



YANG FAMILY  
TAI CHI CHUAN

中国之旅  
CHINA TOUR

*Tai Chi Chuan*

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## President's Letter

### Dear Member:

With everyone's support we have managed to accomplish a great deal this year, continuing the stable development of the International Association.



The China trip has left us with unforgettable memories: the bustling scenes from modern cities, the towering Pearl of the Orient, the steep precipice of cliffs in exquisite forms, like stairs to the sky. We were warmly received and enjoyed unique cuisine. In the beautiful Phoenix City there were young people rowing boats and serenading each other with love songs. At the grand opening ceremony, the neat rows of 170 overseas guests performing Tai Chi Chuan made television news and headlines in the newspapers. The Great Wall snaking along mountainous ridges was a magnificent sight. We saw picturesque scenery, experienced unique customs, unusual attire, developing cities, sampled the local cuisines - they all increased our understanding of China. Due to the Center Directors' efforts and the enthusiasm of our members, participants on the China trip came from five continents: Europe, North America, South America, Asia, and Africa. More than two hundred and fifty people represented eighteen countries. Through great planning, organization and participation, this China trip was the most successful of all our adventures. I want to thank those whose support was crucial to the success of the China trip for allowing China to see the passion of those who travelled from overseas have for Tai Chi Chuan.

Ever since the foundation for the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Memorial was laid last year, this summer was the first time I have had the opportunity to return to my ancestral hometown, Guangfu, to have a look. The government of Guangfu gave us a warm reception. I was amazed by the changes in Guangfu and the government's commitment to development. The foundation for the Yang Family memorial is fifty percent completed. The Tai Chi Memorial is located on the outer area of Guangfu on a refilled moat, along the river surrounded by lotus pads. The tomb of the patriarch, Yang Luchan, is almost completed. The design and construction of the altar, tomb and tombstone is traditional, stately, and dignified, leaving visitors with a feeling of quiet respect. During a meeting, the Guangfu government expressed the importance of the Yang Memorial and its role as part of their town's overall development. I am deeply grateful to the leaders of Guangfu for their efforts preserving the birthplaces of Yang Family and Wu/Hao Tai Chi Chuan.

Two years after application, the United States government has formally approved the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Foundation to be a non-profit organization. The next important event for the Foundation will be the Tai Chi Symposium. After almost a year of screening, we have decided that the next Symposium will be held in Louisville, KY during July of 2014. In the selection process, we had to take into consideration the tai chi student base for volunteers and basic facilities. Carl Meeks, Director of the Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Chuan Center in Louisville, has graciously accepted the position of Vice President of the Symposium and will be organizing the event. We have been invited by Kentucky's governor, Louisville's mayor, and Spalding University's president to hold the Symposium in Louisville and they have all expressed their support. These three in harmony: timing, location and people, are the reasons why I have decided to hold it in Louisville. This will require all our efforts. The International Association is an important sponsor of this project. We will need our members' support and enthusiasm to ensure its success in order to promote the development of different styles of Tai Chi Chuan and reflect that they are united as one.

Finally, I wish everyone good health in the New Year, and may all your wishes come true!

Yang Jun, President

Translated by Mui Gek Chan

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# A Pilgrimage to Guangfu Town

By Claudio Mingarini, Center Director, Roma, Italia

With help from Edward Moore



In August of 2012 several members of the Yang family along with some of their disciples and students, made a journey to the birthplace of Yang style taijiquan and the Yang family tombs. We traveled together across the beautiful Chinese countryside, through Shanxi, Shandong and Hebei provinces to visit Guangfu Town, the Yang family ancestral graves, and several other special destinations. This was a journey that many of us had dreamed about for many years, so as we traveled we were very aware of the history, legends, and reality of these places. It was a great joy and a special honor to share a journey that was so interesting and engaging with Masters Yang Jun, Yang Bin, and so many other members of the Yang family.

It was midday when we arrived outside the ancient town of Guangfu and walked across the elegant stone bridge that takes you over the river and through the high stone walls that surround the town. Being inside the walls of the town is a little like stepping back in time. The 1.5 square kilometer town has four districts, four streets, and eight lanes lined by old traditional structures. To see, live and breathe in the places where Yang Luchan and the Yang family lived two hundred years ago was a very interesting and intense experience. Guangfu (previously called Guangping) is in Yongnian County, Hebei province. It is the birthplace of both the Yang and Wu/Hao styles of taijiquan and many of the people who live there practice these traditional styles. Since 1991, Guangfu has held the Yongnian International Taijiquan Festival that attracts taiji practitioners from all over the world.

Having an ancient origin, the town is said to have been founded in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476BCE) and was once the capital of the Xia Kingdom during the chaotic years of the later Sui Dynasty (581-618CE). Today, the ancient city walls and ramparts built



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during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644CE) are still intact and offer a gorgeous view of the water that surrounds the city. Master Yang Jun, who seemed to be very inspired to be there said, "I'm really happy to be back to my family's hometown!" Inside the town, we had toured the house of the famous Wu Yuxiang, which had large elegantly decorated rooms and spacious courtyards separated by huge doors. It is a special experience to stand in these courtyards and imagine the moments when Yang Luchan was teaching the Wu brothers. It was as if all of the many years of training, research, discussion, and discovery were unfolding again right before our eyes.



degreed course covering the history, philosophy, theory and practice of traditional Yang style taijiquan in various aspects, and the details of the program were discussed. In many ways, the academy program proposed by our international association and the University of Handan are very similar, and this has created a mutual interest for important future collaborations.

Then we traveled to the most important destination on our tour, the ancestral tomb of the Yang Family. Because the previous tomb site had become crowded with homes and streets, the family decided to move the tomb to a new location, which was generously donated by the Yongnian county officials. It is

Next, we visited the house of Yang Luchan, rebuilt near Guangfu by the current generations of the Yang family. This site is a growing destination for the lovers of taijiquan and other martial arts from around the world. The house is very beautiful and charming, and the different rooms connected by several courtyards are simple but elegant. It was here that there was a short ceremony, led by Master Yang Jun, where we silently stood before an altar decorated with images of Yang Luchan. We then performed a traditional offering of incense and bowed to show our respect for this legendary figure that passed the bright pearl of taijiquan down through the generations so that we too might have a chance to study.

the goal of the Yang family and the provincial government to create a public park there with a memorial hall and taijiquan cultural center. This will be a place of pilgrimage and cultural exchange for people from around the world to gather to study taijiquan. To get to the tomb site we traveled by bus through a large flat area rich in marshes and vegetation. The golden hues of the hot summer weather accompanied us everywhere. Finally, the bus turned off the road and moved slowly down a narrow dirt path between the fields as we arrived.



The tombs are located in the center of a very large green marsh that lends a very peaceful feeling to the site. Our group was quiet and solemn as we walked towards the graves. The first sight is the tomb of Yang Luchan, which has a large rounded mausoleum with a tall stone tablet standing before it. Leading up to the tomb are eight stone steps with a large incense burner standing below them. Spread out in front of Master Yang Luchan's tomb are the graves of Yang Banhou, Yang Jianhou, Yang Chengfu,

After our visit to Guangfu we were invited to lunch by the mayor, who is also the administrator responsible for the Yang Family Taijiquan Memorial Park, which is currently under construction. Despite the scarcity of government funds, he promised that with the help of our contributions, he would do everything possible to make sure that the project will be completed without further delays. While we enjoyed distinctive local dishes that have been handed down for hundreds of years, we listened to the local townsmen tell interesting stories about the legendary historical figures of taijiquan who have lived in the area.

On our journey through the region, we also had a meeting with the head of Handan University and a large number of teachers. They gave Masters Yang Jun and Yang Bin a warm welcome and we witnessed an important meeting in the school. About a year ago this university started a







Yang Shaohou, and other family members up to the fourth generation. The most special moment was the ceremony dedicated to the Yang family ancestors. After a moment of standing lined up in silence, we stepped forward to follow the traditional ceremony of lighting and offering incense and kneeling to perform ritual bows before the tomb of Yang Luchan. It was a beautiful moment as we knelt together on the damp earth and shared a quiet emotion and deep gratitude for being able to be part of this important ceremony.

Family members brought offerings of fruit to be left at the tomb, and also made a small fire for the ritual burning of symbolic money, first by the Yang family members, and then by all others present. We also found the tomb of Yang Chengfu and performed ritual bows there as well to show our gratitude to this great master. As the incense smoke swept across the beautiful lotus ponds that surround the tomb site, we shared in our silent glances to each other our feelings of reverence to be in this special place on such a day. To be there with the current generations of the Yang family, to thank the former generations, and to open our hearts and minds to the awareness of what they did is unforgettable. The heart of their teaching continues to flourish in all of us.

The experience of visiting the Yang family hometown and the tombs of the ancestors will remain in our hearts and minds for a very long time. I hope that, in time, we will be able to make our own contributions to the Yang family traditions through the practice of the martial arts, culture, and ethics that have been handed down so carefully through the centuries.



# Tai Chi Chuan

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# Calm Mind, Flowing Brush

## My Strange Path to Tai Chi Chuan and Why I Practice

By Carolyn Fung  
Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Chuan Center, Redmond, WA



I never would have been interested in learning tai chi chuan except for an insensitive little comment from my calligraphy teacher. In late 2009 I painted what I thought was a "perfect" Chinese calligraphy script. I couldn't wait for my teacher to see it. But when he saw it, he told me it looked flat, too perfect, and lacked energy. I asked him how I could improve the energy and flow of my painting. That's when he said the words that drove me to study tai chi chuan: "Maybe you can't learn. Maybe you just have to be born with it." He offered no helpful suggestions. I couldn't accept his words. I remembered sometimes when I painted standing up he would tell me to stand like I was doing tai chi, but I didn't know what he meant. All I knew was tai chi was some sort of flowing exercise and my calligraphy needed more "flow" so maybe learning tai chi could help.

I didn't know how to find a teacher. I wasn't very enthusiastic about learning tai chi chuan so I thought I didn't need a really good teacher, just a "good enough" one. Master Yang Jun's school in Redmond came up first in an Internet search. I didn't even bother to read Master Yang's biography. I remember thinking his website looked good so he was probably "good enough". I didn't realize I would be stepping into the school of a world-class tai chi chuan teacher.

