

國際楊氏太極拳協會

The Newsletter of the International Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Association



MASTER YANG ZHEN DUO



Tai Chi Chuan

Number 10 • Spring 2003

DEVELOPING
TAIJIQUAN
GONGFU

Interview with
Masters Yang Zhen duo
and Yang Jun

EDITORIAL



Dave Barrett
Editor

Welcome to the Tenth Issue of the Association Newsletter!

In the past three years there have been many exciting developments in the content and layout of our publication. Dozens of contributors have shared their insights into Tai Chi Chuan, as well as how their practice affects their lives and communities.

Masters Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun have been very helpful in providing extensive interviews that have covered many aspects of practice and theory. We are so grateful that they have taken the time to explore these subjects in such a thoughtful and thought provoking manner. It is their great hope that the level of our practice can be raised up through the discussion of important aspects of Tai Chi Chuan theory and practical advice. The discussion of Tai Chi Chuan can sometimes veer towards the esoteric and obscure, however the Masters' comments are always down to earth and full of the practical wisdom gained from a lifetime of dedication to maintaining their family traditions.

In particular, Master Yang Jun continues to provide practice guidelines as a regular feature. Using digital photography and brilliant design work, Marco Gagnon has created a new format for Tai Chi Chuan instructional materials. Here we can see the motions and techniques and read the comments of Master Yang Jun on the same page space. Having thumbed endlessly through many Tai Chi Chuan manuals over the years, I feel that this new format is a most exciting and innovative development.

We want to continue to improve the quality of our publications. I am encouraging you to send in questions, ideas, topics you would like to read about in our Practice and Theory sections. I would also like to propose a general topic to our members: "My First Tai Chi Chuan Teacher". How we have all come to practice this marvelous Art is, in many cases, the result of an inspirational individual. This person has shone us the grace and beauty of Tai Chi Chuan, drawing us into the practice and guiding our development. In Chinese there is a phrase describing the importance of one's first Teacher, "The person who opened my throat and taught me to breathe". A testament, memoir or memorial to these Teachers would be of great interest and I hope you will take some time to consider a submission.

On a personal note: I have enjoyed editing this Newsletter immensely. It amazes me to be able to sit in my out of the way corner of the world, way out west in Oregon, and receive fascinating pieces from all over the world. Many, many hours go into our publications and seeing such a wonderful result makes for great satisfaction. Let us work together to make continued improvements!

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THE TAIYUAN EXPERIENCE

Living and Studying in Taiyuan

By JEREMY BLODGETT
our man in Hong Kong

Master Yang Zhen Duo frequently says that one of the many functions of taiji is to form a cultural bridge between peoples. Last summer we learned again just how great that bridge can be. The 20th anniversary brought possibly the largest group of Westerners ever to visit Taiyuan. With all the excitement of the tournament, celebrations, and cultural exchanges, there was less time to slow down and just experience the Taiyuan way of life.

For those of us that have traveled to Taiyuan, we know that it is a unique city, filled with anachronisms and juxtapositions. New Mercedes weave in and out of schools of slow moving second-hand bicycles with babies on board. The newly restored twin towers from the Ming dynasty can be seen from the sky-scrapers that appear modern yet are made with bricks and have concrete floors inside. The cost of living is remarkably cheap, and wages are equally low. Although it is just a one-hour flight from Beijing, the lifestyle is far removed from that of the capital. In one of the poorest provinces with rather polluted air, the remarkably pure people manage to provide the richest experience.

There is an abundance of martial arts teachers, yet very few actual wushu schools. Most teachers hold classes outside in the parks, including during the coldest weeks in winter where people don't even wear gloves as they practice in sub-freezing temperatures. On Sundays when Master Yang Zhen Duo is in town, he teaches a huge group of new and old students at the ancient Library Building at Yingze Park. The park is filled with all sorts of martial arts

practitioners. Just on the opposite side of the same building a well-known Chen style teacher also holds classes, with Sun style and Wu style sometimes seen nearby. In addition to taiji, Shanxi is also famous for xingyiquan. And occasionally, traveling wushu troupes will hold public demonstrations as well.

Unlike other countries, no one is hassled when carrying a sword or saber through the park. In fact, some of the strangest acts are not uncommon in the parks. Some people practice laughing loudly, while others work on screaming. People walk backwards while the economy crawls ahead. Some kids receive saxophone lessons, while others rap in Chinese to make money. Men sing Shanxi Opera at the edge of the lake, where the peculiar sounds of the ice cracking and the booming mining blasts from the surrounding mountains offer occasional percussion.

In the province there are over 30,000 Shanxi Association members, with more than 80 sub-associations (our "Centers"). Visiting Taiyuan provides a great chance to study with some of the finest Yang Style teachers and practitioners, who generously share their skill and advice. Most of Master Yang's Disciples, formally recognized last summer, live in Taiyuan. Master Yang Jun says that real progress at push hands is best made through daily practice with a good teacher and can be made in only a year or two. Taiji is a language, and just like the practice of Mandarin, it is more easily accomplished in China.

If you are interested in visiting Taiyuan, you don't have to wait until the 25th anniversary in 2007. The spring

and fall are mild, with the annual Shanxi Association's competition each fall worth checking out. Staying in Taiyuan and studying taiji for up to a month is neither expensive nor difficult to arrange. Through continued interaction, we can deepen the growing bonds between the Shanxi and International Associations. ☯

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Jeremy's love affair with Taiyuan began in 1995, when he traveled there with his teacher Horacio Lopez. He spent 1996 and 1997 in Taiyuan teaching English, greatly assisted by Master Yang Jun and Fang Hong, and has since returned frequently. This summer he plans on further strengthening the connection between East and West by opening a foreign language school in Taiyuan and seeks individuals with any teaching experience. If you love adventure, taiji, the mid-day rest, inconvenience and lots of stares please contact jeremy@yangfamilytaichi.com for more information.



