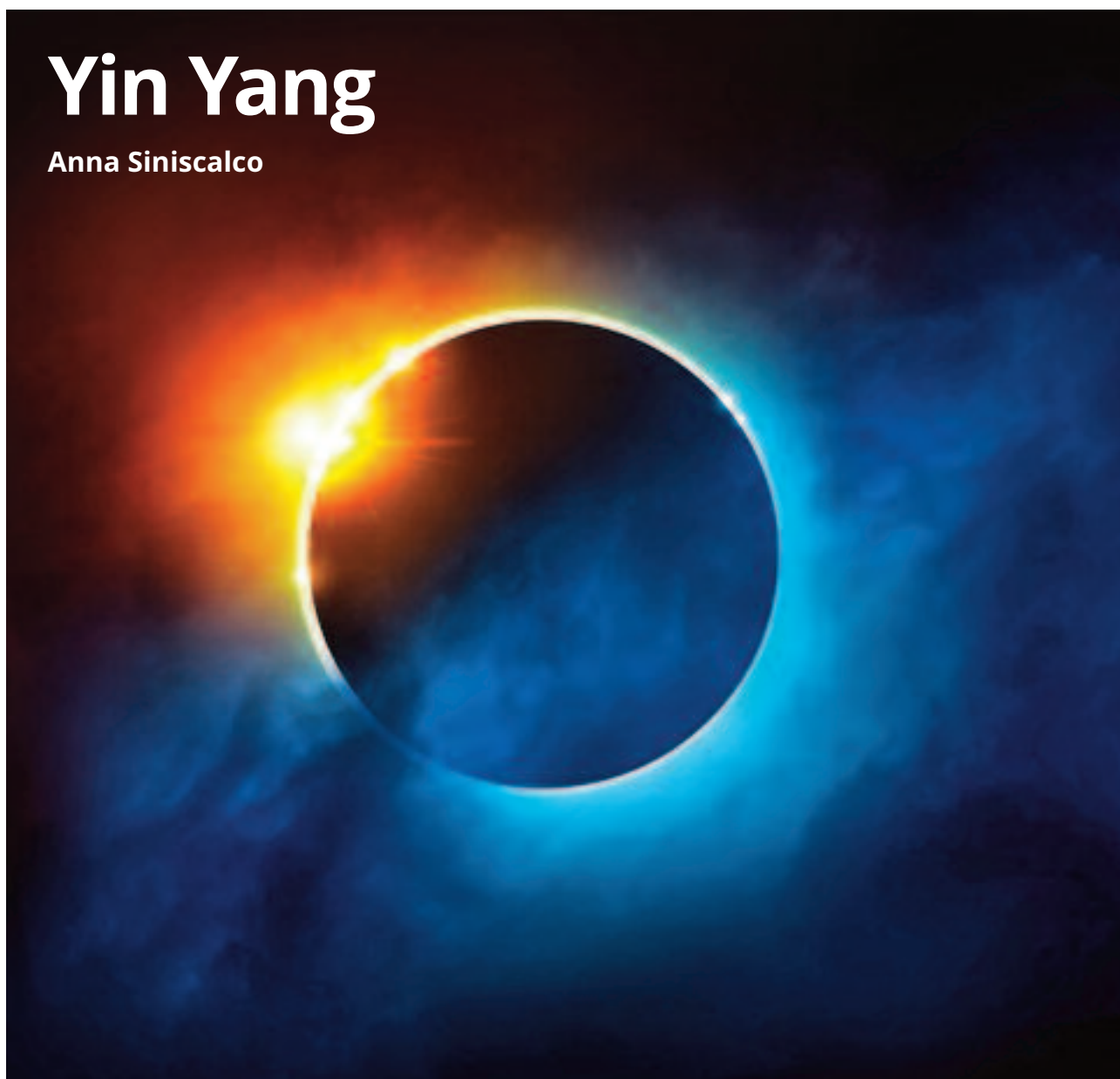
Hoping this will help you to have a whole vision of arts and knowledge, thanks to the professionalism of our members, enjoy your reading!