In January 2010, I signed up for three months of lessons at Master Yang's Redmond school. I experienced a number of surprises. After just a few classes I understood that tai chi would not be a quick solution to my calligraphy problem. I was also surprised to find out it was a martial art. I had no interest in learning a martial art. Even worse, I was shocked to find out the three months would only cover the first section of the hand

form and that it would take a year to learn the entire form. I had only planned on staying at the school three months, learning some flowing moves, and then leaving to practice "flowing" at home. But worst of all, the class was on Tuesday evening at the same time as my Chinese art class. I was learning tai chi chuan to help my calligraphy and now I couldn't even go to my art class for a year because of tai chi chuan! I was not happy

about that. I thought tai chi chuan was boring and I almost quit after learning the first section. I stayed because it seemed wasteful to learn the first part and not finish learning the rest. Also, I had a strong, intuitive feeling that I was supposed to stay at that school and learn tai chi chuan, although I didn't know why.

Halfway through learning section two of the hand form everything changed when a friend told me that tai chi can be a spiritual practice. This was even crazier than finding out it was a martial art! The topic of spirituality was certainly never mentioned in class. I was curious and began to read many books. I'm not a member of any religious group but for years I have been interested in spirituality at the mystical, more personal level. I loved reading about Taoist spiritual philosophy, but what really caught my attention was mind development at higher levels of tai chi chuan. It seemed very similar to the kind of mental cultivation I had a brief experience of previously in my life.

Many years before, I had the experience of living like a Buddhist monk for ten days while learning Vipassana ("insight") meditation at an intense live-in retreat.<sup>1</sup> This involved following a strict daily schedule that included almost eleven hours of meditation per day. The retreat was done in complete silence. There was no talking allowed for ten days and also no television, internet, cell phones, music, reading, writing or contact with the outside world. There was nothing to do but meditate, sleep, eat, shower, or go for a brief walk. For three days the training focused on calming the mind by stopping excessive thoughts and emotions ("monkey mind") to develop the skill of concentration. This was done by focusing on the breath under the nose. Most people stop at this level of meditation and enjoy the calmness they experience. But at the retreat, this was just the preparation stage for Vipassana meditation. From days 4-10, the training went beyond this level to purify the mind at deeper levels. This was done by training the mind to concentrate attention on sensations on the body in a systematic way, becoming aware of all sensations, but not reacting mentally or emotionally. This was challenging because it also involved keeping the body completely still, literally not moving an inch during meditation. Sitting this way for hours can bring strong sensations that I had to learn to sit through and not react to by judging them as good or bad. In the Buddhist tradition, the constant mental habit of judging something good or bad leads to craving and aversion which leads to non-acceptance and attachment (suffering).

感悟







Although hard to describe, I will always remember experiencing the most refined, pure awareness that lies beyond the thinking mind. From days 7-10 I was relaxed, peaceful, centered yet had such a heightened awareness and alertness to everything around me and felt ready for anything. My mind was so swift, precise, sensitive and clear. I could focus my mind like a laser on any area of my outer or inner body very rapidly. My mind was like a powerful tool empty and waiting to be used any way I wanted to use it because I wasn't caught in mental or emotional reaction to my environment. (I can see how in tai chi chuan this kind of mind would allow one to be relaxed and non-resistant with an opponent.) No matter what activity I was engaged in, there was always an incredible inner stillness and peacefulness at all times. It seems similar to a state of mind described in a previous journal article.<sup>2</sup> This quality of mind can only be understood through experience, rather than reading an article or book or listening to a teacher talk about it. This is why personal practice is so important. There was also an understanding that my body, thoughts, and emotions are not permanent, nor is anything in the physical environment. Occasionally there was a profound sense of oneness with everything in my environment. My body felt so light and free. After the retreat I didn't practice the recommended two hours per day. This retreat was the first time I learned to meditate and as a beginner, I didn't have the discipline to continue. I enjoyed some nice benefits in my daily life for a while but without practice, this amazing level of consciousness faded in about a week. The external world's pull is strong when you don't take time to be quiet and focus internally.

So as I read more about tai chi chuan, I discovered it has a spiritual level beyond health and martial arts. I realized that tai chi chuan can be a path back to that powerful mind that I experienced and that is why I practice. For me, spiritual practice involves restoring the mind to its original state of consciousness before the conditioning of thought and emotion or the development of individual personality or ego. The thoughts and emotions we acquire in life are like dirt that dulls the power of our spirit when we identify ourselves with this impermanent mental activity. To operate from pure awareness rather than thinking is a closer alignment with spiritual nature. Taoist philosophy suggests that humans were born with the Tao as their inherent true nature; however they lose and separate themselves from the Tao in their worldly lives. Tai chi's movements are patterned according to how the Tao

expresses naturally in nature and performing them is a way of harmonizing oneself with the Tao. Tai chi chuan's movements are designed to gather, store, develop, and refine chi, helping to transform a person at the energetic level resulting in positive benefits at the physical, mental, and spiritual levels.

What was originally supposed to be three months of studying tai chi to help my calligraphy has extended into three years! I can't imagine quitting. Now that I have memorized the hand form I notice I can "feel" the form more as I practice more slowly. I like the work of trying to perfect precise movements. I also like the challenge of listening to an opponent during push hands and am open to learning a martial art. I notice yin/yang theory applications in everyday life. I love moving into the inner silence as I practice and hope to develop depth in this art.

Did three years of tai chi help my calligraphy? I never went back to my Tuesday night art class because I didn't want to miss my tai chi class! I didn't paint for over two years. It doesn't matter to me anymore whether or not tai chi helps my calligraphy because I love practicing tai chi for its own sake; however, I believe it will help my painting. Although I have not yet found another calligraphy teacher, I recently began to paint again on my own. One thing I noticed was my grip was more relaxed. The brush is an extension of the artist's arm, just like a saber or sword in tai chi chuan. Just like in tai chi chuan, the hand should be relaxed, not too limp or too stiff. The other thing I noticed was, although my teacher never explained calligraphy in terms of yin/yang theory or energy, I was immediately more aware of yin/yang energy patterns in and between the brushstrokes like the storing and sending of energy in tai chi chuan. I could understand energetically how strokes formed characters and each character flowed into the next seamlessly from start to finish in a script; just like each tai chi chuan movement flows and connects to the next movement in the hand form. I realized that just as tai chi chuan students first learn and memorize the basic hand form movements, so do calligraphers first learn and memorize the basic strokes and how to put them together. That was the level I was at in 2009 and the reason why my painting lacked energy then. I didn't understand the energy of calligraphy. Tai chi chuan has helped me understand this aspect of calligraphy more and I hope to find a new calligraphy teacher so I can improve.

#### References:

- 1 [www.dhamma.org](http://www.dhamma.org).
- 2 Barrett, Dave, "Mindfulness in Motion: A conversation with Master Yang Jun about the role of mind in taijiquan", *The Journal of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association*, Summer 2010, #27, Pgs. 12-15.







## The Disciple Ceremony

August 5th, 2012, Taiyuan, China

By Edward Moore

This summer I had the very great honor, along with eight of my taiji brothers and sisters, of becoming a disciple of Master Yang Jun, the fifth generation lineage holder of Yang family Taijiquan. As I stood in the grand ballroom of the Wanda Vista Hotel in Taiyuan, China, nervously waiting for the ceremony to begin under the enormous glass chandeliers, I saw the hundreds of members of my Taijiquan family gathered there to witness the event, and thought about the busy year of preparing for this amazing trip. To get ready for the event, the Yangs helped us to understand the traditional culture that is part of the process, and we learned that after the ceremony, we would then refer to Master Yang and Fang Laoshi by the names Shifu and Shimu, which mean, "father teacher and mother teacher". Each one of us was also given a disciple name, with the Yang character to symbolize our relation to the family. We also learned how to do the "koutou", which is the most profound way to show respect and gratitude to a teacher in Chinese culture. After the disciple ceremony we would also refer to Shifu's grandfather and grandmother, the other disciples, and the disciples of other family members by other traditional titles. As the other disciples and I sat lined up in the front row, we could see before us the representatives of the different Taijiquan families who had come to fulfill the traditional role of witnesses at the ceremony: from the Chen family there was Chen Juan, and from the Yang family, Master Yang Jun's brother Yang Bin was there. To represent the Sun family, there was Sun Yongtian, and Ma Hailong represented the Wu style. The Mistress of Ceremonies and organizer of the event was the very impressive and well-spoken Liang Xiufang, disciple of Master Yang Zhenduo. As Master Yang Zhenduo came into the ballroom and the assembled crowd began to

applaud, it was wonderful to see how happy he was to see so many members of our Taijiquan family assembled to witness the event. The atmosphere was serious and heartfelt as we got up to approach the stage, perform the koutou, and begin a new and important part of our lives with the Yang family.

I asked my new brothers and sisters to send me their impressions of the ceremony:

**Roque Severino (Yang, Yazhi 杨雅智):**

My feelings about the disciple ceremony are related to the idea of continuity. I now have the honor to be part of this lineage and to belong from now on to the family, with the big responsibility of spreading the art of Taijiquan to the world. I hope that I have enough strength and humility to honor the name of the family, and carry on the ideals of the Masters.

**Sergio Arione (Yang, Yazhong 杨雅忠):**

My feelings about the ceremony are about embracing the commitment to help promote and perpetuate Yang family Taijiquan. I had in my heart, for more than 30 years, not only the sense of commitment to promote Taijiquan but also I felt for many years a deep personal sense of mission, as if I knew that this is what I need to do with my life. I feel that the ceremony gave me the opportunity to make public this commitment. Deep in my heart I have felt a deep link with Master Yang Jun. The feeling I got from the ceremony was that I was being allowed to enter officially the heart of the Yang family, in order to serve in our communities as a team of brothers and sisters under the guidance of Shifu.



**Angela Soci (Yang, Yajing 杨雅静):**

The moment was the most impressive and meaningful in my life; surprising and deep inside my heart the feeling was like to be in a dream coming true. It was tempered by the heavy understanding about the responsibility connected with that moment. The presence of Shiye and Shinai, Shifu and Shimu as well as the ancestors all together, gave me the feeling that I belong to a line of transmission that must be carried out carefully, with love and especially with the deep feeling of compassion toward the human kind. I do hope to be worthy of the trust the Yang family has shown in me.