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All Tai Chi Chuan enthusiasts are invited to submit articles, letters, and pictures for publication.

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THE METHOD OF EVALUATION

for Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Ranking - 2002

Specific to those who competed in Shanxi International Yang style Tai Chi Chuan Tournament, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China in 2002.

The Methods of Evaluation - Applicants applying for the first time:

According to the requirements of ranking, applicants must meet qualifications in order to apply to the appropriate Level of Rank. This is approved by the Center or consented by the Association.

THE REGULATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. All of who abide by morals inherent in the practice of Martial Art and have been engaged in systematic practice of Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan for five or more years may apply for the Rank of Level 3.
2. All who emphasize the development of the morals inherent in practicing martial arts, have systematically grasped Yang Style Tai Chi's Hand, Sword, and Saber Forms, and fixed Push Hands, and have been engaged in the teaching of Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan for ten (10) or more years may apply for the rank of Level 4.
3. All who emphasize the development of the morals inherent in practicing martial arts, have systematically grasped Yang Style Tai Chi's Hand, Sword, and Saber forms, and fixed moving step Push Hands, and have been engaged in the teaching of Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan for fifteen (15) or more years may apply for the rank of Level 5.
4. All who emphasize the development of the morals inherent in practicing martial arts, have systematically

grasped Yang Style Tai Chi's Hand, Sword, and Saber forms, fixed and moving step Push Hands, and have been engaged in the teaching of Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan for twenty (20) or more years may apply for the rank of Level 6.

5. Center directors at least get level 4

REGULATIONS - APPLICANTS WHO HAVE APPLIED PREVIOUSLY AND ARE APPLYING FOR THE NEXT LEVEL

1. Those who have been ranked, his or her rank should not be promoted higher than one more level.
2. Due to the International Competition, this will be the first time the evaluation is based on Individual scores from the Competition. The ranks from previous years will not be considered at this time.

THE METHOD OF EVALUATION - ALL APPLICANTS

1. Final scores given by the chief judge of the Competition will act as the standard score for ranking.
2. The score for each level should be no less than the lower level one.
3. In the Combined Score, it is not required to test for Traditional Yang Style Long Form and the Theory this time. For example, in the Regional Ranking for Level 4, the Combined four test scores (103 Form, Sword, Saber and 49 Form) should be 34.4 Points, therefore $34.4/4=8.6$. In this rank, the Combined Score for Level 4 should be 8.6×3 (49 Form, Sword, Saber) =25.8 and each Individual Score should be 8 point or higher.





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The International Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of Traditional Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan.

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REQUIREMENTS OF SCORING FOR EACH LEVEL

LEVEL 1 _____
The individual should achieve a score of at least 7.5 in competition for 49 Form

LEVEL 2 _____
The individual should achieve a score of at least 8 points in competition for 49 Form

LEVEL 3 _____
The individual should achieve a score of at least 8 points in each competition (49 Form and one weapon form)

LEVEL 4 _____
The individual should achieve a score of at least 8 points in each competition (49 Form, Sword, and Saber) and a Combined Score of at least 25.8 points.

LEVEL 5 _____
The individual should achieve a score in each competition (49 Form, Sword, and saber), and a Combined Score of at least 26.4 points.

LEVEL 6 _____
The individual should achieve a score of at least 8 points in each competition and a combined score at least 27.

LEVEL 1 _____

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Petra Freitag | Coln, Germany |
| Kaori Ozawa-McAlister | Seattle, Washington |
| Michael McAlister | Seattle, Washington |
| Teofilo Vargas Avccalla | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Michael Burns | New York City |
| Susan Lisagor | New York City |
| Gary Nelson | New York City |
| William Lynders | New York City |
| Luca Mastini | Rome, Italy |
| Maurizio Battistoni | Rome, Italy |
| Anna Siniscalco | Rome, Italy |
| Antonella Adorisio | Rome, Italy |
| Davide De Santis | Rome, Italy |
| Anna Nadelle | Rome, Italy |
| Giovanna Ribotta | Rome, Italy |
| Teresa Zuniga | Rome, Italy |
| Vincenzo Crassi | Rome, Italy |
| Sonia Ostrica | Rome, Italy |
| Roberto Carchio | Rome, Italy |

LEVEL 2 _____

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Monika Decker | Coln, Germany |
| Marlene Stangier-Linke | Coln, Germany |
| Susanna Wilkens | Manchester, New Hampshire |
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| Douglas Noon | Troy, Michigan |
| William Calunas | Troy, Michigan |
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| Ann Sloane | New York City |
| Kenneth Winters | New York City |
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| Fernando De Lazzari | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Julia Yasumura | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Valeria Sanchez | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Gloria Lopes | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Augustin Grandes | Pau, France |
| Gene Egan | Seattle, Washington |
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| Kiyan Lucia Harumi | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Jefferson Duarte | Sao Paulo, Brazil |

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| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Sandra Bowles | Troy, Michigan |
| James Chan | Troy, Michigan |
| Catherine Hardacre | Troy, Michigan |
| Martine Salane | Troy, Michigan |
| Suzanne Trojanowski | Troy, Michigan |
| Janet Randolph | Troy, Michigan |
| Laura Annia Pezzetti | Milan, Italy |
| Francesco Matera | Milan, Italy |
| Marco Peruzzo | Milan, Italy |
| Humberto Bagatini | Milan, Italy |
| Senoi Katia | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Bill Kilgore | Portland, Oregon |

LEVEL 4 _____

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Michael Coulon | Manchester, New Hampshire |
| Carleen Belfi | Troy, Michigan |
| Anthony Barbear | Troy, Michigan |
| Kent Oldfield | New York City |
| Ruth Kizer | Troy, Michigan |
| Gary Lee | Troy, Michigan |
| Vicki Norman | Troy, Michigan |
| Adriano D'Avila | Porto Alegre, Brazil |
| Terry E.Wick | Troy, Michigan |