Anna Siniscalco
*President Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan
e Arti associate a.s.d.*

Yin Yang

Anna Siniscalco



According to the Chinese philosophical and scientific view, fundamental Yin and Yang dualism could have originated by observing relations such as those between body and shadow, an object and its reflection in the water, dream and reality, the moon and the sun, all considered suggestions, clues of the existence of two different worlds and realities: the physical one, which we see, and another one, which we perceive observing the natural phenomena around us.

Usually the word Yin is associated with female, cold and cloudy weather, rainy sky, and the word Yang with male, light and sunny weather, southern side of the mountains, whereas in a poem of the III century b.c. called *Tian Wen* ('Heavenly Questions') a triad concept of Yin and Yang is exposed.

Here below you can find the first verses of the poem*, ascribed to Qu Yuan (340-278 b.C., one of the greatest Chinese poet of the ancient times):



*Who could ever answer when I ask
What was at the beginning of times?
Back then, Heaven and Earth hadn't been split,
Who knows what took place?
Light and darkness merged together,
Who can explain what happened then?
When things impalpably swarmed formless,
Who can tell how it was?
The shining light and the darkest dark,
When did they form?
The Yin Yang three unions,**
Where do they come from?
The nine-sphered Heaven,
Who has measured and divided it?
Who conceived a scheme so grand?*

The three combinations of Yin and Yang in verse 11 refer to Heaven, Human Being and Earth, because the two abstractions Yin and Yang, while materialising and joining together, generate everything in this world, both spiritual and material. Basically, Yin and Yang are more an idea or alterity yearning to combine: they tune and harmonise each other.

The whole philosophical and scientific Chinese way of thinking is dominated by this concept of Yin and Yang, since they are not substance, powers or principles, but abstractions encasing substance, powers and principles.

Even if concisely expressed, these concepts allow us to have a glimpse on a philosophy in which human being and nature are not two distinct and separate entities, but a whole, since Yin and Yang gave birth to the whole human world, either earthly and heavenly. For this reason human beings must learn to behave in order not to unsettle the state of things, but to conform and unify themselves with the world, without altering the genuine course of events of nature and world. And when we are talking about nature and world, we must consider them both in a material and spiritual way.

In fact, since matter and spirit are not two different spheres, the human being, settled in the genuine course, can help keeping harmony in the world by following the flow of events.

* Transl. from Italian version.

** This verse has been translate from the more ancient version we have, that is by Wang Yi, official of the imperial archives 114-119 d.C. Guo Moro (1892-1978) has translated the poem in modern Chinese, changing the verse: "three" has become "two", and the sense has been distorted.

Artemisia annua

Lamberto Tomassini

Department of Environmental Biology - University of Rome "Sapienza"



Artemisia annua story is an interesting and paradigmatic one. Nowadays and at our longitudes, we know it because of the recent 2015 Nobel Prize which was awarded for the first time to a Chinese woman, the scientific researcher Youyou Tu. Nevertheless, the story started in land and time set very far from us.

It all began sixteen centuries ago in Hunan (middle-easter China), the region where this kind of grass grows spontaneously. Because of its large spread, the plant – which the Chinese people call qinghao from its dark iridescent green and the straightness of its tops – is considered a weed. But its tops, really bitter in spite of their sweet smell, are gathered by local people to be used for medical purposes and, as it often happens in popular medicine, its decoction has many different uses. The most common ones are as antiparasitic (specially cutaneous, but even as polluted water disinfectant) and anti-inflammatory and antipyretic. All these uses had been established more than a thousand years ago: species of artemisia are indeed mentioned in the legendary emperor Shennong's Bencao Jing ('The Classic of Herbal Medicine'), the most ancient text on agriculture and herbal therapy we can find in human history.

