



國際楊氏太極拳協會

# Tai Chi Chuan

Number 12 • Winter 2003

乃太極拳事始  
的發展共勉  
楊振鐸  
辛未年秋

WHAT IS  
THIS THING  
CALLED  
RANKING?

TAI CHI TWINS  
My First Tai Chi Chuan Teacher  
China Memories

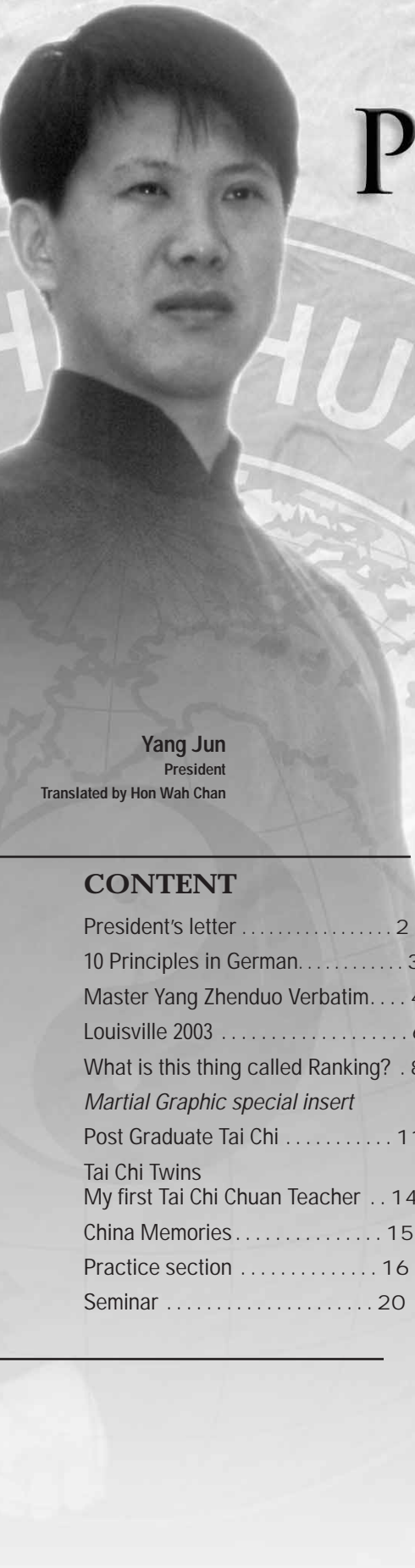
LOUISVILLE  
2003

MASTER YANG  
ZHENDUO VEBATIM:  
On Study and Practice

POSTGRADUATE  
TAI CHI CHUAN:  
A new program in Brazil

The Journal of the International Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Association





# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

**Yang Jun**  
President  
Translated by Hon Wah Chan

In 2003, the International Association has held many Seminars. Although the 2002 China trip has been over for some time, each time I went to a new place for a Seminar, I often noticed students sharing pictures and discussing stories that happened during the trip. The China experience seems like a big ribbon that has linked us together. It has provided students with more topics for conversation and built deeper friendships among us.

In 2003, China has suffered from the SARS epidemic. The world economy is still having problems as well. However, our Tai Chi Chuan enterprise continues to grow. We have had more Seminars, covered more regions, and have more students taking part in the Seminars. The International Association has completed the Instructor Certification program. This will improve the quality of teaching provided by certified instructors. This will also provide better judges for the Ranking system. We have added the Department of South American Affairs to our organization. This year, the Association has experimented with the publishing of the Association Journal in Portuguese. The first publication was well received by many members from South America. The Department of South American Affairs will manage and publish the Association Journal in Portuguese. This will help develop the membership in the South American region and organize more Seminars and related activities. Following the Instructor Certification program, the International Association in Italy is beginning to plan on training seminars for coaches. Claudio Mingarini has been appointed to manage this effort.

We have published 12 issues of our Association's Journal. Marco Gagnon has been the designer for our Journal since the second issue. His brilliant design work has given our Journals a very professional appearance. Lately, Marco has started the Martial Graphic on-line retail store. We have included some of his colorful designs for your enjoyment. We wish Marco good luck and great success with Martial Graphic.

Next year summer will be my grandfather's last Seminar trip to Europe. All the involved parties have started planning for this trip. I am sure this will be a very successful Seminar trip. 2003 is coming to an end; I sincerely thank you for all the support from our members. During this holiday season, I would like to wish everyone a

*Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year!*

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# YANG CHENG FU 10 PRINCIPLES

## ZEHN ESSENTIELLE PRINZIPIEN DES TAI CHI CHUAN

Muendlich uebermittelt von Yang Chengfu, niedergeschrieben von Chen Weiming

Translated by Frank Grothstueck, Koln, Germany

### 6. INTENTION UND NICHT MUSKELKRAFT EINSETZEN

In den klassischen Schriften des Tai Chi heit es: „Es kommt ganz und gar darauf an, die Intention und nicht die Muskelkraft zu benutzen.“ Beim Ueben des Tai Chi Chuan soll der gesamte Koerper entspannt und geoeffnet sein, es soll keinerlei grobe Kraft angewendet werden, die Muskeln, Knochen oder Adern blockieren und dazu fuehren wuerde, dass man sich selbst hemmt und behindert. Nur so kann man Uebergaenge und Transformationen leicht und muehelos vollziehen und auf natuerliche Weise drehen. Manche werden sich fragen: Wie kann ich Kraft entwickeln ohne Kraft einzusetzen? Das Netz von Meridianen und Kanaelen im Koerper kann mit den Wasserwegen auf der Erde verglichen werden. Wenn diese nicht verstopft sind, kann Wasser frei flieen; sind die Meridiane nicht verstopft, kann Qi ungehindert zirkulieren. Bewegt man seinen Koerper mit grober Kraft, werden die Meridiane ueberschwemmt, Qi- und Blutfluss stagnieren, den Bewegungen fehlt es an Gewandtheit und Leichtigkeit; es genuegt schon eine leichte Beruehrung, um uns aus dem Gleichgewicht zu bringen. Setzt man aber Intention und nicht Muskelkraft ein, wird sich das Qi immer dorthin bewegen, wohin sich die Intention wendet. Da auf diese Weise Qi und Blut Tag fuer Tag durch den gesamten Koerper fliesen und zirkulieren und niemals stagnieren, wird man durch bestaendiges Ueben wahre innere Kraft entwickeln. Das ist es, was in den Tai Chi Klassikern gemeint ist, wo es heit: „Nur durch extreme Weichheit kann extreme Haerte erreicht werden.“ Die Arme eines wahren Koenners des Tai Chi scheinen wie aus Eisen, das mit Seide umwickelt ist und sind ungeheuer schwer. Wenn jemand, der aeussere Kampfkuenste praktiziert, seine Kraft einsetzt, erscheint er sehr stark. In den Momenten zwischen den Aktionen aber geraet er sehr leicht ins Schwimmen. Daran koennen wir erkennen, dass es sich hierbei tatsaechlich um eine rein aeusserliche, oberflaechliche Kraft handelt. Diese in den aeussere Kampfkuensten eingesetzte Kraft ist besonders leicht zu kontrollieren und abzulenken und ist daher nicht von grossem Wert.