**Claudio Mingarini (Yang, Yaren 杨雅仁):**

The experience of discipleship is not easy to express in words. Personally, after a long search, when I met for the first time the Masters Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun, in 1996, my dream was to be able one day to study, practice and teach Yang family Taijiquan in a clear and coherent way. I also hoped to be able, from time to time, to study with them in private classes as much as possible. Although I tried to get in touch with a true master almost all of my life, discipleship was a distant dream that I never thought would come true. I so appreciate very much the choice made by Master Yang Jun to move to the West. Coming to Italy year after year, working together and getting to know the Master better, the man, his heart and his teachings, has made my enthusiasm, motivation and love continue to grow, creating an incredible good feeling and unity of purpose. When I got to know better Master Fang Hong, Yaning and Yajie, gradually there flourished an increasingly strong feeling of respect, friendship and familiarity that has further opened my heart. The traditional ceremony that we celebrated was very involving, moving and full of meaning: unforgettable! Being accepted as a member of the Yang family is an incredibly great joy and an honor. It is a commitment that I hope to be able to deserve, honor and reciprocate for the rest of my life.

**Giuseppe Turturo (Yang, Yayi 杨雅毅):**

That day, with great excitement, I went to Fang Hong and said, "I am very worried we might confuse the steps of the ceremony. I'm not quite sure I can remember everything." She very calmly replied, "We are more excited than you. Don't worry, everything will be done." The day of the ceremony, the evening after the test, I do not remember breathing. It was only when I magically found myself in my seat waiting for the end of the ceremony that I took

my first breath. I experienced feelings and emotions that were very beautiful. I looked around and saw new brothers and sisters, a new father and a new mother, and I thought, "I am about to begin a new path, a new path to a new life." I am honored to have this opportunity and I will do everything that I can do to avoid disappointing anyone. If I have to think of something in the wonderful world of martial arts, well, this event is without a doubt the best thing that could have happened to me. It has given me a new family to share a new life.

**Eric Madsen, (Yang, Yali 杨雅礼):**

The ceremony was an incredible day. I pledged my allegiance to the Yang family and promised to help build the Yang family Tai Chi association. Shifu bestowed on us a huge honor and duty that I hope to live up to. The weight of this wasn't lost on any of us because we were, in essence, joining the Yang family. It would have been enough just to be a part of the audience that day. Before and after the ceremony I was extremely touched to be around so many kind people, most of whom I had never met before. Quickly they would become close friends. Even now, after the trip and ceremony, I carry these memories with me as though it happened yesterday.

**Nina Yang (Yang, Yaning 杨雅宁):**

I felt that the ceremony was very formal and grand. Of all the disciples, I think I was the only one with the feeling of growing up, of not living at home with a routine life anymore, but entering to a world greater than anticipated. I have this feeling, along with the responsibilities and expectations that come with it.

**Jason Yang (Yang, Yajie 杨雅杰):**

It was great that I was one of the people to become a disciple. The thing that was really bugging me was that I had to step on stage. After all, this was the first time I had ever been in front of a huge crowd trying not to mess up. If you have ever just taken a moment to think about how a big event would be, and you feel proud and nervous, that was one of the feelings I had. The thing that was great about the ceremony was that it was such an honor. Everybody knew me and was taking pictures and my arm was getting sore from everybody pulling on it. Everything was good when I was on stage, except my heart was trying to yank me back. I knew I had to go up there, and I was thinking, "I just cannot mess this up!" My heart had a positive side and negative side. The positive side was to just go up and do what I have to do. My negative side... well, let's just say, it was trying to give me a heart attack! Eventually, I fought through it. Remember this: You might be nervous, but you will always feel proud when you have accomplished something.

**Edward Moore (Yang, Yade 杨雅德):**

As for myself, as I stood before the Yang family with my hand over my heart and repeated my vows with my taiji brothers and sisters, I felt very happy that with these vows, I could finally give something back to the Yang family who have given me so much by being so kind to share their incredible art with me. I already knew that I wanted to spend as many years as possible learning everything that I could from Shifu, but I never thought that he would ask me to be a disciple. To be given an opportunity like this by a teacher of such skill and integrity is certainly the most important and humbling moment that I have ever known.





A Lecture by Master Yang Jun:  
**The Nature of Taiji Energy**

**Part 2: Energy, Strategy and Technique**

Recorded on April 13th, 2012 in Paris, France  
Transcribed and emended by Edward Moore  
With help from Mike Lucero

**Generating Taiji energy**

Next, I would like you to have some understanding about how we generate the energy. Where does the energy come from? First, I would like you to understand the energy direction. We say that energy comes from your root, which is located in your feet. It is developed by your legs, controlled by your waist, and shown in your hands. To make the energy to work together, you need to put in a lot of work, but working on what? Work on coordination. Physically, the energy flows from down to up. If you want your energy to be more unified, you need to make sure the energy focuses on one direction, it goes together from down to up. How the lower body, middle body, and upper body work together promotes the energy flow in one direction, from down to up. Inside, there is also energy coming from your dantian. This is how you generate the energy: one part is from the physical body, and one part is coordinated with internal energy. The waist controls the physical part. Your heart controls the internal part, which is your mind. When you practice Taijiquan, there are two points that the teacher always reminds you about. One point is, "Use your waist," and the other is, "Use your mind". That's because these are the two things that lead the energy.

The dantian is where you store the qi internally, but the qi is led by the mind. Qi is also coordinated with your lungs, so that means that

the internal energy is coordinated with your mind, your breathing, and your movements. This internal/external dynamic resembles the yin-yang relationship, they cannot be separate. There cannot be one without the other. They have to be coordinated together. The dantian is important, but we also need to make sure that we make the physical movements correctly. We also need to coordinate the body externally. For the internal, what do you need to pay attention to? You really don't pay attention to your qi; you pay attention to your heart. The heart-mind understands where you want to send the energy to and what the target is. This works together with the external movements. Even though we say, "the waist leads the movement", it's actually your heart and your mind that leads the movement. Even though we know that the focus later on is your heart and mind, you still have to work on your body first to make sure that you have the right coordination.





When we talk about the energy, we want to keep the lower body rooted, the upper body light, and the middle body flexible. How can you make the middle body flexible? How can you make the lower body rooted? How can you make the upper body light? They all relate to one basic method: relax yourself and keep your qi sinking down. This is for when you are practicing on your own. If you practice with an opponent, you need to be aware of the other method, which is "do not resist". When working with an opponent, to keep your lower body heavy and upper body light, the important method is "do not resist". This is a basic idea here, but we need to work on it, not just talk about it. When you have that work successfully in place, you will have relaxation and coordination. You can make the upper body light and the lower body heavy and you can unify the energy together. Next, you can focus on working with the technique.

### Strategy of Taijiquan

What are the techniques of Taijiquan? When we talk about the techniques, then we have to talk about the eight energies. We call them eight energies, but it's more like eight techniques or eight technical parts. The underlying dynamic energy is always taiji energy, but it is identified differently as eight energies or eight techniques. What are the eight energies? Ward-off, rollback, press, push, pull-down, split, elbow, and body-strike. We have these basic eight but not only these eight energies. We also have five basic methods. What are the five basic methods? Let me translate them into English. First, grabbing: grabbing is a method. Controlling is another one. We also use kicking, striking, and wrestling. These are the five basic methods. So we have the eight techniques plus the five basic methods, which is how we use the energies. Before you talk about technical parts you need to first understand about what kind of energy we have in Taijiquan. Here I'm not talking about taiji energy. You always have the taiji energy dynamic.

There is another aspect of energy, how you respond offensively and defensively. Basically, energy has two sides, which are yin and yang. But to be a little more precise, it is neutralizing energy and it is also exploding energy. In Chinese we call it "hua" (化). In English, it is "neutralizing", or "storing". Exploding is "fa" (发), or we can also call it "issuing" energy. So even though we say taiji energy, you still have these two aspects: one is neutralizing and storing energy, and the other is issuing energy. Generally speaking, the energy dynamic has two phases: soft and hard. Sometimes, when your opponent is changing to being hard, you need to change to being soft. We also call it "gong fong" (攻防). "Gong" is like attacking, "fong" is like defense. You need to understand that the energy change relates to two phases. If you want to issue energy, first you need to store it. Without storing it, you cannot release it. You need to be clear about these two phases. They are the yin-yang relationship, and they keep changing. When you are clear about the type of energy and clear about the technique, then you can go on to work on strategy.

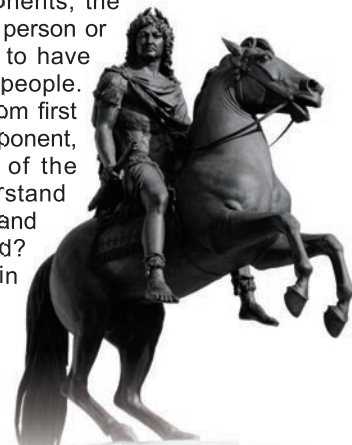
What is Taijiquan's strategy? The strategy is: if the opponent doesn't move, you don't move, if they move,

you move. If they go fast, you go fast. If they go slow, you go slow. Always be part of your partner, and you both will build a yin-yang relationship. When you want to build this relationship you first need to understand your opponent. In order know your opponent, you had better not move first, because when your opponent doesn't move, the yin-yang dynamics are not clear. When they're just standing there it could be yin, or it could be yang. When they start moving, the yin and yang become clear. The strategy is: they don't move, you don't move. Don't resist. Don't separate. Try not to meet your opponent's force with force. Try not to disconnect from your opponent.

There are still many other elements to our strategy. You can improve your strategy by following your opponent. One of the methods you can use is "floating" or "fu" (敷). Whenever your opponent's energy is coming, you just float on top of it. You are like a piece of wood. It doesn't matter how the water moves, you just keep floating on top of it. Another one is "covering" or "gai" (盖). Whenever your opponent's energy is there, you cover it. You cover their energy and make it so that their energy can't come out. When you cover them, it's like you put water into a cup. When you put water in the cup you can move them wherever you want them to go. You have control of their energy.

Yet another method is, "dui" (对). The meaning is kind of like "face each other". When your partner's energy comes into you, you don't go anywhere, you face it. When you face it, you create a technique to find your opponent's center and control their energy. The more the opponent pushes, the more you face it. This makes it so that he has no controlling position to continue pushing, but you can still find his center. You use a method, a strategy, to make their center come out, and then you can find their center. Another technique we use is, "tun" (吞) or "swallowing". Wherever their energy pushes into your body, you absorb the energy. You let them in, then make their energy go away. When they start pushing you, they have energy, but when you use this technique, their energy is gone. This is a basic strategy.