Right at this point, sixteen centuries ago, someone, perhaps a herbal researcher with power of observation and influenced by ancient texts, had the idea to experiment an artemisia formulation against ague, supposedly spreading in a marshland region as Hunan. Such an idea looks perfectly logic: the qinghao is both antipyretic and antiparasitic. Sure enough, this

medicament displayed a fair activity and its formulation had been written out on a medical recipe book together with many others.

Time goes by. In 1967, at the Chinese Cultural Revolution's peak, life for intellectuals, especially scientists, was anything but easy. On the other hand, scientists were an important source to rely upon in times of troubles and that period was full of troubles for the Chinese Popular Republic. Vietnam was fighting a deadly war and the Northern State, besides confronting South-Vietnamises and Americans, had a hard work to annihilate malaria devastating its army. North Vietnam was the main political ally for China and so Mao Zedong entrusted Chinese scientific community with a huge project: a secret research focused on studying any doable chemical matter able to defeat ague. By the way, malaria's plasmodium – the microorganism causing the illness – was showing the first resistance phenomena to quinine and cloroquine, both substances intended to increasingly lose their efficacy.

For two years Chinese scientists had studied a stunning range of synthetic molecules without success. Then, Mao turned to Beijing Traditional Chinese Medicine Academy, which charged the project with its young researcher Youyou Tu, a medical herbs specialist.

Youyou Tu undertook a detailed work to rescue ancient traditional knowledge: she travelled for miles, visiting villages, consulting healers and herbalists, copying thousands of recipes from ancient texts, gathering the described plants in order to extract from them the precious metabolites. In 1971, bringing back to life a Hunan sixteen centuries old recipe, she found at last that *Artemisia annua* is able to halt the microorganism's growth. Its activity was weak, but Youyou Tu found out the cause of active ingredients degradation: the high temperature reached during the decoction preparation. Facing this test, she perfected the formulation using modern scientific knowledge and, due to the low temperature, the extract kept unchanged the plant's components and their powerful activity.

Soon after, its active ingredient was isolated and the chemical structure determined: Qinghaosu is the Chinese name, while Artemisinin is the denomination spread in the international scientific community. During blossom time, the best period to gather this herbs, leaves and tops contain high amounts of this substance. To talk in chemical terms, we are dealing with a sesquiterpene lactone, and in it both chemical structure and mechanism of action are very different from those of Cinchona alkaloids or others antimalarial compounds we know; that's why no drug resistance phenomena has been registered in the beginning (and later they happened very rarely).





The following years were characterised by hard work to settle laboratory findings into clinical practices, as lot of international scientific publications can show. In the meantime, qinghaosu-based pharmaceuticals took hold everywhere and they're still in use, also associated with others anti-ague.

Many times, in the last decades, Youyou Tu has been awarded with medical research acknowledgements and in 2015, eighty-five years old, she reaped at last the rewards of her sacrifices, the Nobel Prize in Medicine, as the first Chinese woman to be awarded by this prestigious institution.

So the story ends in our days, when the fight against malaria is far from victory, nevertheless we're still striving forward, specially in the way of knowledge. As we have said at the beginning, the story is an interesting and paradigmatic one: this little Chinese woman didn't use the usual opposition between West and East, ancient wisdom and modern science; she gained indeed an extraordinary goal combining together all the elements in perfect harmony.

Why is Tai Chi Chuan good for your health?

Teresa Zuñiga Maglione

M.D.



In a definition of the WHO, 'health' means "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being". This definition tends to value the **subjectivity** of each person on one hand, and their ability to express social and personal potential on the other. In the final analysis well-being is considered the sensation of feeling well that every person experience, including its psychological and emotional implications, which are strictly related to the ability of peripheral tissues to consume oxygen, that is the "aerobic power".

This power is measurable and, even more interesting, it can be increased through a specific training which is therefore called aerobic, which has specific features.