### 7. OBEN UND UNTEN VERBINDEN

Das Prinzip der harmonischen Verbindung von Ober- und Unterkoeper findet sich in den Tai Chi Klassikern in dem Satz: „Es wurzelt in den Fuessen, wird ausgesendet von den Beinen, gesteuert von der Taille und zeigt sich in den Haenden und Fingern – von den Fuessen ueber die Beine zur Taille vollzieht sich alles in einem einzigen Impuls“\*. Haende, Taille und Beine bewegen sich in voelliger Einheit, und der Blick bewegt sich mit. Nur dann koennen wir davon sprechen, dass Oben und Unten verbunden sind. Wenn irgendein Teil des Koerpers sich nicht mitbewegt, so ist die Bewegung nicht koordiniert.

### 8. INNEN UND AUEN VEREINEN

Bei der Uebung des Tai Chi Chuan kommt es vor allem auf den Geist an. Daher heit es: „Der Geist ist der General, der Koerper seine Armee“. Ist man in der Lage, den Geist emporzuheben, werden die Bewegungen auf natuerliche Weise leicht, gewandt und muehelos sein, die Prinzipien von „leer“ und „voll“, „oeffnen“ und „schliessen“ werden in jedem Moment offenbar. Wenn wir „oeffnen“ sagen, meinen wir nicht nur das Oeffnen von Armen oder Beinen; Geist und Intention muessen sich gemeinsam mit den Gliedmassen oeffnen. Sprechen wir von „schliessen“, so meinen wir nicht lediglich das „Schliessen“ von Armen oder Beinen; Geist und Intention muessen zusammen mit den Gliedmassen schliessen. Kann man Innen und Aussen in einen einzigen Impuls\* vereinen, verschmelzen sie zu einem vollkommenen Ganzen.

### 9. KONTINUIERLICH UND OHNE UNTERBRECHUNG UEBEN

Die Kraft in den aeussere Kampfkuensten ist eine erworbene grobe Kraft, die Beginn und Ende hat, die mal kontinuierlich und mal unterbrochen ist. Daher gibt es immer dann, wenn die alte Kraft erschoept, die neue aber noch nicht geboren ist, einen Moment, in dem man sehr leicht aus dem Gleichgewicht gebracht werden kann. Beim Tai Chi setzen wir Intention und nicht Muskelkraft ein, und von Anfang bis Ende vollenden wir fluessend und ohne Unterbrechung einen Kreislauf und kehren zurueck zum Anfang, unaufhoeerlich kreisend. In den klassischen Schriften des Tai Chi heit es dazu: „Wie der Yangtsekiang, unendlich fluessend“ oder: „Die Kraft fliesst so, wie man einen Seidenfaden vom Kokon abwickelt“. Beide Beispiele beziehen sich auf die vollkommene Vereinigung in einen Impuls\*.

### 10. STILLE IN DER BEWEGUNG SUCHEN

In den aeussere Kampfkuensten werden Spruenge und abruptes Abstoppen von Bewegungen als Faehigkeit hochgeschaezt. Diese werden intensiv geuebt, bis Atem (Qi) und Kraft erschoept sind, sodass man nach dem Ueben voellig ausser Atem ist. Beim Tai Chi kommt Bewegung aus der Stille, und selbst in der Bewegung ist Stille. Daher gilt fuer das Ueben der Form: Je langsamer umso besser! Wenn man langsam uebt, wird der Atem tief und lang, das Qi sinkt zum Dantian, und es gibt keine schaedliche Verengungen oder Erweiterungen der Blutgefuesse. Der Schueler, der achtsam und sorgfaellig darum bemueht ist, wird die Bedeutung hinter diesen Worten verstehen koennen.

\* Woertlich „Ein Qi“. Man koennte es auch als „Ein Atem“ uebersetzen



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Yang Jun

EDITOR  
Dave Barrett

CONTRIBUTORS  
Bill Walsh  
Angela Soci  
Rouque Severino  
Jeremy Bodgett  
Hon Wah Chan  
Yang Jun  
Dave Barrett  
Roberta Lazzari  
Vera Lazzari  
Carl Meeks  
Bill Wojasinski  
Frank Grothstueck

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Marco Gagnon

All Tai Chi Chuan  
enthusiasts are invited  
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complimentary letters  
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Please send correspondence in  
electronic format to:  
editor@yangfamilytaichi.com  
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International Yang Style  
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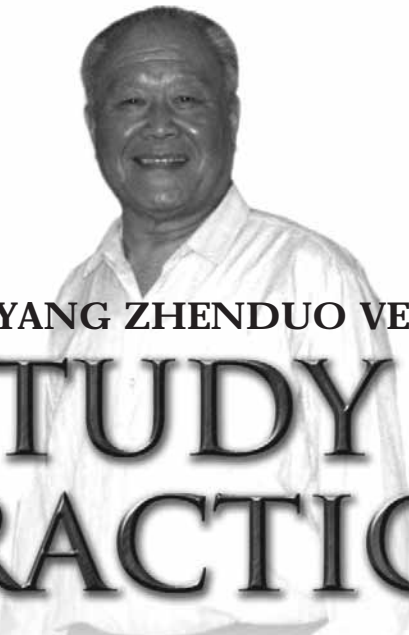
4076 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Redmond, WA 98052 USA  
Phone: 1-(425) 869-1185

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MASTER YANG ZHENDUO VERBATIM:

# ON STUDY AND PRACTICE

*“Tai Chi Chuan looks easy. Actually, it’s not so easy. Spend time with your study and gradually it will become easy.”*

Compiled and introduced by Dave Barrett

Learning Tai Chi Chuan is a life-long endeavor. It is not uncommon to find students in their eighties and nineties who are just as excited and engaged in their study as a beginner. Tai Chi Chuan has the unique capability to engage the intellect and enrich the physical capabilities of the student. The rewards are many: the creation of equilibrium, the achievement of tranquility, the daily experience of grace and beauty, balance and relaxation.