LEVEL 5 _____

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Frank Grothstruck | Coln, Germany |
| Martha Maurer | Troy, Michigan |
| Marcia Bila | Troy, Michigan |
| Susan Smith | Troy, Michigan |
| Holly Sweeney | New York City |
| Gilles D'Anjou | Salaberry de Valleyfield, Canada |
| Raymond Tom | Stockton, California |
| Alice Hayashibara | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| Carlos Eduardo Rodriguez Bueno | Sao Paulo, Brazil |
| James Fox | Buffalo, New York |

LEVEL 6 _____

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| Dave Barrett | Portland, Oregon |
|--------------|------------------|



DEVELOPING TAIJIQUAN GONGFU



AN INTERVIEW WITH MASTERS YANG ZHENDUO AND YANG JUN

Conducted and translated by Jeremy Blodgett



by Jeremy Blodgett

JB: *What was practice like for you when you were young?*

YZD: My family is an old and well-known family. Several generations have taught taijiquan as a profession and to make a living. After the liberation of China in 1949, the National Sports Ministry attached importance to the practice of taijiquan. For Yang Jun and I, regarding this aspect, we feel very honored and feel a sense of responsibility. Due to all kinds of reasons I personally have had to develop gongfu. But, the development of gongfu is not an easy thing. One aspect is to practice, and another aspect is to

improve in the understanding of theory. Objectively and subjectively both require hard work.

Past generations of youth had a certain foundation. When we practiced taijiquan, we got up before dawn, at 4 or 5 a.m. Not only did we practice taijiquan, but we also taught. There was no free time the whole day, all the way until evening when we couldn't move anymore. But, while practicing it was very comfortable. Doing the form one time commonly takes about 25 minutes now. In the past, we took 45 minutes to do the form, doing the form three times in a row each session.

The transitional time between moves was longer, the postures were lower, and the moves were slower. It was very strenuous, even to the point that squatting on the toilet and climbing out of bed were not possible. We actually had to roll out of bed. It was very arduous.

But now it is not like past generations and that era has passed. Objectively speaking, during that time they had more actual combat experience. There were push hands, two-person free-style fighting and individual practice, thus providing many practice and combat opportunities. For example in push hands, I and several



students would get up before dawn to go practice, really working at developing some gongfu. Now, the opportunities are relatively less. After all, now is different than the past era when the emphasis was placed on fighting.

JB: *Many practitioners are interested in push hands, but do not realize that the staff is used to help develop in this area. Can you talk more about the how to practice with the staff and what it accomplishes?*

YZD: Taiji uses a white wax wood staff to develop arm strength and whole body coordination. In the past the spear was used, but now the staff is substituted. In the whole series of taijiquan practice, push hands is begun after one has learned the hand form. Push hands emphasizes pushing; it doesn't emphasize striking. In free-style fighting, generally free-form hand techniques are used with the stress on striking. But, push hands is more civilized.

In push hands you must have a certain amount of arm strength. If you cannot push, then you are not able to use four ounces to deflect one thousand pounds, affecting the opponent and leading him into emptiness. Although it is not entirely that easy, the point is that your body does need to have some strength. Practicing with the special vibrating staff will be a big help later because it can increase arm strength and greatly benefit your whole body coordination.

YJ: External martial arts work on the body from the outside in, while internal martial arts work on the body from the inside out. Both goals are the same. In taijiquan, mutual consideration is given to both the soul or spirit and the building of a robust and strong physique. The internal and external are both developed.

To develop the limbs, one form of practice is drilling the individual postures. Another form is to use the white wax wood staff, helping you become stronger. Fa Jin, the spontaneous emission of force, does not just concern the external. You also have to have the internal, coordinating the energy from the Dan Tian with the energy from the limbs. The

internal and external must be combined. It shouldn't be just strengthening the arms when practicing the staff. Otherwise, it is the same as external martial arts. You also need to have the internal aspects. The external shape of the limbs needs to be practiced, but you also need to pay attention to working on this idea of mutual development.

JB: *What are some of the internal aspects of taijiquan?*

YZD: The Sanya demonstration had expert commentary, which specifically talked about "disposition." This is because the practice of martial arts refers not only to the external appearances, but also the internal aspects of Jing, Qi, and Shen. Can the internal be outwardly expressed? Can the expression come out? If you only practice external martial arts some aspects are not enough. Generally speaking the Jing is prenatal energy or vigor, Qi is the vital energy connected with the blood, and Shen is the mental and spiritual energy. These three all have a definite relation. Because of these, performing the movements can be extremely beautiful and spirited. When practicing taijiquan one should be glowing with health, graceful and natural. When I was working at the Mineral Bureau I participated in an amateur opera group there where I gained some experience singing Peking Opera. Peking Opera and martial arts are the same in that both must express the Jing, Qi, and Shen to do them well.

JB: *For practitioners who desire to begin teaching, what recommendations do you have?*

YZD: There is a Chinese saying meaning that a teacher must serve as a role model of virtue and learning, thus being worthy of the title of teacher. First, the teacher must set an example. Then, she must work on perfecting herself. But she must be genuine and treat students with sincerity. My sincerity allows me to receive others' trust. This is the most important. Regardless of whether you are from China or abroad, if I teach you I will teach you very conscientiously. What we are really talking about is the character of the teacher.

We Chinese place particular emphasis on morals, and not only in the practice of martial arts. In your social conduct, you should present yourself as a model because not only do students study martial arts from you, but they also study your conduct. Be an honorable person and a fair-minded person. In the study of taijiquan you should be modest. Chairman Mao said, "Modesty lets people advance. You should be sincere with people and should unassumingly study from others." In this way if you are to be a teacher, you must first be a role model. If you don't have these qualities, then you are not a sincere teacher.