The official medical model of well-being corresponding to the absence of illness leads to a 'check-up' practice: if I want to know how I feel, all I have to do is undertake all possible tests, or the most possible of any kind, especially those which allow me to exclude any existence of an actual disease.

It is well known that TCC is healthy – it's the ultimate aerobic discipline –, as newspapers

and magazines report. There you can read that TCC is good for your joints, your muscles, your circulatory system, that is destressing; but this is just a list of its benefits without describing how it works, what happens to our body mind from the functional/physiological, metabolic, psychic, nervous and immunologic point of view, topics that we will discuss in the next issues.

In this article I'm going to talk about a very important feature of TCC, which is relaxing. When we talk about relaxing, listeners normally think about being limp, whereas relaxing makes you able to extend your joints, tendons and muscles, thus helping the blood supply. And, even more so, a better peripheral oxygenation – that increases the aerobic power of tissues – enhances cellular interchange as well as the health of tissues in the whole body, as a consequence improving:



Elasticity - the muscle makes us elastic (allowing extent of movement).

Flexibility - our joints make us flexible (allowing us or not allowing us to make that movement).

Moreover, movement is life, and if you improve it you can avoid illness and diseases, such as osteoporosis and metabolic syndrome. The calm and continuous movements of TCC make our body train the tendons to be more elastic and efficient, thus enhancing energetic consumption and metabolism.

Aging means that many cells die, but they can be replaced according to the request, that is from what the body needs. 'Use it or it gets atrophized' it's the organic efficiency law: what you don't use is meant to be wasted; only if a need/request occurs, the stimulated tissues are kept efficient. It is nowadays recognized that physical activity is the most efficient way to improve strength and balance in elderly people.

TCC practice – which emphasize slow, continuous, soft and relaxed movements – requires the participation of many muscles in the whole body for long periods of time, meaning that not only your body activates and strengthens the muscles engaged, but also your mind is involved in controlling and memorizing the movements, thus prompting neurons to create new neural connections and increasing the brain plasticity (we are going to talk about this in the next issues).

Pottery: the Art of transformation

Cinzia Catena

Ceramist

In its original form of clay, earth has been used by mankind since the beginning of times (back to the Neolithic we can find the first fired bowls, heated by the fire). And worldwide the art of pottery is known as one of the basic forms of handcraft.

Probably observing the footprints left on the ground, mankind discovered the typical features of clay, its plasticity, allowing different uses and shapes.

It can take any shape: from the simple clay, conveniently worked, you can create bricks, and build a house, or a jar, or a Liberty vase, an Ontani's sculpture, Ikea dishes.

Even more than being highly adaptable and its appearance that makes clay working particularly fascinating, making it different from other materials, it is its ability to undergo transformations, moving from a semi-fluid stage to a hard and resistant one, almost like glass.

Clay is sedimentary **earth** that mixed together with **water** can be pressed, overlapped, stretched, squeezed, engraved, handled in many different ways. It is drained, dried by **air**, so that clay harden and stabilize its shape till it becomes such a hard material it can be sculpted, overlapped, etched or coloured with other kind of earth. And then **fire** makes clay even harder and sturdy, and if you add some glazing materials, you can decorate it and make it waterproof, giving it endless nuances.



Clay is not only transformed through handcraft but also undergoes an inner transformation through a series of stages that people's mind and hand can guide and steer, towards a more or less precise artistic and functional result. Therefore working clay is also playing with natural elements: **Earth** (physicality), **Water** (emotionality), **Air** (rationality), **Fire** (spiritual tension).

When you create an object or a shape, you are starting a dialogue as well as facing the law governing matter. (And just like all natural phenomena, it requires an empathetic and at



the same time practical participation, spontaneous but requiring great devotion).

It is necessary to know, steer, respect the interaction between elements. Moreover you need a curious and consistent attitude, and you must acquire enough technique to understand how it all works.