Over the past ten years I’ve been fortunate to study with Yang Laoshi. As I mentioned in our last issue, during each seminar I have taken comprehensive notes of his teachings. In reviewing this material I’ve collected his comments on the learning process and his encouragements and guidance for correct practice. In this article I have combined quotations from various seminars as they relate to study and practice.

Studying Tai Chi Chuan involves a good deal of memorization. First the Long Form itself, the names and the motions and then the Ten Essential Principles must be committed to memory. Being able to focus the mind on the Principles and examine

how they affect the practice is the central task of study. Another important aspect of study is observing and evaluating the performance of players more skillful than oneself. On many occasions Yang Laoshi would insist on students examining others in the class, “ Watch and learn. Make comparisons. Pay attention. You can learn by doing but also learn by looking.” On our trip to China in 2002, the most exciting and enriching experience for me was to watch the men and women who were so skillful that I was inspired to study and practice all the more, that one day I might have the same achievement.

Practicing Tai Chi Chuan involves a unique interplay between the mind and the body. The physical movements are informed by the mental process and the calm, balanced motions nourish the mind. Yang Laoshi always insists on purposive practice as opposed to automatic or mechanical repetitions. In his comments he sets forth a detailed plan for a lifetime of progressive practice. I hope that these instructions are clear. I have tried to preserve the spirit of his comments, which are sometimes brief and condensed, and at other

times expansively detailed. If you have any questions about these matters please contact me and we can work together to improve our understanding of this wonderful art.

### On Study:

“The Learning Process in Tai Chi Chuan

1. Rote imitation
2. Gaining understanding
3. Looking at differences
4. Ability to recognize improves
5. Realizing how to change
6. Developing by increasing requirements
7. Focusing mind on progress
8. Never ending, no limit”

“Techniques and applications are important but beginners should focus on Principles first.”

“Achieve the requirements gradually. Plan to work day by day. One day focus on dropping the elbows, next day: footwork. There is no end to this study. Gradually skill levels improve, the eyes become sharper and one is no longer satisfied with beginning efforts. Look, compare and evaluate. As understanding improves, dissatisfaction increases.





Go back the Essential Principles and re-examine your skills. Find a quiet place and achieve the requirements one at a time. Point by point gradually connect them into the whole."

"As your study progresses and the form is memorized the mind has a tendency to wander, as if you know the forms too well. At this point you must focus on understanding the Principles as they affect each motion: generally and locally. Work part by part, then as you connect them together the mind becomes more focused, skill levels improve. One part at a time focus your mind on the particular, gradually learning control. Otherwise you'll never learn how to link the Principles together. Practice with the Principles and you'll become better and better. After this has been accomplished then you can focus your mind on the martial techniques and applications. At this point you imagine an opponent. Concentrating on this coordination of inner attention and external technique is an important feature of advanced practice. Study from frame to frame combining the technique of the forms with the Principles of the motion. If the Principles are not applied in this way the spirit and the frames will be deficient and it will be difficult to improve. Don't go in the wrong direction."

"Day by day examine yourself. Year after year: everyday persevere. When you study have a long-term plan: your whole life, when will you stop, at 100? Still keep going!"

#### On Practice:

"Every day you have to eat. Every day you have to practice. I wish you could practice everyday, make this training a part of your life. Practice everyday and you will improve. Please practice everyday! Create continuity and use your will to continue. This training will improve your body and mind: your work and

your life will be better; you will have happiness and a wonderful life."

**"Form practice:** Frame clear. Intent manifested. Spirit full, joints loose. Embody the essence of Yang Style. Pull the whole body together as one, sinking the joints together. Whole body feeling is connected. It is not done in one day. Practice everyday."

"If you have the time and opportunity practice the Long Form three times in a row. First time: loosen up. Second time: comfortable. Third time: feels really powerful."

"Try your best to remember the form and apply the Principles. Pay attention to how you execute the motions. Understand the Techniques. One posture at a time, make it clean. Feel if it is correct or what part is not correct."

"Practice Traditional forms without alteration. Whatever the requirement is, that's what you do. Performance must be clean and clear. Little parts influence the whole routine. Try to practice 100% perfect, it's not easy, but possible. Try hard; make it absolutely clean and correct. Practice to improve personal character, if you start something, finish it. Start practice seriously, practice to make good habits, try to make it correct. When the forms are correct they are comfortable, when they are comfortable the power naturally comes out."

"Control by feeling. No feeling during practice is incorrect. Improve the skills by sensing and feeling. Without set rules you will not succeed. Try to extend the internal energy throughout the whole body. In any motion you can feel it moving: rooted in the feet, developed in the legs, controlled by the waist and manifested through the shoulder, elbow, wrist to the palm and fingertips. If you don't have the feeling it's not right. Check yourself: is it smooth and natural, open and extended, whole body loose and moving freely? With out this the beauty of our forms will not

come out. Gentle and open, we need to show this when we practice. Having no power is incorrect, power coming out naturally is correct."

"Every technique must be clearly executed, even the smallest technique, try to imitate exactly. This is mind training, focusing and disciplining the mind. What is the Principle of mind in your body? Inside and outside coordinated. How do I feel? Does the energy flow? Can I coordinate it? Practicing without feeling makes it difficult to improve. How to understand this? If there is no understanding there is no control. Only when you understand can you feel. Yang Cheng fu's Principles are crucial for promoting feeling. How do I achieve the Principles? Do I have them in my body? These questions serve to focus the mind. Put your mind somewhere, put it in your body. Coordinate the Principles and the motions otherwise your mind will wander off and leave the body. The mind is no longer focused. Practice all of this in your intent, using mind to control the body. You can feel, you can understand, you can control."