JB: *When you demonstrated at the competition in Taiyuan this summer it was the first time for many people to see the new short-form. What led you to create this form?*

YZD: In a good deal of places, abroad for example, many people want to practice taijiquan but when they see how long the form is they feel it is too difficult. Han Hoong Wang from Michigan once told me that many of her students could not practice the form because it was too long and too difficult for them. So later, in order to make it suitable for even more people to practice taijiquan and to recruit even more students, I arranged the "Thirteen Posture Taiji". Some other styles have already arranged a thirteen-posture form, but other people had previously declined to arrange a short form for traditional Yang style.

Consisting of just thirteen moves, it is very simple. In this thirteen posture form there are no standing-on-one-leg moves, and no push down moves. Thus it is simpler for the elderly. In addition, the form is very short; in one or two minutes it is finished. Therefore the form is quite convenient for even more people to participate in the practice of taijiquan because it is more suitable and easier to accept for beginners and especially people of a somewhat more advanced age.

This is the sequence of the form: opening; wave hands like clouds; single whip; punch under the elbow; white crane spreads its wings; brush knee and push;



hands strum the lute; high pat on horse; thrust palm; chop with fist; step forward, parry, block and punch; step forward to grasp the birds tail, and turn body into cross hands.

Recently when I was in Beijing, the Director of the Chinese Martial Arts magazine invited me to begin arranging another thirteen-posture form for the sword. Many people like to practice with the sword, but because their age is too great and the form is too long they cannot remember it.

JB: *When one begins to learn taijiquan, what are the general stages of practice?*

YZD: Regarding the teaching of taijiquan to a new student, we generally say that the training is divided into three steps. The first step is approximate practice. The second step is detailed practice. The third step is refined practice. In the first step the student is to roughly get the form down with the main purpose being to just become familiar with the form. In the beginning it is hard to get the idea and the student does not quite understand the principles. Later, with the passing of time, the student has a basic understanding and is clearer about the ideas and can then connect the movements together. Then on this foundation, the student can enter the second step and go back and add again the ten essentials and practice to these higher standards. The final step is for the student to go back and refine everything. The foundation for a beginner is fairly weak and if the beginning requirements are too strict, the student cannot reach the goal.

The development of gongfu requires a process of time. To practice taiji well does not just require understanding. In this way the practice of taiji is not quite the same as other things. It requires putting it into practice, doing it, and succeeding at doing it. But this "putting into practice" is different for each person. Some people are better at imitating, and receive the training faster with less time required. Some people are less good at imitating and require a correspondingly longer period of time. Because it varies with each individual, teachers must suit the instruction to each student. Generally speaking, one must follow the principles of the above

three training steps. Speaking to teachers, and more able students, the training requires less effort. For those with less desirable conditions it is more work. For example after being taught one time, some students will return to their original way of practice. This is somewhat more troublesome. So in talking about the practice of taijiquan, what really is required is an ability to understand.

JB: *You mentioned that gongfu requires a process of time. What is the meaning of "gongfu"?*

YZD: The simplest explanation is that the practice of gongfu, or just "gongfu", includes both strength and skill training. Through practice strength is increased. The other component of gongfu is skill. Just knowing of something will not produce skill; you must put it into practice. Regardless of which martial art you practice, whether it is long fist for example or an internal martial art, you must have skill and you must have strength.

Looking back at the past, a long time ago, the practice of gongfu was not the same as it is now. In the past emphasis was placed on rigorous training. Now, that kind of training is not too suitable for people's physical health as excessive fatigue can injure the body. In addition some people practice hard in an inappropriate way, and then sometime later, or maybe not until old age, problems arise. So now, following the development of society, a more scientific approach to practice is advocated with emphasis placed on the practice technique. But, in looking at gongfu, you still do need to train hard. To just talk about it and not actually work hard won't suffice.

In general, practice can be for two types of goals. The first aim is to improve health and cure disease or illness. Practicing the form, especially when done to our standards, allows one to achieve the results of curing illness and improving health. However if you are interested, you might as well explore the next step and put some effort towards developing gongfu. Only if you are truly interested can you then have confidence in your practice. If you are forced to do something you will not do well at it.

To develop gongfu you can't be afraid of working hard and you must have many

other elements as well. It requires the ability to recognize and distinguish, as well as strong comprehension. Aside from these, one must also have agility and the movements must have strength. The presence of all of these conditions will allow the practitioner to develop gongfu. But, everyone is different in their practice. Some are a little faster, requiring just a few years to establish a good foundation. Some require a little more time. It really varies per individual.

JB: *Given that taiji was founded on the basis of Chinese culture, do you think that in general foreigners learn taiji more slowly?*

YZD: I think that this is not absolute. Because Chinese are raised in eastern culture, their circumstances are a bit better when learning taijiquan. An analogy can be made to Chinese studying modern science and technology: if Westerners are leaders in the field of science it does not necessarily mean that Chinese cannot be on the forefront as well. In general Asians, and especially Chinese, are able to "eat bitter" or endure hardships and work hard. The practice of gongfu is different than eating things but the comparison is useful. Flavorful, good-smelling dishes are easy to accept. Practicing taijiquan however is more concerned with "eating bitter". At present, many people practice taijiquan in order to strengthen the body and improve health, and for these people it doesn't really matter. But, if you look at the practice of gongfu, Chinese are better able to "eat bitter".

JB: *Besides the martial arts and health aspects of taiji, what other benefits are there to practicing?*

YZD: Most people practice taiji just to improve health and cure illness. But, the practice of taijiquan is a multi-function activity and there are other benefits beside these. Because emphasis is placed on making it look good, it provides aesthetic enjoyment. It can also mould one's character and serve as a cultural bridge between different peoples. It emphasizes sinking qi down to the dantian, combining quiescence and movement. Taijiquan has evolved into a multi-function activity and not just simply a martial art concerning attack and defense.