When your opponent is smaller, you can use "cover" to control them and move them away. When your opponent is very big, to cover them becomes a little harder. Instead of trying to cover them when you are small and they are big, it's better that you swallow the energy to mute it instead of trying to meet force with force. From this we can see that for following different opponents, the strategy needs to be specific for that person or that opponent. To do this you need to have experience practicing with different people. When you have this basic training from first practicing alone, and then with an opponent, you can improve from both sides of the training. This will help you to understand energy better. When we say, "understand energy" what should we understand? Basically, we need to understand yin and yang. This is the idea.





# China Adventure: 2012

By Dave Barrett  
Journal Editor

"What's past is prologue"  
William Shakespeare  
*The Tempest*, Act 2, scene 1

## Beijing, 1995

Eighteen years ago I embarked on my first trip to China. I met Han Hoong Wang and seven of her students in Victoria, B.C. and we boarded for the long flight to Beijing. We were on our way to take part in the Yongnian International Taijiquan festival and competition. We were part of a delegation of 25 students, invited by Master Yang Zhenduo to represent traditional Yang family taijiquan. We would also travel across Shanxi with Master Yang to Taiyuan to demonstrate at the annual meeting of the Shanxi Taijiquan Association. We had only studied with Master Yang for two summer seminars. During this short time together, we had become fast friends with each other and devoted students of Master Yang and his grandson Yang Jun.

The plane pulled into the gate at the Beijing airport, a two-story terminal. The halls were worn and the floors well travelled. Emerging from customs we were met by Master Yang Jun. At this point, Yang Laoshi spoke no English but his delight at seeing us needed no translation. We piled our luggage into the empty seats of a dilapidated bus of uncertain vintage and headed into Beijing in the late afternoon.

The road into the city was nearly empty. There were a few buses and trucks, no traffic, only a few private autos. Occasionally a brand new black Audi A6 Quattro with tinted windows would fly past our bus. This was the car of choice for elite cadre of the Party and the only luxury cars we ever saw on the entire trip. Fast, mysterious, all one could ever see of the occupants were the chauffeur's white gloves.

When we came to the 4th Ring road into Beijing proper it was rush hour and our small bus sailed right down the almost empty avenue. On either side were tens of thousands of bicycles, a river of perpetual, pedal driven motion. It seemed to me that the entire population of Beijing was on the move, on a bike, on their way home. Men in suits, women in fine office wear, moms and dads with kids sidesaddle on the back, hauling all manner of groceries and goods, all on a bike. At one corner there was an old man with a bucket of dirty water, scissors and a hand pump fixing inner tubes. He did not lack for customers.

We left the bus to get on the subway on our way to the Temple of Heaven. Trying to cross the river of bicycles

was harrowing. There was no one stopping, there were no breaks in the flow. Yang Laoshi showed us how to pick a small break and dash resolutely to the other side. We were slow and tired and had no dash and the resulting pile-up was an homage to the Keystone Cops. The Beijingers were not amused.

The Temple of Heaven was deserted at that hour. It was like walking into a dream, eyes wide open. I stood at the center of the circular mound altar, turning several 360's, slow stately revolutions that centered my soul in the "Heart of Heaven." The Imperial Vault of Heaven was silent, potent with past rituals. The iconic Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests was empty; we walked in alone and unbidden. Were I Pavarotti, I would have launched into an aria. As it was, the beating of our hearts resounded, amplified and headed upwards towards heaven.

Our dinner that night was at a venerable Beijing establishment with no indication outside that it was there. We walked up three flights into an exquisite room, darkly paneled with ceramic stools for seats. It looked as though Sun Yat-sen could walk in the door at any moment and sit down with us. It was a memorable meal. Were they at our table, Gertrude Stein might have turned to Sun Yat-sen saying, "A duck, is a duck, is a duck." That night we savored the quintessential Peking duck.

After dinner we made our way to the Beijing Railway station to catch the night train south to Handan. Carrying our luggage, we had to walk through, sometimes over, hundreds of people who were spreading newspapers on the ground and bedding down for the night. Whole families, kids and grandparents, all finding haven at one of the few places the homeless were allowed to congregate. Yang Laoshi was focused like a laser on getting us tickets and onto the platform, for if we were late, we'd have to sleep on the top bunks on the hard sleeper coach. Thanks to him, we were on the train with the coveted bottom bunks as the train filled up.

I sat across from a gentleman by the window who reached into a paper bag and pulled out the biggest boiled chicken foot I had ever seen. He looked at it, then at me. Smiling broadly, he offered it. When I politely declined, he offered me a Marlboro. I took the Marlboro. We sat as the train pulled out, he occasionally spitting toenails and knuckles out of the window and me marveling at the long day slipping past into night.

The bunk was a hard thin mattress and the blanket and pillow were worn but clean. Removing my shoes I covered myself with the threadbare blanket and fell asleep with





my stocking feet sticking well out from the bed. In the middle of the night, somewhere south of Shijiazhang, the call of nature could no longer be denied. Slipping on my shoes I made my way to one end of the coach for my first encounter with what would become a legendary talking point for many an adventurer on our China trips: the squat toilet. A rectangular oval in the floor with foot placements on either side presented a moving target. The swaying of the train, the crossties flying by underneath, served to concentrate the mind wonderfully on the task at hand.

#### Handan and Guangfu

In the dank smoggy dawn we hauled our gear from the train station across the main square to our hotel. Here we sat down to what would be the standard issue breakfast for the entire trip: steamed bread, pickles, cold cuts of unknown origin, and a watery soup of either millet or rice. Later that morning our group of 25 had the first of many rehearsals for our demonstration in a parking lot behind the hotel. There was a small mountain of soft coal next to the power plant for the hotel. Thick smoke belched out of the chimney and black soot covered everything. Even then, lining up and marching in an orderly fashion proved to be the biggest challenge. To the vast amusement of the hotel staff and passersby, we practiced over and over and over again.

The next day we attended the opening ceremony of the Taiji Festival. The concrete in the municipal stadium was



still wet and we sat on woven mats while group after group marched in precise order onto the infield to perform an endless variety of acts. Some were doing Taiji, others calisthenics or flag dances, but all of them marched on and off the field with superb discipline. Clearly, we 25 had our work cut out for us.

These groups averaged seven hundred participants and every school age child in the county had been recruited for the event. At one point, hundreds of them wearing costumes that made them appear like they were all small boats on a lake, transformed the infield into a nautical spectacle. This went on for hours, with the grand finale being a small plane flying overhead and dropping long strings of exploding firecrackers on parachutes. As we were leaving the stadium, the surrounding crowd turned toward us and, to a person, studied us with such intensity that it was unsettling. Whether we were the first foreigners they had ever been that close to, I don't know, but we all felt like exotic animals at the zoo.

That afternoon with Masters Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun we visited Guangfu and the ancestral Yang family compound. The building and grounds had been recently renovated with donations from all over the world. Master Yang Zhenduo was clearly elated by the result and posed endlessly for photos with the staff and townspeople. Leaving the compound with us, the Masters walked up the street for about 10 minutes until we came to the Wu family compound. A spontaneous parade developed, with an ever-larger group of children tagging along with our exotic crew. Jeremy Blodgett, of blessed memory, led the parade, high stepping like a drum major. The kids were beyond delighted by this and by the time we reached the Wu house, there were scores skipping along with us. The caretaker shooed them away as he opened the heavy iron gate and we walked into another century.

This compound of courtyards and buildings had not been renovated. The rooms held scroll after scroll of exquisite commemorative calligraphy and the final internal courtyard had a bust of Wu Yuxiang. I bowed three times to acknowledge our debt to this exemplar of scholarship and his research into the nature of Taijiquan.

The children were waiting for us, and we had a more leisurely promenade through town back to our tiny bus. Just before we pulled out, a father held his toddler right up and almost into the window to show her to us and us to her. We clapped and she cried. Everyone was in high spirits; the warmth and friendship shown to us was so precious.

#### Taiyuan

The next morning after breakfast we loaded our luggage into the back of a coal truck and boarded our small bus. This was a Toyota with the engine in the center behind the driver. It was larger than a van and smaller than a bus and sat exactly 24. With Masters Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun we were 27. There were jump seats between the rows and a few hardy souls sat on these. There was not enough room to scratch your nose without elbowing a neighbor.

Our route took us up and across the Luliang Mountains and down into the central valley of Shanxi along by the Fen River. A narrow two-lane road was our track that





we shared with coal trucks, donkey carts, and two-stroke tractors hauling covered carts with passengers in them. We left at 9:00 am for a six-hour journey. Going up the mountains we passed through solidly built villages whose adobe brick houses were the exact color of the surrounding countryside. Well-ordered and maintained, these were a welcome view of old China after the miasma of Handan.

We made the high pass by noon, but coming down the traffic halted. Hour after hour went by. A few of us walked to the head of the traffic jam and reported back that two loaded coal trucks had collided head on, blocking the roadway. Evidently no one was injured as both drivers had jumped out an instant before contact!

Three hours later we began again down the mountains. Reaching the accident site, the two trucks had been pushed into the ravine and lay crumpled below. The grade became more treacherous, with hairpin turns and steep drop-offs, no shoulder or guardrail. On more than a few turns I looked down to see the twisted wreckage of vehicles that had not made the curve. Our driver, like many others in China I would ride with later, was a true master of the art. He held our lives in his capable hands.

Thirteen hours later, at 10:00 pm, we finally pulled in to our hotel. Even though we were bone-tired, there was a welcoming dinner set. Master Yang Zhenduo toasted us and welcomed our group then made his apologies for the lateness and headed home. We were right behind him. The hotel was still under construction and our floor was the only one that was finished with carpet and paneling but it was paradise to us.

For the next five days we studied with Master Yang Zhenduo in the mornings and then explored Taiyuan and its environs. It was a bicycle-powered city with long rows of them parked in front of every building. One of our team was a young woman from Texas with long blonde hair. One day as we were walking down the street, a gentleman was so taken by her exotic appearance that he turned as we passed, kept staring at her and walked backwards into a row of 50 bikes which collapsed like a row of dominos.