**"If you don't practice, forget it!"** ☯

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**Marco Gagnon**  
*Department of Outreach and Development*  
marco@yangfamilytaichi.com

**Jerry Karin**  
*Webmaster*  
jerry@yangfamilytaichi.com

**Dave Barrett**  
*Journal Editor*  
dave@yangfamilytaichi.com

**Horacio Lopez**  
*Department of Training Standards*  
horacio@yangfamilytaichi.com

**Han Hoong Wang**  
*Department of Membership Services*  
han@yangfamilytaichi.com

**Bill Walsh**  
*Department of Public Relations*  
bill@yangfamilytaichi.com

**Mei Mei Teo**  
*Department of European Affairs*  
meimei@yangfamilytaichi.com

**INTERNATIONAL YANG STYLE TAI CHI CHUAN ASSOCIATION**

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

**USA**  
4076 148th Ave NE  
Redmond, WA 98052 USA  
Phone: 1-(425) 869-1185

**CHINA**  
No. 10 Wu Cheng West Street  
Taiyuan, Shanxi P.R.C. 030006  
Tel.: 86-351-7042713

**EUROPE**  
Ornstigen 1, 18350 Taby,  
Sweden  
Tel.: +46-8-201800



USA CENTER

# LOUISVILLE 2003

by Bill Wojaszinski and Carl Meeks



The Kentucky Tai Chi Chuan Center hosted a Traditional Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Hand Form Seminar in Louisville Kentucky July 11-14, 2003. As with most seminars taught by Master Yang Jun, participants represented many areas of the country. Attendees came from Kansas, Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Florida, Michigan and of course Kentucky. The seminar was a great success, as we received many good comments from everyone there. Without exception, everyone had a great learning experience.

Lewis Durrett from the Louisville Center writes; "Those who attended are now so much the richer for their

time and effort spent with Master Yang Jun as he led us through a phenomenal 4 days of instruction. Master Yang Jun continues to prove that the legacy left to him by his unparalleled grandfather, Grand Master Yang Zhen duo is in very good hands indeed. For the time he was with us, he revealed to us the purpose of each movement, which made the postures "come alive". The detailed instruction of each small movement was more readily understood and assimilated by those in attendance."

Needless to say, Master Yang Jun presented us with a weekend of excellent instruction, corrections and demonstrations. Beginning with the lecture on Friday, he provided

the seminar attendees with insights into the history, development and principles of Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan. For several people, this was their first exposure to Master Yang Jun. Their intent initially was to attend the Friday evening lecture only in order to meet and listen to Yang Jun. Afterward, however, they enthusiastically asked to attend the "hands-on" part of the seminar and continue learning.

A major highlight of the seminar was Master Yang's demonstration of form applications. Through his instruction and attention to detail, everyone in attendance gained a deeper understanding of the underlying principles of the art. Many participants commented on



how this greatly increased their understanding of the movements, bringing more focus to each posture. Larry Moe and Sonia Sinn from the Michigan Center described it very well; "We are particularly happy with the seminar content because Master Yang Jun gave a very substantial presentation with numerous application demonstrations of the 103 hand form. The basic principles and techniques were



fully explained, and the intent behind each posture and transition move was thoroughly discussed, so both new and old students alike were able to add to their understanding of Tai Chi Chuan."

Hosting Master Yang Jun at your Center to teach a seminar takes a great deal of planning and preparation. Care must be given to every detail, so that everyone will have an opportunity to both enrich their study of Tai Chi Chuan as well as to enjoy the company of old friends and the pleasure of making new ones. For the members of the Kentucky Center, all of the hard work became very satisfying when the seminar went well, everyone was happy with the time spent and we all received some of the highest level instruction available anywhere.

We are very grateful to Master Yang Jun for coming to Kentucky and helping all who attended deepen their knowledge and skill in Tai Chi Chuan. We also extend our

sincere appreciation to everyone that attended the seminar, and especially those from the Kentucky Center that helped with seminar activities.

"The Louisville seminar was extraordinary. It is obvious that Master Yang Jun is not only a world class martial artist and teacher but a world class person with a great passion for the art. In addition, I met a diversity of people who all share one thing: a love of Tai Chi Chuan. It was a wonderfully motivating and uplifting experience being surrounded by so many people with this same passion. I look forward to seeing all of my new friends at the next seminar!" Mark Burns, Louisville Center

Attending a seminar with Master Yang is a rich and rewarding experience. We look forward to seeing everyone back in Louisville for a hand form and sword seminar in July 2004.







# WHAT IS THIS THING *Called* RANKING?

By Bill Walsh

In 1929 Cole Porter wrote a tune "What is this thing called LOVE", which became famous in the Broadway show "Wake up and Dream." Mr. Porter writes, "What is this thing called love, this funny thing called love? Just who can solve this mystery, why should it make a fool of me?" There are few mysteries as difficult to explain as "Love" but perhaps Tai Chi "ranking" is one of them.



Center Directors and students can often find their interpretation unique. Is ranking a measure of fighting ability such as belts in the external styles or a measure of ability to be health educators? Is a level four person more powerful or knowledgeable than a level three? How do their skills differ? Are levels consistent throughout the world? Should a rank be assessed on the basis of the person in that level with the lowest ability or the highest ability? What kind of questions should be asked on the theory test? Is there a relationship between a theory test and a good practitioner?

**Certainly the ranking guidelines specify what is to be judged:**

- Total points possible in competition is ten
- Standardization of movements, possible six of ten points
- Application and coordination, possible two of ten points
- Spirit, concentration, speed and style, possible two of ten points

But when you boil it all down and answer a simple question, "What does ranking measure", it is hard to get a simple or consistent answer. And so I ask you, our members, to write to me of your thoughts, ideas and concerns at [bill@yangfamilytaichi.com](mailto:bill@yangfamilytaichi.com). We will have a follow up article to further develop this idea.

This article started with a conversation I had with Master Yang Jun and Center Director Han Hong Wang. I whined, " We can't even agree on what ranking measures." And so, what follows is the result of battling around some ideas and ending with Master Yang Jun saying, "write an article for the next newsletter and get other peoples ideas too!"

The actual ranking process measures certain skills. The most obvious and most important is the student's ability to translate, through movement, the Yang Family teachings. In the ranking process this most obviously translates into 'technical skill.'