From the past to our days, people have tried and experimented new forms to process clay, actually varying and adding different elements throughout the working stages: for example mixing clay with other materials, forcing or interrupting heating, experimenting new building techniques, inventing varnish and glaze to cover the pottery. I believe that those who decided to practice in the pottery craft are willing to try their hands at a totally engaging form of art – both on technical and expressive level – making us witness incessant transmutations.

This is also true, even if in different ways, for the industrial research, which has always exploited one of the cheapest material in the world.

Working clay is not only a way to interact and in case control its transformations while understanding the stage of processing. It also involves the possibility to deal with an extremely receptive material, which make it possible to express an emotion, an impression, a desire or a fear. It often happens that feelings which we ignore start shaping through

working clay with bare hand, or through the choice of a particular color, or a shape. What often remains unexpressed in a more rational way, can arise from the contact with clay and its elements.

It is therefore a way to get in touch with your inner self, with those parts the practice of this art can talk to.

As any creative process, the emotional tension finds its way out through a gesture, a sound, a word, a colour, an image, a shape. In case of working clay, its extreme ductility allows even beginners to transfer feeling, emotions, directly and unconditionally into the material. It's pressing, pinching, separating, carving, etching, moulding, even if in a rough way, without any special skills.

Once again the word 'transformation' can be appropriate to indicate the capacity of clay to record movements and gestures.

Clay is also a material which has its symbolic and archetypal significance. The earth nourishes the seed, generates natural phenomena, becomes material for the creation of the first man. The Mother Earth, the sacred Tellus, the Pacha Mama are all embodiments of the creative force, common to different parts of the world. This earth, this clay, which generates and transforms, has always been used by human beings, who, in moulding it, know and mould themselves.



✓ **Sabato 9 aprile 2016 ore 14.00**

CREA - Centro di ricerca per la frutticoltura in collaborazione con Parco dell'Appia Antica

HANAMI, FESTA DEL CILIEGIO IN FIORE AL PARCO DELL'APPIA ANTICA

Passeggiata sensoriale tra i ciliegi in fiore

*Appuntamento presso CREA - Centro di ricerca per la frutticoltura,
Via di Fioranello, 52 - Ciampino Roma*



✓ **Sabato 30 aprile 2016 ore 10.30**

GIORNATA MONDIALE DEL TAI CHI CHUAN

Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan e Arti associate A.S.D. invita i praticanti di Tai Chi Chuan ad una pratica condivisa a Villa Borghese.

La pratica sarà guidata dalle Istruttrici certificate IYFTCCA e FIWuK: Anna Siniscalco e Teresa Zuniga, discepole del G. Maestro Yang Jun.

Appuntamento nel piazzale antistante Galleria Borghese, dentro Villa Borghese - Roma



✓ **VI SEGNALIAMO**

Sabato 2 aprile 2016 alle ore 15.30

A Castelnuovo di Porto (RM), Via Monte Cardeto, 12

in collaborazione con l'AIAS (Associazione Italiana Amatori piante Succulente)

TECNICHE DI SEMINA e COME ORGANIZZARE UNA COLLEZIONE

Lezione e condivisione di esperienze, preparazione del terriccio, semenzaio, semina.

L'incontro si concluderà con un "apericena".

Per info e prenotazioni: 347 2375290

Sabato 7 maggio 2016 alle ore 20.30

Al Teatro Greco Via Leoncavallo 10, Roma

la compagnia " L'Albero di Maggio" dell'Associazione Cemea del Lazio, presenterà

L'AMORE E LA PASSIONE PER LA DANZA

danze della tradizione popolare internazionale, italiane e del Rinascimento, con musica dal vivo.