10 PUNTI ESSENZIALI DEL TAI CHI CHUAN

Trasmessi oralmente da Yang Chenfu a Chen Weiming

6 - USARE L'INTENZIONE E NON LA FORZA

Nei classici del taiji si dice che, "è completamente una questione di uso dell'intenzione e non della forza".

Quando praticate il taijiquan non utilizzate neanche in minima parte la forza rozza, grossolana che causerebbe blocchi all'apparato muscoloscheletrico o circolatorio con il risultato di limitare o inibire ogni movimento.

Al contrario lasciate che tutto il corpo si rilassi e si distenda, solo allora sarete in grado di muovervi con leggerezza e agilità, cambiare e trasformare con naturale circolarità. Ci si può chiedere: se non uso la forza come posso generare forza? La rete dei meridiani e canali dell'agopuntura distribuita nel corpo umano è come le vie dell'acqua sulla terra. Se le vie di scorrimento non sono bloccate l'acqua può circolare liberamente; se i meridiani non hanno impedimenti il chi può circolare. Se voi muovete il corpo usando una forza rigida, rozza, sovraccaricate i meridiani, il chi e il sangue non potranno circolare liberamente e i movimenti non potranno essere agili e sciolti; basterà essere toccati perché tutto il corpo venga scosso. Se usate invece l'intenzione al posto della forza, dovunque questa viene diretta va l'energia.

In questo modo - con il continuo fluire e scorrere del chi e del sangue tutti i giorni in tutto il corpo, senza mai ristagnare - dopo una lunga pratica, otterrete la vera forza interna.

Questo è quello che nei classici del taiji si intende nel detto "solo attraverso l'estrema morbidezza si può realizzare l'estrema durezza". Un vero esperto di taiji ha le braccia che sembrano come seta avvolta intorno al ferro, estremamente pesanti. Quando il praticante di arti marziali esterne usa la forza sembra molto potente. Ma quando non la sta usando è debole e instabile. In questo modo possiamo osservare che la sua forza in realtà è esterna, o superficiale. La forza usata dai praticanti di arti marziali esterne è molto facile da manipolare o deviare, per questo motivo non è di gran valore.

7 - SINCRONIZZARE LA PARTE SUPERIORE E INFERIORE DEL CORPO

Nei classici del taiji sincronizzare la parte superiore e inferiore del corpo è espressa come: "Con le radici nei piedi, l'energia è rilasciata dalle gambe, governata dalla vita ed espressa nelle mani e nelle dita - dai piedi alle gambe al bacino - uniti da un unico impulso o flusso vitale". * Quando le mani si muovono, le gambe e il bacino si muovono e lo sguardo attento si muove insieme a loro. Soltanto allora possiamo dire che la parte superiore e inferiore del corpo sono sincronizzate. Se una parte non si muove non è quindi coordinata con il resto.

8 - UNIRE, ARMONIZZARE L'INTERNO CON L'ESTERNO

La nostra pratica nel taiji è basata sullo spirito, da qui il detto "Lo spirito è il comandante generale e il corpo sono le sue truppe". Se voi coltivate il vostro spirito i vostri movimenti saranno naturalmente chiari, agili e leggeri, la forma niente altro che piena e vuota, aperta e chiusa. Quando diciamo "aperto", non intendiamo aprire solamente le braccia o le gambe; l'intenzione mentale si deve aprire insieme agli arti. Quando diciamo "chiuso", non intendiamo chiudere soltanto le braccia e le gambe; l'intenzione mentale si deve chiudere insieme agli arti. Se riuscite a combinare e armonizzare l'interno e l'esterno in un unico impulso o flusso di chi *, questi diventeranno un tutto unico.

9 - (PRATICARE) CONTINUAMENTE E SENZA INTERRUZIONE

La forza nelle arti marziali esterne è un tipo di forza bruta, acquisita, che ha quindi un inizio e una fine, un momento in cui è continua e un momento in cui si interrompe, in modo che quando la vecchia forza è stata esaurita a la nuova non è ancora sorta, c'è un momento in cui è estremamente facile per la persona essere controllati da un opponente. Nel taiji noi usiamo l'intenzione invece della forza e dall'inizio alla fine in modo armonioso, incessante e continuo completiamo un ciclo e torniamo all'inizio continuamente senza fine. Questo è quello che si intende nei classici nel concetto "Come il fluire senza fine dello Yangtse o del Fiume Giallo". E ancora: "Muovere l'energia è come srotolare la seta dal bozzolo". Entrambi gli esempi esprimono il principio di unificazione in un solo chi o unico impulso.*

10 - CERCARE LA TRANQUILLITA' NEL MOVIMENTO

I praticanti di arti marziali esterne considerano i salti e gli stop come qualità e abilità, e lo praticano fino all'esaurimento del respiro (chi) e della forza e dopo la pratica rimangono invariabilmente a corto di fiato. Nel taiji noi usiamo la calma nel dirigere il movimento, e anche mentre ci muoviamo, rimaniamo calmi e tranquilli.

Di conseguenza quando praticate la forma, più la eseguite lentamente e meglio è!

Quando la si pratica lentamente il respiro diventa più lungo e profondo, il chi affonda nel basso campo del cinabro (dan tian) naturalmente senza che ci siano deleterie costrizioni o espansioni nei vasi sanguigni. Se lo studente persevererà con attenzione cosciente nella pratica potrà comprendere il significato che sta oltre queste parole.

* Letteralmente "Un solo chi". Questo può anche essere tradotto "un soffio, un respiro".