Our demonstration for the Shanxi Association was held in the dusty courtyard of a nearby factory. There was a large crowd pressing in on three sides as we marched

smartly in and began to perform. I was in the back row and during the sword form my sword passed well into the third row of onlookers. This became a game to see



how close my tip would come, with some ducking and others holding their ground resolutely. It was an extraordinary piece of theatre and appreciated by all. I especially remember Master Yang Zhenduo's heartfelt talk to us after the demonstration. We were the first group of his students from overseas to present their skills in his hometown and he thanked us for our hard work.

The Taiyuan airport had only one flight a day to Beijing. We boarded an aging Soviet-era airliner with torn carpeting and worn out seats. All of the emergency exits were marked in Russian. Saying a silent prayer to my comrades in the jet factory, we took off heading back to Beijing and the future.

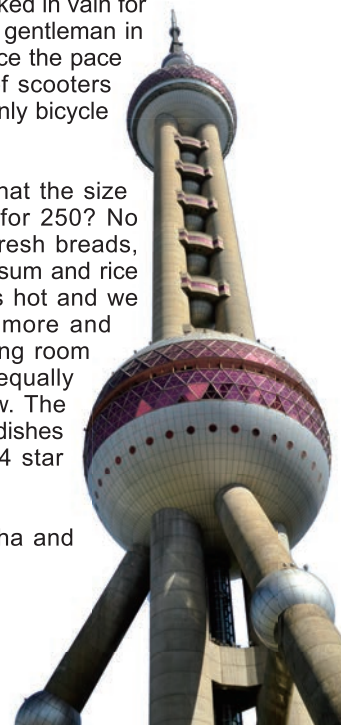
### Shanghai, 2012

On a beautiful afternoon our plane descended into the Shanghai environs. A recent storm had blown away any vestiges of smog and the city lay sparkling below us. The airport was spotless and expansively palatial. Emerging from customs we spotted the Association logo and were ushered into a group to await the arrival of the flight from Brazil. No one makes an entrance like the Brazilians. Eighty of them came trouping out and promptly unfurled a Brazilian flag in the terminal. We all clapped and shouted, "Viva Brazil!", as they posed for a group photo.

Waiting outside for our buses there was a constant stream of new Mercedes and BMWs coming in to pick up overseas arrivals. The main road into Shanghai was gridlocked, a genuine western style traffic jam. As we inched our way towards downtown, I looked in vain for even a single bicycle. Finally an elderly gentleman in a long white shirt rode placidly by at twice the pace of the traffic. There were all manner of scooters and small motorbikes, but his was the only bicycle rolling by that afternoon.

It was the next morning at breakfast that the size of our group became evident. Buffet for 250? No problem. A wide variety of fruits and fresh breads, freshly cooked eggs and cheeses, dim sum and rice porridge were laid out. The coffee was hot and we were hungry. I sat in amazement as more and more people came down until the dining room was full and they opened up another equally expansive room to handle the overflow. The hotel staff brought an endless supply of dishes in superb fashion. Now this is how a 4 star hotel operates in China.

We had an afternoon flight to Changsha and







Landing in Changsha we basically did the whole drill in reverse minus the tickets and security. It was here that our large group split into five smaller units, each with its own bus. These became autonomous little villages on wheels. We'd see the Brazilians or the French roll by on their buses; they would see us Americans briefly, mostly our tail lights, because we had the best driver and a tour guide named Tutu. The buses were state of the art, brand new, two-story behemoths. Even Master Yang's eyes widened as they pulled up. They were the biggest buses anyone had ever seen.

After dinner we settled into the buses for a six-hour drive to Wulingyuan National Park. On our bus, Tutu made her introductions in excellent English, telling us that, "Sorry about that",

spent the morning on the waterfront on the new side of Shanghai, Pudong, which boasts some of the most outlandish skyscrapers ever seen on a city skyline. One is called by the locals, "The Bottle Opener", because towards the top of the huge structure is an open rectangle some 20 stories high which looks exactly like what you would use to open a pop bottle.

Many of the group went up to the top of the Pearl of the Orient tower to take in the stunning 360-degree views of the city. A few of us stayed below to promenade along the riverside. It was a beautiful, blue-sky day and the old Shanghai could be seen from across the river. The Bund and its assortment of old colonial buildings, the river traffic from large freighters to a few small sampans made for a delightful scenic stroll.

Han Hoong Wang gave us a master class in bargaining as she examined some trinkets from a peddler at the riverside. Looking at everything, asking a price, shaking her head and saying, "No, no, that's way too much!" We didn't need any translation. She was trying combinations of items and prices, extra discounts for quantity, anything and everything. All of this was done with the most cheerful playfulness by both parties. In the end she settled on a few packages of small kites for her nephews and nieces back home and left the peddler shaking his head with a rueful smile, knowing he had worked a hard bargain, but made a sale nonetheless.

At the airport that afternoon we checked in for two separate flights to Changsha. Everyone was patient and in high spirits. We checked in enough swords and sabers to outfit a small army. Our guides and the airport staff just kept smiling and working through the passports, the luggage, and the weapons. Tickets were produced, passports returned, and we streamed through the security checks, down to the gates, onto small buses that hauled us to our planes sitting on the tarmac. There are so many daily flights out of Shanghai into China, that there is no way each of them could have a jet-way. We climbed aboard a brand new Boeing airliner that had mist flowing out of the ventilation as the air conditioning met the humid afternoon air. It was surreal, a space-age vision of the future.

but part of the highway was still under construction and we would have to travel the first leg of the trip on "rough roads". She wasn't kidding. At the outskirts of Changsha the freeway disappeared, our driver downshifted and took a hard right onto a single lane gravel road. He drove that bus like a pickup truck, gears grinding, gravel spraying out behind with no apparent concern for oncoming traffic. Thunder clapped and a heavy rain commenced. Flashes of lightning occasionally illumined the countryside as we bumped along for about an hour.

Magically, the freeway reappeared and the true nature of our bus and driver revealed themselves. It was no longer a bus but a dragon! He was not a driver, but a master of the mystical art of flying a dragon through the night sky. Hour by hour we climbed into the Hunan highlands, the full moon leading our way with a pale light that gave us extraordinary views of the surrounding mountains.

Before turning out the lights Tutu gave us our instructions. Very simple: be on the bus first. "Our bus will be the first bus and we will never be late." She was very sweet about this but firm. "Finish your meal first, be the first group out, be the first to leave and the first to get back." Then she began to sing to us. This is part of every tour guide's patter and has been a mixed blessing on previous adventures. Tutu is a true daughter of Hunan, from a mixed family of Miao and Bai minority stock. Singing is a special gift to these people and Tutu is abundantly blessed. Her lovely voice lulled some of us to sleep but Jack and I in the back of the bus had five years of catching up to do. Besides, how can you sleep when you are riding a dragon through the mountains with a flying full moon overhead?

Well past midnight we reached our hotel. Indeed, we were first: no long lines in front of us, no long wait



for a room key. Tutu was right. Being first is about having the best time, first time, every time.

### **Wulingyuan National Park** UNESCO World Heritage Site

For the next two days we explored the wonderland that is China's first National Park. For all of the sights to see in China from the Great Wall, to Guilin and the terra cotta warriors of Xian, this forest park is exceptionally dramatic and unforgettably beautiful. Our first trip into the park was by small buses that took us up into increasingly rugged terrain of steep ravines and towering ridges above us. Boarding a cable car, we were whisked straight up and onto the top of a plateau. On the way up we passed spires of standing limestone 400 meters high, straight as swords pointed to the heavens.

Here we looked out over miles of rugged mountains that had eroded over the eons into freestanding towers of immense magnitude and endless variety. As we hiked a small circuit the views around every corner were breathtaking as was the sheer drop-off down to the valley floor. We were blessed with a clear sky and bright sunshine and those rarest of treasures in China: clean air and cool breezes. We were as giddy as a group of kindergartners on their first field trip.

Our next visit took us into the main valley of the park along the Golden Whip River Canyon. From below, the towering spires presented a different perspective: majestic and powerful, as if the forces of nature had created a monumental cathedral of limestone and open sky. Impossibly, engineers had tunneled into a ridge and then



built a 330-meter high glass-walled elevator going straight up the side of the ridge to the top. Called the 100 Dragon Elevator, it affords astonishing views on the way up, if one is lucky enough to be pressed into the front of the lift. For those in the back, claustrophobia is the dominant sensation; for those with vertigo, forget about it.

This took us up to a panoramic loop trail hung at the very edge of the mountainside. Here were some of the most fabulous overlooks and drop-offs, again not for the faint of heart. To me what was even more extraordinary was the absolute crush of Chinese tourists along this walk.



The trail in places was only 2 meters wide but packed four or six across with masses of people passing in both directions. It wasn't just because the movie "Avatar" had used the standing spires for the floating mountains of the forest planet. It was that finally, many Chinese could not only afford a vacation but also visit one of their scenic treasures. From little kids to wizened grandmothers they crowded the small trail. For the life of me I couldn't say who was more amazed, but I think it was the old-timers. Back in the day, they needed stamped documents to go from one town to another. They now were finding themselves on top of a mountain in what was once one of the most remote areas of the whole country, and clearly loving every minute of it.

On our last afternoon in the park, Joanne and I decided to forgo the "hike". Hiking in the afternoon sun in China in August is oxymoronic at best, and possibly fatal at worst. We found a shady bench and sat there fanning ourselves, watching as the more ambitious of our group labored past us in a heavy sweat. An elderly woman came towards us with a large plastic sack collecting empty water bottles. Her partner was smoking a hand rolled cigarette with relish. They were both tiny, half the size of the tourists, with ragged clothes and dirty canvas shoes. When I presented her with our empties, she smiled at us and began singing a mysterious melody. Gesturing at us and at the surrounding mountains she sang us an aboriginal song of welcome and thanks. Her partner giggled and did a few small dance steps before they moved on to rummage through the next garbage can. With her song ringing in my ears, we walked back and climbed aboard our dragon for the six-hour drive to Phoenix City.

### **Fenghuang Ancient Town** UNESCO World Heritage Site

Hour by hour we rode through the Hunan highlands. The landscape scrolling past the windows presented scenes of small towns and lush green farmlands. At one point, as the sun was setting, the mountain valleys were scattered with perfectly formed conical hills of limestone. Our dragon flew through the sunset into nightfall and finally onto the



small two lane road to Phoenix City. Here our driver put on the most astonishing display of mastery I have ever seen. He began to drive as if the bus was a Ferrari in the Italian Alps. Downshifting and winding the engine impossibly high, he would pull into the oncoming lane to pass two or three slow trucks at a time. Around blind curves, up limited sight hills, our dragon was breathing fire and taking every vehicle in its claws and leaving them in the dust. Some slept through this, but Jack and I in the back were transfixed. With each new conquest we'd look at each other in sheer disbelief. "They will never believe this back home."