Per prevendita biglietti, info e prenotazioni rivolgersi: Cemea del Lazio tel .06.58203177 (ore 9-12) - Paola Della Camera 3479309321 - Grazia Saracini 3398713485



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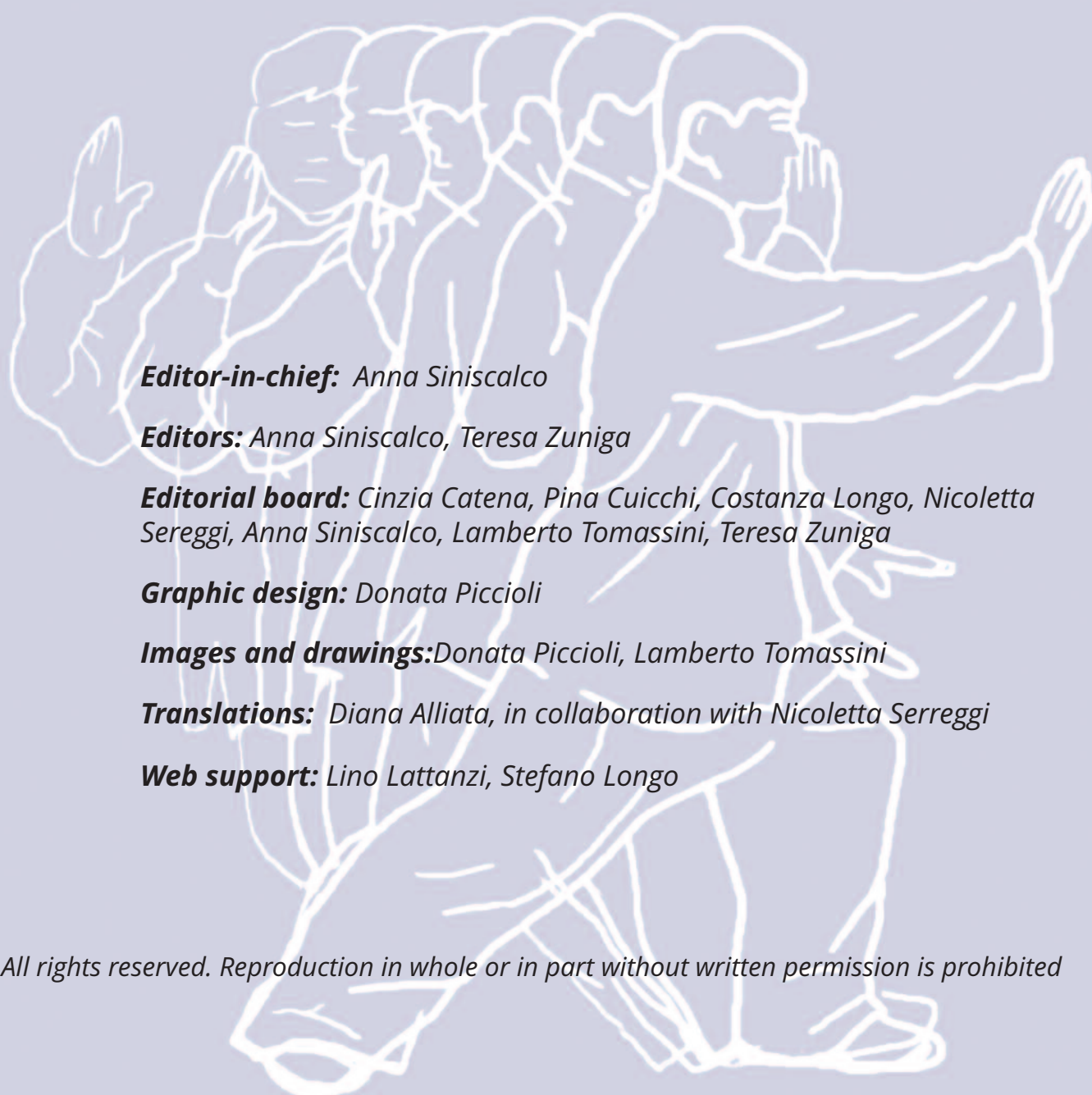
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