Translated by
Claudio Mingarini -
Italie



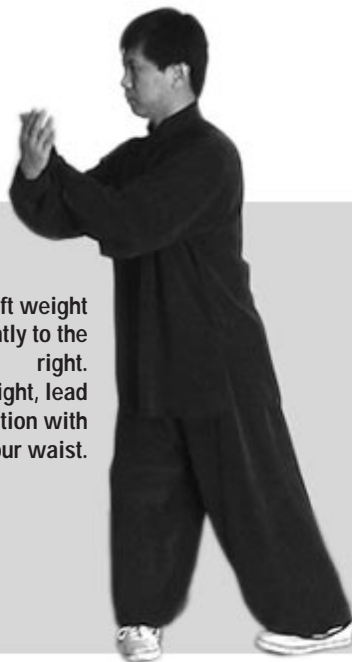
PRACTICE DEPARTMENT

by Yang Jun
Translated by Hon Wah Chan



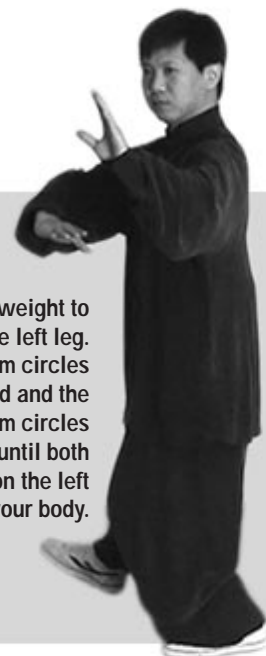
Cross Hands

Shift weight slightly to the right. Turn right, lead the motion with your waist.

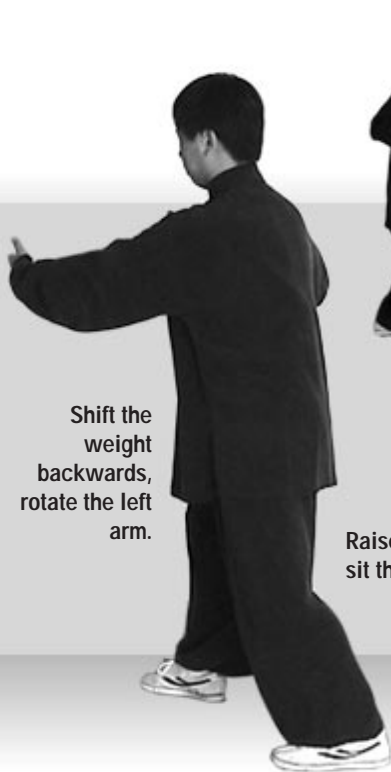


At the same time use your left heel as a pivot to turn your left toe inwards at 90 degrees.

Shift your weight to the left leg. The left arm circles downward and the right arm circles upward until both arms are on the left side of your body.



At the same time, step out with your right leg to the right.



Shift the weight backwards, rotate the left arm.



Front view

Raise the right arm and sit the right palm.



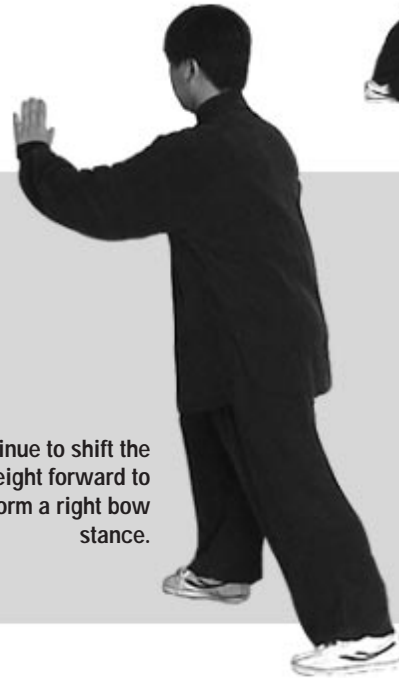
Put your weight on left leg. Pull in the left arm and move the right arm forward.



Front view



Shift the weight forward.
The right arm circles from left to right, bring in the left arm and sit the left palm.



Continue to shift the weight forward to form a right bow stance.



At the same time, strike forward with your left palm and pull down the right arm to the side of the right knee. (Brush Knee and Push, right)



Place the left palm in the middle of right forearm.



Turn body to the right, rotate both arms.



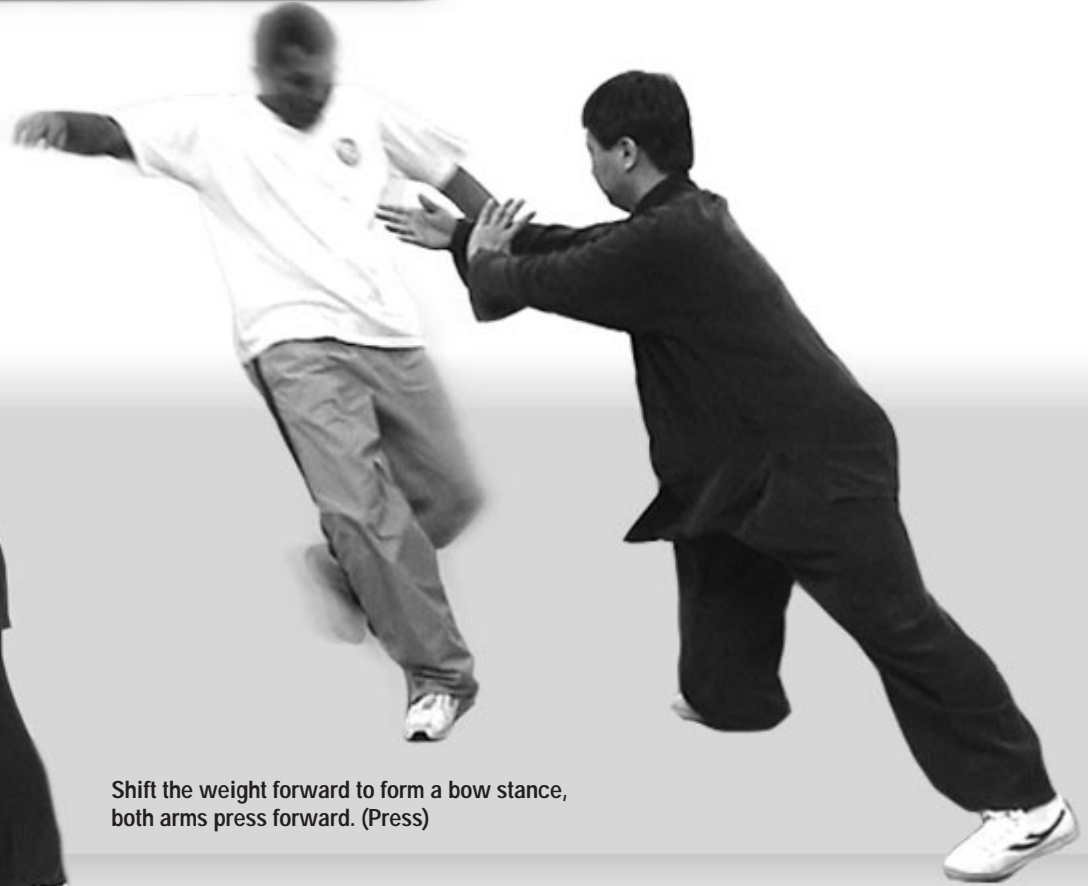
Turning the body to the left, both arms following the waist, execute Roll Back to the left side.