Of course we were the first bus in to town. The road became impossibly narrow as we inched toward the center of the old town to have dinner at a celebrated restaurant



servicing the local Miao minority dishes. In front of the restaurant we were welcomed in the traditional manner by a troupe of Miao drummers and dancers. The women were in full regalia: silver headdresses with chains of silver ornaments cascading down to the hems of their intricately embroidered garments. They sang us into the door and we sat down to an exquisite meal featuring the bounty of the local mountains. After dinner the troupe entertained us with song and dance. It was an extraordinary welcome into a truly unique cultural center.

Our time in Fenghuang was all too brief. The next morning we began to explore the old town of narrow alleys and structures dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), full of shops and strolling tourists. There was a festive atmosphere to the whole town, everyone it seemed was on holiday and the locals were more than pleased at the bustling crowds and the trade they brought. Flower sellers constructed garlands of fresh flowers from the mountains and many women visiting the town that day were crowned in beauty.

A jade green river runs through Fenghuang and we boarded small boats to float past the ancient stilt houses at the center of town. It was a beautiful day of clear skies, willows waving by the waterside, and mountains in the distance. In the UNESCO citation is the following description: "The designers made wonderful use of the

mountain landscape and water flows and magnified the spirit of the land and waters. The mountains, waters, and town have all been employed in the picture to realize the unification of human beings and nature... A river with mountain shadows and a town covered by green shade has made the town the perfect example for the harmonious integration between human and nature and a masterpiece of ancient Chinese architectural arts." Fenghuang was a vision of the old virtues of Chinese culture to which I held on to tenaciously as we were to re-enter the modern morass of China's reconstruction in the coming days.

Another 6-hour bus ride would take us to our hotel and then a 3-hour ride the next morning would return us to Changsha for our flights to Taiyuan. As our dragon flew down the mountains back onto the plains, the landscape was constantly changing. At one point the pine trees gave way to lush bamboo forests of astonishing beauty. The freeway was brand new and mostly empty and our driver seemed almost bored by the simplicity of it all. It was on this last ride that Tutu told us her extraordinary story. Born deep in the remote highlands, her parents had taken her out of the mountains at the age of twelve. They rented her a one room flat, paid a local restaurant 6 months in advance to feed her, and left her there alone to attend school. After spending an entire month despondent and weeping, she decided that her only route lay in excelling in school. Years of hard study and achievement took her to a university and into a career as a translator for the banking and hotel industries. Here she was at age 24, singing to us a lament in her native tongue. Part of the marriage ceremony in her culture includes singing and weeping at the same time. She told us she had to practice every day for an entire month. Then, asking us not to laugh, she pulled a bamboo hat over her face and began her song. It came from deep inside of her and opened our hearts.



When she was done, her face was glistening with fallen tears.

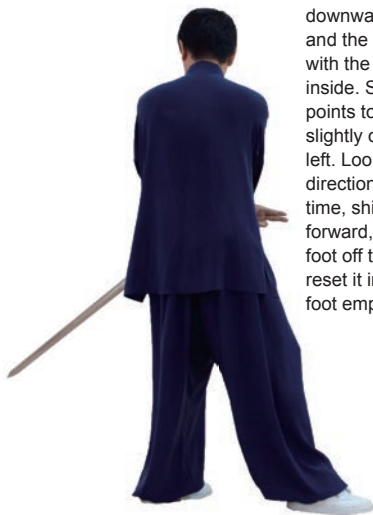
The next morning at the Changsha airport we bade her farewell amid tears, laughter, and many hugs. She boarded the dragon back to Zhangjiajie and we turned toward our flight and Taiyuan.

In our next issue: China Adventure 2012 Part 2: Taiyuan, Fenyang and back to Beijing



# Practice Pages

Transition from Phoenix  
Opens its Left Wing



Shifting back slightly, turn body to the left. The sword circles downward to the left and the arms cross with the left arm on the inside. Sword direction points to the back, slightly open to the left. Look to the sword direction. At the same time, shift slightly forward, lifting the right foot off the floor and reset it in a ball of the foot empty stance.



Casting the Fishing Rod



Turn the waist back to the right, the sword swings from down to up and ends with the tip pointing to the front. The sword is in the center of the body, about chest height and the left sword fingers sit by the right forearm. Look straight forward, following the sword direction.



With the weight shifting back, turn body to the right. Follow the body rotation, pulling the sword to the right side, palm facing down. At the same time, pick up the right foot. Sword tip points to the torso centerline.



Left foot steps out to the diagonal direction, less than 45°. At the same time, the left arm circles downward and leads to the left. Rotate the right arm, turning the palm up and keeping the sword level. Sword tip points to the left, diagonally.



Shift the weight forward from heel to ball to toe. At the same time, the sword circles and sits at the left side of the body with the tip pointing to the body left. Left arm goes from left and circles to the right. Look forward.



Poking the Grass to Seek the Snake, Two



Continue shifting forward and bend the knee into a bow stance. At the same time, thrust the sword to the body center with the left sword fingers returning to the side of the right forearm.

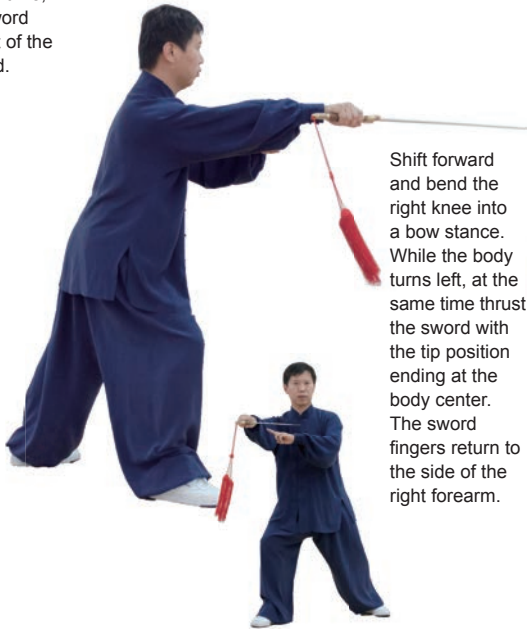


# 太極劍

Right foot steps out to the diagonal direction: toe direction less than 45°. At the same time, open the arms with the sword fingers leading to the front of the body while looking forward.



Poking the Grass to Seek the Snake, One



Shift forward and bend the right knee into a bow stance. While the body turns left, at the same time thrust the sword with the tip position ending at the body center. The sword fingers return to the side of the right forearm.

Shifting forward, rotate the body to the right. Pull the sword back to the right and bring your left foot close to the right foot. The sword fingers follow sword, sitting to the right.



Shifting forward, bring the right foot close to the left foot. The sword pulls back and sits to the left side of the body.



The right foot steps out to the diagonal: toe direction less than 45°. At the same time, turn the body to the right and pull the sword to the right sitting the sword with the palm facing down. Left arm opens, sword fingers pointing diagonally.



Poking the Grass to Seek the Snake, Three



Shift forward and bend the right knee into a bow stance. At the same time, while the body turns left thrust the sword with the tip position ending at the body center. The sword fingers return to the side of the right forearm.



# Practice Pages

Shift forward and pick up the left foot while circling back the left arm.

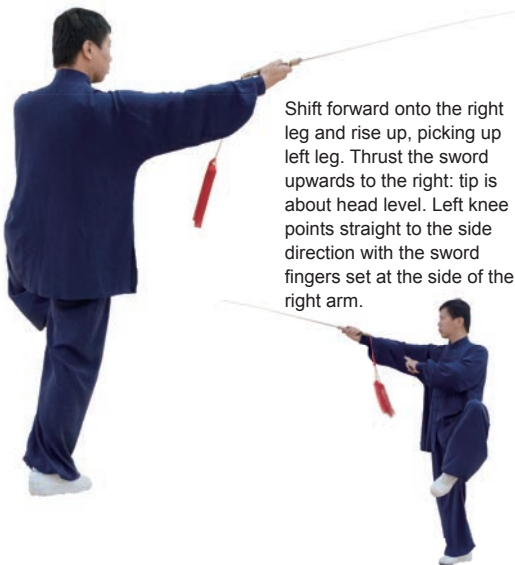


Left foot steps back (center line, two sides) with the left toe set diagonally, pointing close to 90° while rotating the sword. Left arm circles from back to forward to meet the sword handle. Right hand grips the handle and left hand supports the right hand.

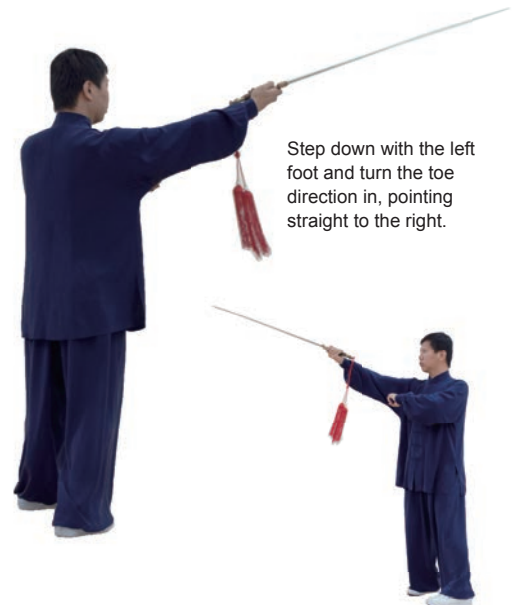


## Birds Lodging in the Forest

Shift forward onto the right leg and rise up, picking up left leg. Thrust the sword upwards to the right: tip is about head level. Left knee points straight to the side direction with the sword fingers set at the side of the right arm.



Step down with the left foot and turn the toe direction in, pointing straight to the right.





# 太極劍

Embracing the Moon



Shifting back, pull the sword back. At the same time, the right foot steps in. The arm shape is rounded with the armpits open. Toe direction points diagonally, touching with the ball of the foot. Sword sits on the left side of the body, tip points straight. Look straight, following the sword direction.



Step out with the right foot: toe pointing at 45°.



Black Dragon Swings its Tail



Shift back and rotate the body to the left. The sword circles up to the left.