Anyone who has attended a dozen or more seminars will know our teachers emphasize the same ideas. Certainly their specific use of the arms is different than even other Yang stylists. The higher the rank, the closer the student should imitate the teacher. Also, as the rank increases, a student should clearly demonstrate, though veiled, the martial art intent in the movement. The student's form should communicate an understanding of the movement's application. Grandmaster Yang Zhen duo warned that because you imitate his external movements doesn't mean you do it as he does it. He said what is happening inside is also very important. I can only conjecture that what is happening on the inside for him is the result of seventy years of chi cultivation, reflection and refinement.

Another important criterion in ranking is moral character. Confucius introduced the concept of moral character and became a prominent philosopher both morally and politically. "Confucius had a simple moral and political teaching: to love others and to honor one's parents, to do what is right instead of what is of advantage ([www.friesian.com/confuci.htm](http://www.friesian.com/confuci.htm)). Confucius' philosophy describes important Chinese characters: "Ren" as benevolence, charity, humanity, love, and kindness. "Li" as profit, gain, advantage: NOT a proper motive for actions affecting others. Lastly, "Yi" as "zhong", doing one's best, conscientiousness, loyalty, and "shu": reciprocity, altruism, consideration for others," i.e., what you don't want yourself, don't do to others" (Chinese Golden Rule). Confucius said, " The gentleman understands yi. The small man understands li. During the T'ang Dynasty, the canon of Confucian Classics became the basis for the great civil service examinations!) [www.friesian.com/confuci.htm](http://www.friesian.com/confuci.htm), quoted definitions, Matthews' Chinese Dictionary, Harvard, 1972, from Analects by D.C. Lau, Penguin Books, 1979).

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo has made a special point in seminars about the importance of being humble and not being arrogant. He would raise his chest and point his thumb at himself, saying, "This is not good." You are not rewarded with a higher rank for your moral character but it is a prerequisite for advancing within the system. Actually, it is within the Yang Family instructor code that teachers should not share their Tai Chi knowledge with anyone who does not have a proper moral code.



An unusual consideration in ranking is what the Chinese call "gong xian", which has to do with contribution, service to the organization, promoting tai chi, and early support for the Yang Family's promotion. If we consider the analogy of a school test, this area called "gong xian", is similar to extra credit.



The last category in ranking is spirit. Spirit, for the sake of discussion, can be divided into two ideas: social spirit and individual spirit. Social spirit is how an individual contributes to working together, like a family, in the organization, the training environment, or any group effort. Michigan Center Director Han describes the big heartedness of social spirit, "The heart is open and wide." As I probe, Master Yang Jun says "heart, you can put a boat in there" (xiong jin kuan guang). He further explains, "The mind thinks narrow and the heart thinks wide." He said



that when a person possesses this characteristic, big things become small things and small things become nothing.

Individual spirit has many meanings. In tai chi, it is not related to religious beliefs. Spirit is often referred to as the degree of "heart" a person displays in putting forth an enormous effort. In football, a running back who drives down field avoiding many tackles and the defensive players seem to bounce off him. It appears he cannot be stopped. The same player is running all over the field on defense, backing up his teammates, protecting his goal. It would be a common remark to say that he plays with "great heart" or "great spirit." In push hands it might be the player who keeps going long after he is exhausted. It also refers to the sacrifice an individual makes for a common cause. This can be demonstrated by a person who gives up his own career or livelihood to care for someone else or support the survival of a family business.

In ranking, we are concerned with the kind of spirit that might be perceived by a skillful judge. Spirit is a reflection of the heart and can be observed through the eyes. Master Yang Jun gives an example. He says that when a person first begins to drive, they are a little nervous, thinking about where the brake and the clutch are, where the turn signal is, watching the speedometer and the rear view mirror. Their eyes reflect this nervousness and lack of experience. As they become very experienced as a driver, they are relaxed and can include all these elements into their driving. This skill and calm can also be observed in their eyes. A beginning Tai Chi

player, for example, is nervous about where their foot lands, how high their hand is, and what movement comes next. Spirit is observed in the experienced Tai Chi player by the internal attentiveness of being present with a deep understanding of what the movement and application is, with the body relaxed and very alive, sensing moment to moment the slight changes in weight and placement, and at the same time sensing the surrounding environment. It is this aliveness, attentiveness, self-understanding and cultivation, with the mind calm and clear, that exhibits spirit through the eyes.

This is my first attempt to try to explore some views of ranking and some of the meaning of words that are used in our judging criteria. Ranking is a double-edged sword. Not everyone appreciates it. Some feel it makes a collaborative experience into a competitive experience. Some feel it should only reflect fighting ability. For others, ranking has provided a wonderful opportunity for individuals to challenge themselves to improve, to set goals, to test themselves under pressure (self-pressure) and to succeed. Not everyone has to do it or like it. I just think we need to talk about it more. Perhaps by writing songs about "love", Cole Porter initiated endless discussions about love's true meaning. It is my hope that by discussing the different elements of ranking and different opinions of ranking, I will learn a great deal and we can all come to a richer understanding and clearer sense of purpose. Please E-mail me your thoughts.



diploma



# POST GRADUATE TAICHI

## *A New Project in Sao Paulo, Brazil*

Interview conducted by **Jeremy Blodgett**

**I**n November we were able to catch up with Angela and Roque (Sao Paulo Center Directors) at their beautiful home overlooking the artistic town of Embu, a quiet suburb of Sao Paulo. In 2004 they will begin enrolling students in the first postgraduate course for Tai Chi Chuan in Brazil, and possibly the world. In this interview, conducted in English, Angela and Roque share with us the exciting details of this new postgraduate Tai Chi program.

### **How did you first get this idea?**

For many years we have been graduating students from our own teacher's course as one of our principles has always been to ensure the quality of Tai Chi teachers. To really popularize Tai Chi in Brazil we need teachers who have a graduate degree, a requirement by the government for teaching many disciplines. Over the last several years we have been developing our ideas and now have a course to fit the formal postgraduate format. We have partnered with Faculdade





Diadema, a University in Sao Paulo, and they will provide certification authorized by the Brazilian government.

#### How is the curriculum designed?

Postgraduate courses in Brazil require at least 360 hours. Because Tai Chi is such a broad discipline we ended up with a 450 hour program and divided it into three areas: Historical and Philosophical, Scientific, and then Technical.