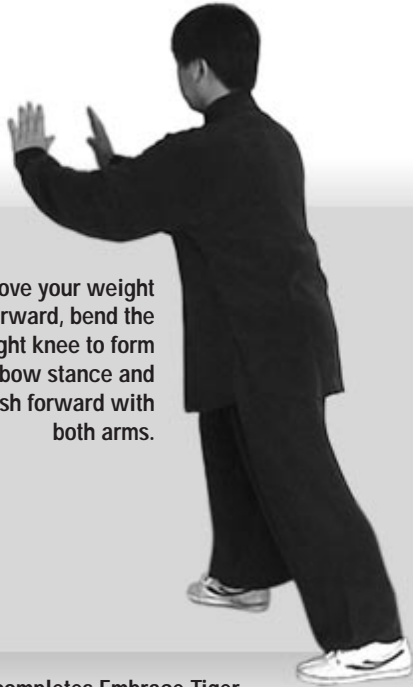
Prepare to Press.



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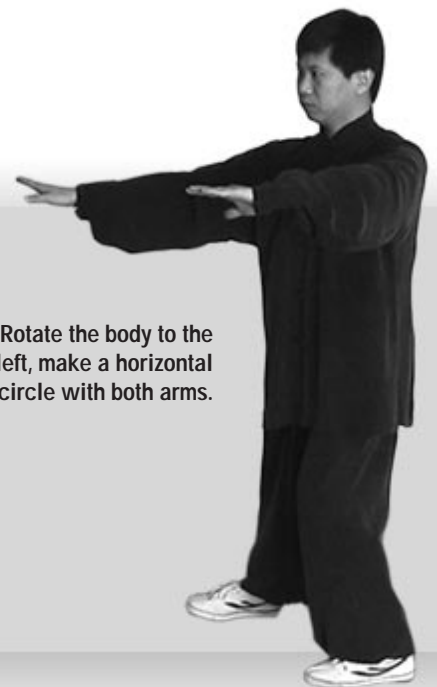
Shift the weight forward to form a bow stance, both arms press forward. (Press)



Move your weight forward, bend the right knee to form a bow stance and push forward with both arms.



Move your weight backwards and level both hands.



Rotate the body to the left, make a horizontal circle with both arms.

This completes Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain.

At the same time use your right heel as a pivot to turn your right toe inwards.



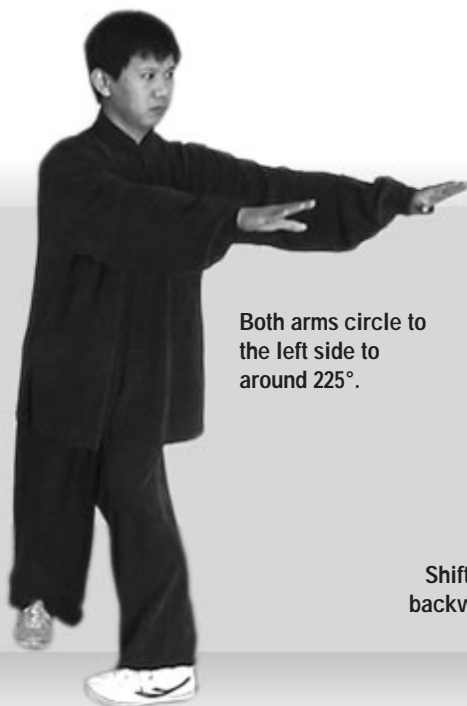
Turn the body to the right, separate both arms.



Sit both palms in front of your chest. Upper body should not lean back.

Shift your weight backwards, at the same time sink the elbows bring both arms in.

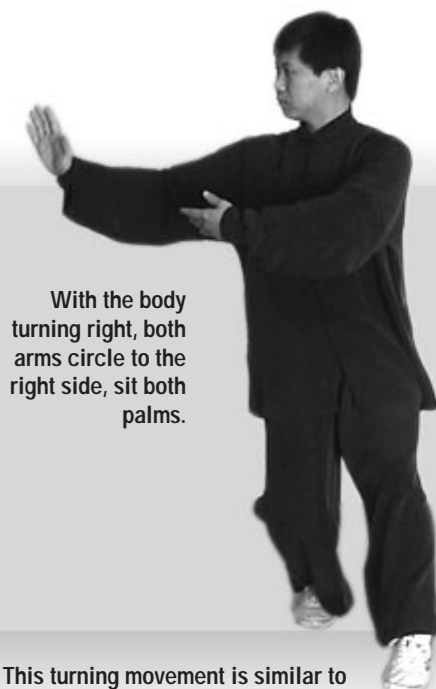
Prepare to Push.