Turn waist to the right and step out with the ball of the right foot into a standard empty stance: toe direction pointing 45° to the right. At the same time, open both arms and circle the sword from up to down and left to right. It stops when it's in line with the right leg. The left arm is open to the left side at 45°, slightly above the left shoulder.



# Practice Pages

Shifting back, draw in the right foot and the sword. The sword sits horizontally in front of the stomach with the sword fingers at the side of the right forearm.



Stepping forward with the right foot to the same position as before: toe direction pointing straight. At the same time, circle the sword to the right while keeping it horizontal. Continue to move the weight and the sword to the right while drawing in the left foot.



Shift back and lower the left arm. Sword fingers sit at the side of the right forearm.



Rotate the body to the right about 135°. The left toe turns with the body, facing straight.





# 太極劍

The left foot steps to the corner. Circle the left arm from down to up as a Ward-Off, while the right arm circles and rotates palm facing up. Keep the sword tip up pointing at 45°.



Green Dragon Comes out of the Water



Shifting forward, turn body to the left. The left arm Wards-Off upward and the sword thrusts to the corner. The left arm is rounded, over the head, and the sword is in line with the right arm pointing diagonally with the tip at head level.

Lotus Swirls Around in the Wind



Shift the weight to the left leg. Maintain the right arm position up. Circle and rotate the right arm from palm up to palm down. The sword swings in a round circle. Make sure to keep the tip up and circle level.

The right foot steps out to the right diagonal direction: toe direction less than corner. After the palm rotates down and the sword circles past the head, drop the sword down to the left side of the body. Sword fingers sit at the side of the right forearm.



Shifting forward, follow the body turning and slice the sword to the right, turn in left foot. The right arm is in line with the right leg, with the sword tip slightly turned in and the sword slightly lower than the shoulder. Look forward through the middle of the blade with the sword fingers set at the side of the right forearm.



# International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association Tai Chi Teacher Academy

By Carl Meeks

Vice-President, Tai Chi Teacher Academy



The spread of Tai Chi Chuan worldwide is an important goal of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association. The ability to accomplish this goal requires a network of qualified teachers that are passionate and skilled in Tai Chi. From the beginning of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association, Master Yang Jun has understood the necessity of training teachers for this purpose.

Good teachers must be effective communicators and have the ability to understand the people that come to learn, what their students' abilities are and how best to guide them in reaching their goals. The teacher is a mentor and coach to their students, a respected member of the community and a trusted resource for Tai Chi knowledge. The teacher's knowledge and skills should be sufficient in scope so that they are trusted by students, recognized in the communities they serve, and respected by everyone.

Due to time and distance, the method of training and certification of Tai Chi teachers has often been performed through individual schools and by personal development through experience. To meet the challenges of providing standardized training around the world for those interested in becoming Certified Instructors, Master Yang Jun envisions a teacher training academy without

walls. Working first with the Yang Chengfu Centers in Italy and Brazil, a curriculum for teacher training began development. In 2011, the Tai Chi Chuan Teacher Academy was officially named and, using the curriculum from the training programs in Italy and Brazil, a required area of study for all Certified Instructors was developed by the Association's Instructor Advisory Board.

The Tai Chi Chuan Teacher Academy curriculum covers all areas outlined in the Association's Progression of Study. The training focuses on standards and methods of teaching traditional Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan hand and weapons forms and Push Hands, advanced Tai Chi theory and principles, the philosophy of Confucius, Taoism and Buddhism and fundamentals of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The history and development of Tai Chi Chuan, classical Chinese texts and meditation were included with newer writings of Grandmaster Yang Zhen duo and other distinguished Tai Chi Masters. Other areas of study include exercise science, anatomy, and biomechanics to improve the understanding of body structure and function in Tai Chi movements. All courses are devoted to teaching methodologies that give the instructor the tools to teach effectively in different classroom settings including fitness, clinical and educational institutions.





Successful teachers need good communication skills, need to design and structure their classes to provide a comfortable learning environment and also have good business management skills. Courses that train instructors in student safety, recognition of learning styles and the ability to teach within specialized areas are essential areas of study. Training in fundamental business management techniques to help the Certified Instructors be successful in their communities is included as part of the curriculum.

Where three or more Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Chuan Centers are located in a single country, the Association designates National Training Headquarters that are responsible for the management, planning and scheduling of training for students enrolled in the Teacher Academy. National Training Headquarters in Italy and Brazil have been active for many years with training Centers in France and the United States now under development. Where National Training Headquarters are not yet established or required, Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Chuan Centers teach general Academy courses for those enrolled.

The Academy training program is conducted through specialized training events consisting of classes or seminars with specific content meeting the criteria defined in the Teacher Academy course descriptions. Training Events are organized, planned and managed by Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Chuan Centers and National Training Headquarters. Training events are taught by Center Directors, Academy Instructors and National Training Headquarters Directors approved by the Association. The Association has implemented standards that recognize different levels of instructors and to qualify those with the experience and skill to conduct training within the Academy. Certified Instructors and Center Directors will continue to teach Tai Chi Chuan according to the Progression of Study and in other courses where qualified. Academy Instructors and Senior Instructors will teach classes and conduct seminars in specialized subject areas.

A system that defines credits per hour of study or training is used to record member progress to determine when the candidate for Certified Instructor has met the requirements for graduation. Completing the Academy course of study requires a minimum of 750 credit-hours.



The Association is transitioning to credit-hours for qualification in the Ranking System, and training credits earned for completing Academy courses also apply toward ranking requirements. If not enrolled in the Academy, training credits earned through participation in seminars and classes are applied toward ranking requirements only. The successful candidate for Certified Instructor must also participate in the Association Ranking System and reach Rank 4, demonstrating practical skill and ability in Tai Chi forms and Push Hands. Written exams and a satisfactory teaching assessment are additional requirements that must be met to apply for Certified Instructor.

Training in Tai Chi forms and Push Hands described in the Association's Progression of Study is included in the Academy curriculum. Credits earned by participation in regular classes and seminars held by Masters Yang Jun and Fang Hong are included for graduation from the Academy. Each course described in the Academy curriculum is assigned a number of credits upon completion of training in that course. While some individual classes may be different from Center to Center, the main topics are essential to ensure the comprehensive content of the Academy curriculum is followed.

Upon completion of all course work of the Tai Chi Chuan Teacher Academy and meeting other requirements as described, successful candidates for Certified Instructor will have the skills and knowledge to become valuable teachers of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. Continual study and training will improve the skills of the Certified Instructor to progress even further and provide additional benefits for those wishing to learn this valuable martial art and exercise.





弘扬东方文化 让世界认识

天下太极是一家





# Opening Our Hearts to China

By Paula Faro

Sao Paulo, Brazil

Going to China was a dream come true for me. We always use that expression to say that something really great has happened. But I'm not using it that way. I'm really saying it was a dream come true! For two reasons: finally to be able to meet Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and to share this experience with my teachers. They have taught me so many wonderful things and introduced me to the world of Tai Chi.

I began practicing in 2004, and since then I have been discovering Tai Chi and Chinese culture. We read all the stories, like *Journey to the West*, or *The Three Kingdoms*. We study the philosophy, Chinese Traditional Medicine and learn about Chinese history. We also have access to so many movies that show us a little bit of China. I have always wondered what it would be like to be there, seeing and feeling China, how are the Chinese people, how they behave, the food, people talking Mandarin on the streets, etc. My teachers have told me so many stories about being there. Especially about being in Taiyuan with Master Yang Zhenduo, that everything that I saw and experienced in this China Adventure was great.

It is a long way from Brazil to China, but somehow we were able to take almost 80 Brazilians to this wonderful event. I also had the opportunity to meet with many people from all over the world, celebrating Tai Chi. We did so much: travelling with Master Yang Jun and his family, practicing with him in the early morning, and participating in the Tournament, attending Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's 87th birthday celebration and Master Yang Jun's disciple ceremony. There were so many special occasions!

All the places we went and everything we saw was amazing for me, as a beginner and first timer. Going to Phoenix City was like being in a wonderland, it was such a magical place. Wulingyuan Park reminded me of those old Chinese paintings with the mountains and the rivers. It was a journey that taught me a lot not only about China and its culture, but also about human beings and of course, Tai Chi.



In Taiyuan at the tournament, we could watch, learn, and exchange with both westerners and Chinese in an environment that exalted Yang family Tai Chi at every turn. This was my favorite part of the trip. Everyone was so friendly, so enthusiastic about the event and about this art that everybody was practicing, that it made me feel like I was home. I just felt part of it. We spend so much time practicing on our own, and we get so used to practicing in the same places, with the same people. Being in a place with hundreds of people, so many different people, was really a great lesson and a mind-opener. It took my understanding of Tai Chi to another level. We can study and read in books, but the live experience is totally something else.

The opening ceremony presentation and also the closing presentation when we all practiced together was a memory to cherish. It was very moving for me when I realized that Master Yang Zhenduo was watching us. At the opening ceremony I was in the second row, so I could really see him. Although I could not speak to him, or could not see him giving lessons, or practicing, when I saw him there sitting with such dignity, I was very moved. For me, being in the presence of a teacher like Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was to be in the presence of a great hero.

When I got back to Brazil everything had changed for me. Practicing Tai Chi after these experiences will never be the same. I really have to thank my teachers for making such a great effort to bring Yang family Tai Chi to Brazil. Not only them, but also I must thank everyone that has been working to spread the practice everywhere. It really can enrich people's lives and open their hearts.



# Stealing Boxing

By Gong Baiyu

Chapter 4: Making a mistake while fighting a strong opponent, losing suddenly

Yang Luchan looks at the crowd around them whispering and talking to each other. The china seller is still shouting, "No way, you can't leave here. You have already cursed me, now you must pay for my bowls!"



"Mister, don't worry. I will pay you later. Your booth still has my things there. Can you take care of them for me?"

At that moment, the donkey rider speaks loudly, "Everyone, excuse us." The crowd parts to make a path for them. He swings up on the saddle, turns around and looks down at Yang Luchan sideways, "Let's go."

Yang Luchan takes big steps, walking like a hero. He says with a frosty laugh, "Even if you go to the edge of the sky, I will follow you." One of the people in the crowd whispers to Yang Luchan, "Sir, don't follow him, you're going to suffer." Still laughing, Yang Luchan replies, "This man is too arrogant. I'm willing to bump him." He strides strongly forward, without fear.