The first area, Historical and Philosophical, introduces Yang Style and the other styles. It also makes a comparison between Eastern and Western philosophy so students can have a broader idea about what they are learning about. One of the scientific area courses is Anatomy and Physiology of Tai Chi Chuan, which focuses on the benefits of Tai Chi Chuan to the body. And we have Kinesiology and Biomechanics Applications of Tai Chi – always going back to how they deal with your body. Both of these classes are examined from a Western Scientific perspective. We also have a first aid class. Why? Even though Tai Chi is slow, there is always a risk because Tai Chi is a physical activity. We teach people how to deal with these risks. The last class in the technical area is a class on how to teach Tai Chi. Teaching Tai Chi is different than teaching mathematics for example. You will teach all kinds of students and it is important to know the pedagogy to deal with this.

#### Who will teach the subjects?

Most of the teachers are our students who have already been practicing Tai Chi with us for many years, and who have master's degrees in their subjects. For instance, the teacher who is giving the Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine has a master's degree in acupuncture and is a Doctor. as well. She practices Tai Chi and can relate this with acupuncture in a clear way. In accordance with the Education Ministry of Brazil regulations for postgraduate certification, over half of the teachers need to have a master's degree. For the program's scientific area courses, all of the teachers have master's degrees.

#### How long does the program take?

Because most of the students are working and we have designed three options to fit peoples' work schedules. The first option has two three-hour classes a week and takes 18 months to complete. Another option has classes every other Saturday and takes 22 months. Finally, we have an immersion system where you study three times for 15 days of rigorous studies each time, taking 18 months to complete. We have facilities in the country near here where we hold the Immersion classes. These are suitable for people coming from outside of Sao Paulo.

These immersion courses offer many opportunities. We can bring in teachers and students from other countries to participate in the program. There are currently agreements between our border countries, and maybe even Portugal and Italy because of the language similarities, so that students and teachers can come participate in the program. For students, even if the credits are not transferable, you are welcome to participate in any of the immersion courses and study just for the knowledge. For people who don't speak Portuguese we will offer English translation.

The facilities for the Immersion Course are called Dharma Gardens. It is in an area surrounded by poor communities, as is so common in Brazil. For many years we have been holding our Tai Chi and meditation retreats there, and as we have mentioned before, we run a social service towards that community so our intentions are to create a small clinic with dentistry, psychiatry, and day care services, all provided by volunteers. Many Tai Chi and meditation practitioners are very involved in this project and our hope is that others will provide medicines, equipment, and other resources to help us accomplish our goal of helping the community.

HISTORICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL	SCIENTIFIC	TECHNICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Chinese History</li> <li>• Introduction to Eastern Philosophy</li> <li>• Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Yi Qing</li> <li>• Traditional Yang Style Characteristics</li> <li>• Psychology of Tai Chi Chuan</li> <li>• Introduction to Western Philosophy</li> <li>• Professional Ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine</li> <li>• The Anatomy and Physiology of Tai Chi Chuan and its Practical Benefit</li> <li>• Kinesiology and Biomechanic Applications of Tai Chi Chuan</li> <li>• First Aid Principles and Cardiac Physiology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory Exercises for Tai Chi Chuan, Qigong, and 8 Pieces of Brocade</li> <li>• Form Practice – Traditional Yang Style (103 postures)</li> <li>• Form Corrections</li> <li>• Tai Chi Chuan Pedagogy</li> </ul>

### **Is there any relation between your course and ranking?**

Yes, our idea is to spread the knowledge of Tai Chi and provide a deeper theoretical foundation. Graduates will have had more than one year of classes and extensive practice, and will have passed many practical and theoretical examinations. After finishing the course students can apply to be ranked for level 1. So, they will be inside the Association system after finishing our course.

Here in Brazil, people usually practice Tai Chi in a free way and it is hard to know what it means when one has practiced for say one year or three years. This course requires that the student practice consistently. If a student comes six hours a week, studies well, and finishes the form with high performance, then he is very prepared to be ranked. Before, the consistency was not there.

### **Will it be hard to find students for the program?**

Our focus is on finding students who are in the health field. Many of our current students already work in hospitals and clinics and are professionals in the field. They are helping us advertise with posters there. We are also using the Internet to advertise, sending e-mails to every association, hospital, and university in Brazil. It is interesting because this is a new subject that does not yet exist. Because people are interested, they are very open to put up our signs on their walls, letting everyone know about this new option.

### **Why will this work now, when it might not have say 15 years ago?**

I think we all are experiencing a big change in the world, related to exercise and health and especially related to holistic and alternative medicine. Today you have a wide-open mind. China and the West are eagerly opening up to each other. Master Yang Zhen Duo started

coming to the West in the late 80s and now with Yang Jun living in the America, it has made the world smaller. When we subject all this knowledge and experience to our Western scientific methods, all humanity can prosper together.

For many years now in Brazil, Tai Chi has been considered a kind of physical therapy, and not so connected with the scientific minds of the people. Doctors were especially skeptical of Tai Chi. As the years have passed and the art has been spread more, many people are feeling better about it. So, another purpose of having this course is to graduate special people with scientific minds who practice and understand Tai Chi. They can conduct research with our students and their own students. By sharing this research, they can help spread Tai Chi and prove that it is not only an exercise; it is also an Art and a Science.

### **What are your hopes for with this?**

It's interesting because when you have a postgraduate degree you may teach classes at the university level. For example, you finish this course and you may apply to the Psychology College and teach a 100-hour introduction for Tai Chi in a special graduate program. Our dream is to have Tai Chi in all our universities, and then in the high schools, and even going down to kindergarten for example. It should be a program to be given to the adults and children in the whole country so that we can improve the health of the people.

This is also similar to the Association's dream of having a Tai Chi college one day. When Master Yang Jun was here for the October seminars he talked about the dream of making a four-year college with many courses, bringing teachers from everywhere. I think we can help realize this dream by first beginning with a postgraduate course.

We have another aspect of our social programs which is also another way to bring Tai Chi into the Brazilian public schools. Next year we plan to give a series of Tai Chi and Qigong exercises and the new 13-posture form to public school teachers of all levels. Since Brazilian public school teachers earn a very low salary we need to offer free classes for them. Classes will be held at our Dharma Gardens, where we can lodge as many as 50 people! Two full time teachers will teach the participants for ten hours of classes a day. We need this many hours for the students to learn well, not just superficially. So, imagine if you have a group of 50 school teachers having a five day program there – when they come back to their jobs, they can apply the movements of Tai Chi in their classes and families, sharing what they learned.

