

Daoist Flow Yoga Teacher Training: In-depth overview of each module:

Module 1: Nature Is Our Teacher: Vinyasa Yoga, Somatics, and Qigong (five days)

We are all part of the natural world and natural world is part of us — we share rhythms, patterns, cycles and fluid movements. This first module sets the groundwork for our journey to rediscover these fundamental rhythms and patterns that underlie and support our ability to move with fluidity, coordination and wholeness. In retracing the steps to this wholeness, we will explore through felt experience (somatics) how natural and universal movement patterns found in qigong can inform how and why we move in yoga. Emphasis on finding what intuitively inspires the body to move and breathe will help students begin to embody their practice.

In this module we will explore:

- The philosophy of Yoga, Buddhist and Daoist views of fluidity, nature and wholeness.
- The breath as the primary pattern and inspiration of movement
- An introduction to somatics and its importance to all we do
- An introduction to qigong and how it can complement yoga
- The role of the teacher and how to hold space
- Philosophy: 'Foundations of Yoga' (with Daniel Simpson)
- Somatic anatomy: The skeletal structure (with Aki Omori)

Learning Outcomes - By the end of this module trainees will:

- Have gained an overview + basic understanding of Yoga, Buddhist + Daoist philosophy
- Have refined their understanding of somatic practice
- Have deepened their own personal practice + explored somatic practices and understood the importance of practice
- Have gained awareness of qigong principles and how it can complement yoga
- Have gained insight to the role of the teacher
- Have gained an overview of the history of yoga
- Have experientially learnt the basics of the skeletal system

Module 2: Movement Patterns and Vinyasa Yoga: Rediscovering Our Natural Movement Wisdom (five days)

In this module we will explore the source of all movement: the breath and its emerging natural movement patterns which underpin development as well as carry prana throughout

the body and support yoga asana and vinyasa.

We will delve into the all encompassing pattern of respiration to observe and experience how this is the template for all movement in life. Exploring through somatic, solo and partner work we will feel and understand how the breath informs, influences and guides us, not just through our yoga practice but through all movement and states of being.

Revisiting and reintegrating these primary movement patterns can enable us to move with more natural ease, skill, fullness, grace and strength in yoga asana (and life!) and gain understanding of structural alignment, foundational stability and momentum of breath to support transitional movement.

In this module we will explore:

- The profound power of the breath and how it supports our every movement and carries prana through the body and mind
- How breath awareness helps us work with gravity, movement, touch and dialogue to access the body's wisdom and natural movement patterns
- How natural movement patterns underlie and support the moving body in the context of asana practice and alignment
- How to integrate traditional modes of yoga alignment with a somatic approach to teaching
- The connection between personal practice, creative endeavours and teaching skills
- Philosophy: 'Yoga, Meditation and Buddhism' (with Daniel Simpson)
- Using your voice (with Dan Breakwell)
- Somatic anatomy: Spinal movement + development (with Aki Omori)

Learning Outcomes - By the end of this module trainees will:

- Have felt and understood the breath and how it supports our whole being
- Have learnt approaches to cultivate and develop somatic and embodiment awareness
- Have learnt about the natural fundamental movement patterns
- Have practiced connecting primary movement patterns to asanas
- Have understood how sourcing these underlying patterns of movement can be used to support all levels of yoga experience both in their own practice and teaching
- Have an understanding of the relationship between meditation, yoga philosophy and the Buddha's teachings.
- Have gained experience using vocal range, projection and public speaking.

- Have experientially learnt the anatomical and physiological principles related to physical structure and well being
- Have connected aspects of somatic awareness and embodiment to help realise the relevance of yoga and yoga philosophy in a modern day life context

Module 3: Vinyasa Yoga and Qigong: Harmonising with the Movement of Energy and Intention (five days)

Qigong is a Chinese energy healing and martial art with roots in Daoism and Buddhism. It integrates the virtues of trust, integrity, wisdom, and compassion into the human body and spirit. Like yoga, it uses deep breathing, meditation, and static or dynamic movements to promote greater health and vitality. The actions generate and revitalize the *qi*, or life force, in the body. As an energy-based practice, the focus in qigong tends to be on slow, circular and intention-based movements that improve the flow of *qi* through the body's meridians and organs. In contrast, yoga *asana* practices tend to emphasize linear extensions of the spine, body and limbs. This works to tone, lengthen and strengthen muscles more directly. When aspects of qigong are incorporated into an *asana* practice, the flow of *prana* and *qi* can be significantly increased, bringing greater energy, health and efficiency to the body. Students will see how the cross-fertilization of yoga and qigong offers creative and insightful discoveries that can delight in unexpected ways.

As qigong works with energy, this module will also include the energetics of touch and giving adjustments. We will explore the importance of kinesthetic learning, and understand how the transmission of energy through our hands and hearts can be an invaluable communication aid to education, learning and teaching.