Both arms circle to the left side to around 225°.



Shift your weight backward and pull in both arms.



With the body turning right, both arms circle to the right side, sit both palms.

This turning movement is similar to the Single Whip turning movement.



Have Videocam, Will Travel

DOCUMENTING THE 2002 TAI CHI ADVENTURE IN CHINA



By **Darla Nowell**

In February 2002 we decided to attend Taiyuan 2002 Tai Chi Tournament in China. Suddenly we had a number of things to do to get ready: update passports, obtain visas, get shots, coordinate flights, arrange childcare for two weeks, research where we were going, and what we needed to pack. I wondered how we would ever be ready. My husband, Dave, is an engineer, planner and an entrepreneurial person, as well as a long time martial artist. He explained to me that this was an incredible opportunity to tell a Tai Chi story and suggested we create a documentary about the tournament and tour. I was too concerned about the basics to worry about the equipment and planning that was needed to shoot a documentary in a foreign country. Before I knew it, Dave had purchased a

digital camera, computer video editing station, and DVD burner. He tasked me with shooting the documentary because he would be competing. Together we sketched out a story of what we imagined might take place in China, but really had no idea. All the unknowns made getting ready to go a challenge, but as in Tai Chi training, I put in my time, practiced and prepared, relying on the training to help me through what we anticipated would occur.

Next thing I knew, we were landing at the Beijing Airport after a 17-hour flight overwhelmed with nervousness and excitement. Coming through the last baggage check, I saw the familiar International Yang Family logo on Mina the translator's shirt. Her bright smile and warm welcome were a great comfort. I knew we would be OK. The hotel in



Beijing was located near Tiananmen Square. Anxious to begin taping, the first morning we took in a few sights and I filmed before our bus departed for the long ride to Taiyuan. The eight-hour bus ride took us over the mountains and through stormy weather. But it did give me an opportunity to capture moments on the bus, as well as a few city sites, rest stops and countryside. Arriving bleary-eyed in the middle of the night and only wanting a comfortable bed, I sadly missed the opportunity to film our Taiyuan arrival.

Our first days in Taiyuan were packed with activities, beginning with Master Yang Zhenduo's disciple ceremony and the attendees' International team practice. Opening ceremonies included so many things happening at once; with my heart pounding in my ears I looked for the best place to capture the ceremonies. Watching the countries march in, I felt thankful to be alive. I could feel the energy in the arena and realized I was witness to a rare cultural event and had the good fortune to be capturing it all on tape. Positioned near the dignitaries' table I had an uninterrupted view of the parade of nations, international team demonstration, and all of the Tai Chi masters—Master Yang Zhenduo's 13 posture form, Yang Jun's 49 move form as well as the various other masters performances of the Wu and Zhao Bao styles. Each showed a perfection that words cannot describe.

The following three days of competition so many people performed in various arenas that I wished for a team of photographers with multiple cameras to assist me. I attended as many contests as possible, and regret not being able to get every team and person on tape because everyone there was doing

their best and I could see the amount of time and energy that they had spent preparing for this event. At the closing and awards ceremony, all participants and winners extended mutual respect and admiration to each other, making this easy to tape. Everyone wanted their picture taken with their newfound friends and Tai Chi family members. As the banner on the arena hall stated we were "friend's first, competitors second."

At the tournament's conclusion, I was ready for a break, but the pace for filming did not slow as we toured 6 cities in 7 days. I tried my best to capture every moment and in my "spare time" focused on keeping track of names, dates, and places. My lack of Chinese language skills made this a real challenge. Early morning practice, meals and touring various locations filled each of my days. In the evenings I needed to ensure the batteries were charged, the day's taping cataloged and the equipment prepared for the next day's shooting. I tried to anticipate the following day's events and prepare my equipment accordingly but I soon realized that I just needed to go with the flow and record what I could.

One moment in particular stands out in my mind. In Hangzhou visiting the Seven Harmonies Pagoda, the unbearably hot and humid weather took its toll on several weary travelers. Fellow travelers encouraged me to trek up the steep trail lugging my camera saying that they would remain in the air-conditioned bus and wait for the movie to be released.

Returning home and barely recovering from jet lag, Dave and I reviewed the 25 hours of raw footage. I cross-referenced this with my notes with names, people's faces and events and Dave cataloged

clips and captured the video into the computer. After condensing the raw video down to a manageable eight hours, we considered how to organize the material. With so much excellent, rare footage we decide to break it into four separate titles. This way we could focus on a theme and narrative for each title to make it more appealing to watch. During this time Dave cut a demo video putting the "rock and roll" music under the clips. I questioned the music choice but understood the need for the fast pace underlying the collage of over 2,000 individual clips.

As time passes, the pressure builds. The four titles have proved to be an enormous amount of work to organize and produce. Developing the themes and sub-themes throughout the four titles, researching, writing scripts, capturing narrative, and always keeping in mind the goal of promoting Tai Chi and creating a professional product with broad appeal was on our minds day and night.

Now after many months, we are pleased to announce our first title The Masters' Performances is ready. The other three titles – Tournament, Teams and Individuals and Tour will be available April 1, 2003. Our trip to Taiyuan was a once in a lifetime opportunity and we are thankful for the many new friends we have met around the world. On one of the banners at the tournament I remember reading, "All Tai Chi Practitioners are of One Family the World Over" this is what I felt in my heart and saw through the lens of my camera. ☯

For information on prices and ordering, visit Darla's Website: <http://eAware.US> Questions, please contact: Darlanowell@eAware.US



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