We have been using these techniques with children, including our own. It works really well, especially with children who have attention disorders. Practicing some breathing exercises and then the 13-posture form makes them calm and feel better to learn the subjects. The teacher can say let's forget mathematics for five or ten minutes. After the students just relax a bit, they then feel very good to follow the learning. Through public school teachers we can both spread the form and improve peoples' health. About the only assistance we need for this program is help in paying the teachers of the five-day seminars.

During his last visit, Master Yang Jun said that even in China Tai Chi is not taught in such a formal way. We feel fortunate to have this opportunity and look forward to sharing our experiences with others so that similar programs can be established in other countries. Later, we could have sister schools so that we can exchange information, students and teachers. I hope others are excited as we are about what we are doing here in Brazil. ☯



# TAI CHI TWINNS

*Letters from Italy*

## My First Tai Chi Chuan Teacher

By Vera Lazzeri, Florence, Italy

**D**r Nguyen Van Nghi was my first mentor. I was studying acupuncture under his instruction at his school in Florence. As you may know, he was one of the best-known masters of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the world. The doctor focused on not only the classroom material, but also martial arts. He and his students all practiced martial arts, especially Tai Chi Chuan. He merged theories of Chinese Medicine with the theories of energy as utilized by most martial arts. I am a Urologist who was fascinated by this holistic approach to healing.

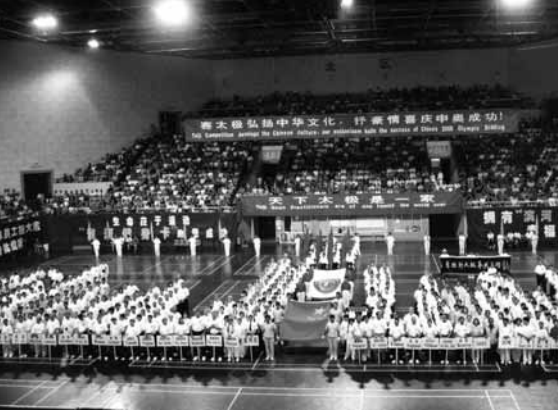
So I started my search and encouraged my twin sister Roberta to start practicing as well. Initially, I encountered many different kinds of tai chi styles. For example, the first kind was Taoist tai chi. I was looking for something that was more dynamic and focused on balance. Next, I encountered a Yang style school that taught the Beijing

24 form. I liked this style, but more than anything, I enjoyed working with my instructor, Daniele. He was a sincere and skilled instructor who inspired me to continue with Tai Chi. This would have been good for me, but I wanted to learn the long form.

Meanwhile, my sister was practicing at the Yang Cheng Fu Center in Milan. I had the possibility of observing the long form with her there. I took some seminars with the 49 form and push hands. That summer I had the opportunity to go to Seattle and yes! my search was finally over. I found the style and mentor who complemented my spirit: Yang Jun.

That summer I was lucky to informally meet Yang Zhenduo at a farewell party in Seattle. It was an emotional moment and I felt touched by his presence. My sister and I went to China in summer 2002 and practiced Tai Chi with the Masters Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun. ☯





By Roberta Lazzeri, Florence, Italy

# CHINA *Memories*

I like Tai Chi Chuan, and after our summer trip to China, I like it even more. I feel very close to Tai Chi Chuan and it really happened by chance. I decided to try it to increase my muscle elasticity when I was in my late forties. When I encountered Yang Zhenduo/Yang Jun Tai Chi Chuan, I was invigorated! This is for me, I thought!

Then, I had the opportunity to go to China and participate in a tournament! It was wonderful! The trip to China was incredible for me. It was energizing as I could meet people from all over the world. It was lovely to see us performing in the same style, as we were from the same school. Perhaps, I couldn't understand everything that Bill and Dave said, but I could understand what they were performing. I like this feeling since this is the way to promote peace among people by better understanding each other.

In particular, I enjoyed 'Yang Zhenduo's thought, "We need to understand that regardless of how you look at it, all Taiji practitioners are of one family. It should not be as it was in the past when people were suspicious of each other and would create trouble. This is not good."

On my path to discovering Tai Chi Chuan, I encountered many people with narrow thinking, but at last, I encountered the International Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Association.

I know that every person can put some of his own flavour in his interpretation of Taiji. This is only human. However, belonging to a school with a standardized training system allows us to stay with the original form and to develop it through a constant supervision.

There are two main reasons why I chose Yang Zhenduo/Yang Jun Tai Chi Chuan. First of all, I like open-minded people, and, maybe even more importantly, I distrust close-minded people. Only very open-minded people can understand new and differing thoughts. These people would develop their own theories while confronting something new. They are challenged by contradictions and comparisons. Secondly, a standardized system allows us to improve in the style all together in many countries throughout the world.

How could I stand not practicing this kind of Tai Chi Chuan in my city, Florence? All kinds of Tai Chi Chuan are good, but I like this one and I want to continue practicing it!

How could I stand that my own twin can't practice this wonderful style all week and can't perform in international tournaments? I couldn't and we couldn't.

We started a practice group of 'this style' of Tai Chi Chuan in Florence. We started with some friends, and then we advertised, promoted and now, we are

ten students practicing together regularly. (A small number? I don't think so! It is enough for starting!). We practice every week, and in addition, we are supported by a higher-level Tai Chi Chuan practitioner once a month. He travels from Milan to Florence, just for our group. We gather mainly for health purposes, but now some younger students have joined us.

The trip to China gave us the will to start a practice group and also inspired the name for our association. It is the Chinese word that we heard most often: "shuangbaotai" (meaning: twins in Chinese). We very much enjoyed seeing the gorgeous Chinese places and to meet Chinese people. We were pushed to improve our knowledge of Chinese culture, and mainly for Vera (the medical doctor), Traditional Chinese Medicine, that she has been practicing for many years.

The trip was also a great opportunity to meet up with the friends that we knew in Seattle and update our friendship (we miss Seattle and, now, we miss China!) We are very glad to have been in China and to have met more members of the Tai Chi Chuan family, first of all Yang Zhenduo family. Now, we hope to contribute to developing the cause of Tai Chi Chuan and returning to China in 2007 with a Florentine group. ●

## 太极拳



As you turn your body to the left, use your waist to rotate your hands.



Shift your weight back, at the same time circle your arms downward.