In this module we will explore:

- Active as well as static qigong forms, visualisations and meditations
- Chinese Five Element theories of the organs and meridians as well as seasons
- The integration of vinyasa yoga and qigong
- The energetics of touch, assisting + adjusting
- Philosophy: 'What is Daoism? + Yoga and the Dao' (with Mimi Kuo-Deemer)
- Somatic anatomy: The organ system (with Aki Omori)

Learning Outcomes - By the end of this module trainees will:

- Have gained an more in-depth understanding of qigong
- Have and refined their understanding of working with energy and intention
- Have deepened their own personal practice + explored qigong practices and
- Have gained ways to integrate qigong forms into vinyasa yoga classes

- Have gained the ability to give skilful and responsive hands-on adjustments
- Have experientially learnt the basics of the organ system

Module 4: Fundamentals of Teaching, Creativity and Sequencing (five days)

In this module we will begin to utilize and integrate the learning from the previous modules to develop clear, systematic yet flexible teaching methodologies from which to guide our future students. We will examine the key principles of alignment such as structural safety, movement and breath to ensure safe, accessible and enjoyable teaching and learning for both student and teacher.

This will all be explored through the lense of what we see and how we interpret that visual feedback in order to gain understanding of our students' needs and use that information to guide us in how and what we teach, instruct and offer.

We will introduce the systematic construction of asana which is referred to as "krama" or "wise progression" and explore the basic progression and nature of instruction through verbal cues, vocal intonation, demonstration, modifications, alternatives and props to provide a healthy somatic experience of movement. This will then lead into how we can organically sequence our classes with purpose and intention to create a flowing embodied experience of Yoga.

In this module we will explore:

- The Art of Seeing
- Teaching approaches that are clear, kind and compassionate
- Use and refinement of vocal quality and language of teaching
- Developing narratives in themes in teaching
- Theory and creativity of sequencing in vinyasa yoga
- Restorative and Healing practices
- Philosophy: 'The Evolution of Physical Practice' (with Daniel Simpson)
- Chanting and kirtan (with Dan Breakwell)
- Somatic anatomy: the nervous system (with Aki Omori)

Learning Outcomes - By the end of this module trainees will:

- Have gained insight into how we see and read bodies in motion and stillness
- Have learnt authentic and compassionate approaches to teaching so learning is accessible for all levels
- Have gained understanding of safe, purposeful and creative sequencing

- Have an understanding of the roots of modern yoga
- Have gained experience of the value, place and meaning behind chanting
- Will have gained skills to use and share therapeutic and restorative yoga practices

Module 5: Practicalities of Teaching and What a Deeper Practice Means (three days)

Module 5 comes at the end of the training's mentorship. It will be an opportunity for the group to reflect on the journey but also share their experiences of teaching in the real world. We will explore questions that arise during teaching, and contemplate how we can ensure time for self care, to develop as caring successful teachers in a competitive world, and continue to live our practice authentically. We will review the role of the teacher, and consider the difficulties as well as opportunities to share what we love in the best ways that we know. We will also have a chance to come together once more to bring a conclusion to our journey as students and teachers of yoga.

In this module we will explore:

- What it is to be a yoga teacher
- How we can sustain ourselves in the seat of yoga teacher
- Professional issues and concerns that may arise
- Self Care and the dangers of "burning out"
- Ethical Principles
- Continuing the journey of Learning

Learning Outcomes - By the end of this module trainees will:

- Understand the importance that: 'In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few'. – Shunryu Suzuki
- Understand that teaching yoga is a continuous journey of exploration, inquiry, learning, service and humility.

Philosophy Modules Overview:

Module 1 – Foundations of Yoga, with Daniel Simpson

We begin with an overview of yoga's origins as a way of renouncing the world to avoid rebirth. Considering a range of sources, from archaeological relics to texts such as the Vedas and early Upanishads, we will reflect on how we know what we know and how much is unknown – not least since yoga was mainly taught orally. In the process, we will identify common themes, from inward focused detachment to the underlying quest to find freedom from *karma*.

Module 2 – Yoga, Meditation and Buddhism, with Daniel Simpson

Looking in depth at classical teachings on yoga philosophy (in Patanjali's *sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Mahabharata*), we will compare their ideas to the Buddha's discourses. Although the two traditions have much in common, there are also subtle differences. We will examine their approaches to meditative practice and the nature and meaning of liberation. This includes an introduction to philosophical systems such as Samkhya and Vedanta, on which yoga draws.

Module 3 – Yoga and the Dao, with Mimi Kuo-Deemer

We will explore the origins and central teachings of Daoism, including naturalism, harmonising with nature, yin-yang theory and *wuwei*, or effortless effort. We will also look at the distinctions as well as similarities between Yogic and Daoist philosophies, and understand the relationship Daoism has to Buddhism, particular Zen Buddhism. Early Daoist texts such as the *Lao Zi*, or *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, *Neiye*, *Huainanzi* and *Zhuang Zi* will be explored.

Module 4 – The Evolution of Physical Practice, with Daniel Simpson

Modern methods based on postures are a recent innovation, perhaps beginning 100 years ago. However, they have roots in traditional techniques of *hatha* yoga. This was influenced by Tantra, which regarded the body not as an obstacle but as a means of transformation. We will focus on shifts in early 20th century India, when ideas were exchanged between East and West under colonial rule. We will conclude by reflecting on contemporary issues such as cultural appropriation.