Continue your circles until your arms are closed in front of your body. The weight is all in your left leg.



With the turning your waist, rotate your right arm palm in and make a downward circle. Start an upward circle with your left hand at the same time.



Follow your waist's turning by rotating your left hand in an upward circle and your right hand in a downward circle. Move your weight back at the same time.

Continue your circles until your left palm is extended and flat in front of your body and your right palm is extended to the back right. Step forward at the same time.

This is the front view of White Crane Spreads Its Wings.



At the same time as you shift your weight to your right foot and bring in your left foot, use your right arm to ward off up and your left arm to push down.



Step straight forward with your left foot and touch with the ball of the foot. Keep your shoulder down and your elbow down, while you ward off upwards with your right arm. Make sure it is rounded and extended.

Push downward with your left palm. Make sure the palm is down, the fingers are extended, and your elbow stays back. Square your torso to the front.



Start shifting your weight forward while you make a large circle across your body with your left arm. The arm descends slightly during this circle.

Meanwhile, bring your right arm into a ready position with your palm facing forward.



Finish shifting weight to the left leg. Your body will be squared to the front. Your left arm finishes beside your left knee with the palm down and the fingers facing forward.

Your right arm is directly in front of your body and the palm is facing slightly inwards. Your back leg is naturally straight, and you should lean forward slightly with your upper body.



## 太极拳



Shift weight forward slightly, lower right hand slightly, at the same time raise right leg.



Shift weight backward, turn body to the right. Following the turning waist, raise right arm to the side of body, keep right shoulder and right elbow down, fingers pointing forward.

Raise left arm in front of the body, sit left palm slightly, bend left elbow slightly. Touch the ground with left heel.



Opponent grabs your right wrist.



Move weight forward and then shift weight backward, raise right arm backward, Press opponent's right shoulder with your left arm.

If opponent is still holding on your right wrist, bend down and sink the body, move right arm down to split the opponent's right wrist.



Shift weight backward, turn body to the right. Following the turning waist, raise right arm to the side of body, keep right shoulder and right elbow down, fingers pointing forward.



Raise left arm in front of the body, sit left palm slightly, bend left elbow slightly. Touch the ground with left heel.



Lift the body up and rotate right arm from inside to outside, left palm touching the right forearm.

Step out with left leg to make left bow stance.

Shift weight forward and turn body to the right, separate both arms.



Sit left palm and strike forward at shoulder level, pull back right arm to the side of right temple, right arm slightly stay up. Upper body stays straight.



Opponent grabs your right wrist.



Left hand presses against the opponent's right palm. Raise right arm.



Step forward to form left bow stance, separate both arms, left palm strike at the opponent's left arm pit.



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# SEMINAR

## MASTER YANG JUN

### STOCKTON CA USA

January 17-18, 2004 • Hand Form  
January 19, 2004 • Saber Form  
**Raymond Tom**  
Ph: (209) 952-8582  
Mailing Address:  
5050 Gadwall Circle  
Stockton, Ca. 95207  
Ray@yangfamilytaichi.com

### EAST BRUNSWICK NJ USA

February 14-15, 2004 • Hand Form  
**Andy Lee**  
Ph: (732) 238-1414  
Fax: (732) 238-7322  
leeandy@yangfamilytaichi.com

### MANCHESTER NH USA

March 13-14, 2004 • Hand Form  
**Michael Coulon**  
Ph: (603) 668-3181  
250 Commercial Street,  
Suite 2008  
Manchester, NH, 03101  
michael@yangfamilytaichi.com

### MONTREAL QC CANADA

April 16, 2004 • Saber Form  
April 17-18, 2004 • Hand Form  
**Sergio Arione**  
Ph: (514) 684-9584  
Fax: (514) 684-8291  
sergio@yangfamilytaichi.com

### WINCHESTER VA USA

July 5-8, 2004 • Hand Form  
July 8-10, 2004 • Sword Form  
**Pat Rice**  
111 Shirley Street  
Winchester, Virginia 22601  
(540) 667-7595  
pat@yangfamilytaichi.com  
http://www.atocataijiquan.com

### PORTLAND OR USA

July 14-16, 2004 • Hand Form  
July 17-18, 2004 • Saber Form  
**Dave Barrett**  
Ph: (503) 357-8917  
24300 Northwest Timber Road  
Forest Grove, Oregon 97116  
dave@yangfamilytaichi.com

### LOUISVILLE KY USA

July 24-26, 2004 • Hand Form  
July 27-29, 2004 • Sword Form  
**Carl Meeks or Bill Wojasinski**  
Ph: (859) 879-9434  
carl@yangfamilytaichi.com  
or william@yangfamilytaichi.com  
http://www.kentuckytaichi.com

### NEW YORK CITY NY USA

August 7-10, 2004 • Hand Form  
**Bill Walsh**  
Ph: (845) 225-0662  
Fax: (845) 225-5350  
22 Birch Trail, RR 5  
Carmel, New York 10512  
bill@yangfamilytaichi.com  
www.nycyangfamilytaichi.com

### TROY MI USA

August 14-16, 2004 • Hand Form  
August 17-18, 2004 } Saber Form  
**Han Hoong Wang**  
Ph: (248) 680-8938  
1748 Lakewood  
Troy, Michigan 48083  
han@yangfamilytaichi.com  
www.michigantaichi.com

### WHITEHORSE YU CANADA

September 18-19, 2004 • Hand Form  
**Pam Boyde**  
Ph: (876) 633-6034  
ttnyukon@yt.sympatico.ca  
www.taichi-yukon.ca

### Master Yang Zhenduo & Yang Jun's Seminars

### PARIS FRANCE

June 12-15, 2004 • Hand Form  
June 16-17, 2004 • Saber Form  
**Duc Nguyen Minh**  
Ph: +33 1601 22419  
duc@yangfamilytaichi.com

### STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

June 20-23, 2004 • Hand Form  
June 23-25, 2004 • Sword Form  
**Terese Mei Mei Teo**  
Ph: +46-8-201800  
meimei@yangfamilytaichi.co  
www.taiji-qigong.com

For more information please visit  
[www.yangfamilytaichi.com](http://www.yangfamilytaichi.com)



INTERNATIONAL YANG STYLE  
TAI CHI CHUAN ASSOCIATION  
4076 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Redmond, WA 98052 USA