The two of them walk out of the street, toward the square.

The crowd follows them, the whispered news spreading like wildfire. "Come over and see! Taiji Chen's fourth disciple is fighting again!"

The young man rides into the village square. He places the reins on the donkey's saddle, and gently gives the donkey a pat. It moves off to graze on a patch of grass. He turns and sizes Yang Luchan up. "My friend, who gave you the right to mind my business? Come on, let's duke it out!"

Yang Luchan also sizes up the young man. He finds himself in a quandary. He has no choice but to respond. "Lao Xiong (older brother) you don't have to be so rude. I'm just a passerby, not a vigilante. He's a poor old man, just a peddler. You not only broke his china, you were whipping him, and now you want to take a shot at me. I'm from another village, coming to your treasured land, I've never seen anything like this." Turning to the crowd, he asks loudly, "Have you folks ever seen anything like this?"

The young man's face suddenly reddens. "What kind of bastard are you? Wagging your tongue! Today, Uncle is going to teach you a lesson! Make sure you mind your own business so that your father and mother don't have to worry about you!" Before he finishes shouting, he lunges forward with his right hand striking towards Luchan's face. "Take that!"

Luchan dodges to the side and uses his left palm to deflect the blow. The young man withdraws his right hand, his right shoulder moving back diagonally. Simultaneously his left hand strikes diagonally towards Luchan's lower abdomen. His strike is heavy - like a gush of cold air rushing by. Luchan does not know what kind of martial arts or move he is using - the young man is using taijiquan's "Diagonal Single Whip".

Luchan quickly extends his left arm, turning his body horizontally to the left, his right hand moving down to the young man's pressure point. The man withdraws his left hand, using "Fair Lady Works the Shuttles", strikes towards Luchan's chest. Luchan pivots on his right leg,



turning halfway, and flips his left hand intending to grab the young man's wrist. But he was quick and slippery and doesn't allow Luchan to get to his wrist. He withdraws his right hand, separates both his arms, and kicks his right foot into Luchan's dantian. He uses the "Step Back Ride the Tiger" move so well that Luchan has to withdraw quickly, and deflect it aside.

Luchan was really taken aback. Although he thought the young man knew martial arts, he did not expect him to be this skilled.

Although Yang Luchan had just dodged a move, the young man is at it again, body agile and hands lightning quick, using "Step Forward Raise Hands". Luchan immediately uses "Iron Bolt" to neutralize, not allowing the young man to advance. He steps forward and uses "Push the Boat with the Current".





However, Luchan is confused by his opponent's techniques, and his martial arts roots are not very deep. He tries his best to strike the young man, but makes a mistake and allows the young man to separate his arms. The young man changes his move to "Bend Bow Shoot Tiger" and strikes Luchan in the ribs.

Luchan winces in pain. He quickly tries to regroup but fails to protect against the young man's leg and receives a direct kick, knocking him to the ground. The crowd roars boisterously.

The donkey rider laughs out loud. "With such ability, you dare to come and talk nonsense? Go back to your



teacher's mother and practice a few more years, before coming out to mind my business." Not waiting for Luchan's reply, he struts proudly back to the black donkey, mounts up and rides away.

Defeated and ashamed, Luchan stands up and dusts his body off with both hands. Both his arms and his ribs ache painfully. He lowers his head not wanting to look at the crowd around him, turns and walks away.

A talkative old man with a short beard walks next to Luchan and says sympathetically, "How to put it, you started with good intentions but resulted in stirring up trouble. I don't know if you have heard, but people from Chen Jiagou all know about this: nobody dares to provoke them, these Chen family boxers!"

Yang Luchan says with surprise, "He's a Chen family boxer?"

Another middle-aged man says, "Don't you know, our

Master Chen Qingping's Taijiquan is world famous. It looks like you know martial arts, don't you know about this Chen family boxing?"

"I didn't know it was Chen family boxing. How is that young man related to Chen Qingping?"

"This young man is Chen Qingping's 4th disciple, didn't you know?"

Yang Luchan did not wait for him to finish, he shudders, "Ai ya!"

The bearded old man says to the other man, "Don't you know he is from another village? How would he know?"

Turning to Luchan he continues, "All you need to know is that he is the Chen family's disciple, and don't meddle in this business. People here, when we talk about martial arts, nobody dares to provoke the Chens."

"Is this person really Chen Laoshi's direct disciple? What is his name?"

"His surname is Fang, given-name Zishou. Although he was able to beat you, he is Chen Laoshi's most incompetent disciple. It is said his abilities are limited. He has studied with Chen Laoshi for quite a while, making no progress. Chen Laoshi regularly criticizes him, complains he does not work hard and lacks ability."

Yang Luchan had to endure a beating to discover Fang Zishou's martial arts ability. Chen Qingping had only six disciples, this village had three, and Fang Zishou was not capable. Fang Zishou was merely crafty and lacked true ability. He had been around a long time, but his gongfu was not good. Both the fifth disciple and sixth disciple's gongfu were better than his. Although Chen Qingping suspected he lacked talent and persistence, the young man was popular, and he did not dislike him.

Yang Luchan had come a long way to find a teacher, but did not expect his butting into other people's business would get himself into a fight with his future mentor's disciple. He mutters to himself, "This is bad!"

Yang Luchan was covered with dirt, so it was not appropriate to go to the Chen residence. He left the crowd and walked back up the street to the stall to retrieve his gifts. He saw the china seller who acted like nothing had happened and was sorting through the broken china, setting aside the not-too-broken ones for his own use. He caught a glance of Yang Luchan, stood up immediately and said thankfully, "Guest, I thank you, you got involved."

Yang Luchan blushed and said, "Don't mention it!" He took out a handful of money and said, "I don't care how much the trampled, broken basins and bowls are worth, I'm compensating you."

The old man declined saying, "There is no need, no need at all. That barbarian already compensated me. Isn't this twice the money? I thank you. If you didn't stick up for me, this small fry, after beating me, would not have paid up."

This took Yang Luchan by surprise. The incident was definitely unnecessary. That young man had already





compensated for the damage, so apparently he was not unreasonable. This whole episode left him feeling empty.

People on the street glanced at him and gossiped behind his back. He was hoping to do a good deed, but his skills and ability were disappointing and subject to ridicule. Yang Luchan lowered his head as he carried his gifts back to the hotel.

He had just entered the hotel when the clerk asked, "What happened? Didn't meet the Chen master again?" Luchan looked at him, saying nothing as the clerk followed him to his room. He put his gifts on the table and said, "Make a pot of tea, I feel dizzy." He lay on the bed and did not reply to the clerk's questions. The hotel clerk did not pursue the matter. He quickly brought the pot of tea and went off to attend to other guests.

Yang Luchan felt extremely depressed and regretful. He thought to himself, "What a coincidence. Being a vigilante, being nosy – all pointless. Unfortunately, I have to bump into one of Master Chen's disciples. I've come a long way thinking of joining the Chens, and I have to get into a fight with my future brother, impeding my own progress! I just got to Chen Jiagou, and already I'm in trouble. I realize the truth about what just occurred. Forgive me; I had to take action against injustice. People are going to criticize me and say I'm not law abiding, just trying to be brave, and a troublemaker as well. Why would Chen Laoshi retain me?"

Yang Luchan felt very remorseful and had no appetite to eat or drink. He could not make up his mind whether to go to Chen Laoshi's residence or not. It was not until dark, after much thought that he decided to swallow his shame and visit again. "If I meet that young man again, I will apologize to him. When I join the Chens, I would be the younger brother. Will he bear a grudge and prevent me from being a student?"

Luchan, in one moment regretted his actions and in the next would justify himself. As a result, he was unable to sleep very well that night. He gets up the next morning, hesitates for a long time before pulling himself together. He gets himself dressed, carries his gifts and heads again for Taiji Chen's residence.

The streets are much quieter as there is no market today. He follows the street heading south, his feet familiar with the route. Before long, he finds himself in front of Chen Qingping's front gate.

Luchan walks up the steps when he saw Lao Huang, who had delivered his message the last time, puffing his pipe.

He smiles, and greets Lao Huang before placing the gifts on the hallway's wooden bench.

"Master Yang, you're early today. You want to see my master? He's out. Better come again tomorrow."

Luchan, hearing this, is very upset thinking, "Obviously, he doesn't want to meet Me."

He hides his disappointment and tries to put on a cheerful face, "Lao Xiong Huang, I have already told you my intentions. I am sincere in paying my respects to Master Chen. So, no matter what, I definitely want to meet him just once. Even if he doesn't want to take me on, it doesn't matter. I've come such a long way and I can't just go back. Even if he doesn't want to see me today, I'll wait till March or May, until he sees me. Lao Xiong Huang, can you please deliver my message?"

Lao Huang knocks out his pipe, "Master Yang, I'll tell you the truth. Even if you meet him, he may not accept you as his disciple. My old master has an odd temperament. In



the past, there were quite a few fellows like you, and they all were rejected. Why don't you take my advice and not insist on seeing him?"

"If I weren't determined, then I would not have made this long trip to get here. I'm not afraid of him not accepting me as disciple. I just want to hear him say so in person. I'll then leave to find some other famous teacher, instead of not even meeting at all."

"It's not that; he is really out today."

Luchan thought for a while and asked, "Can you find out for me if Chen Laoshi has a disciple named Fang?"

Lao Huang blinks his eyes, "There is one called Fang, why do you ask?"

"I would like to see him regarding a small matter. Lao Xiong Huang, sorry to bother you, can you ask him to come out?"

Lao Huang shakes his head, "Master Yang, do you know him already?"

"No, I met him after I came here."

"He doesn't often come. He isn't here. Leave your message with me, so when he comes, I'll have him find you at the hotel."





Luchan lowers his head and ponders. "I have to entrust you with my story, Lao Xiong. Yesterday on the way here, I unknowingly offended this brother Fang. Initially I didn't realize he was a disciple but later someone told me. I'm sorry for what happened. I intend to join Chen Laoshi, but instead I offended his disciple. Isn't this creating an obstacle for myself? I want to meet this brother Fang to apologize; otherwise if Chen Laoshi finds out, it would be awkward."

"How did you end up fighting with him?"

Luchan tells the story of yesterday's incident. Lao Huang listens, waves his hands and advises, "Master Yang, I suggest you don't look for him. If you mention this incident, it'll be terrible. He wouldn't dare to tell his teacher his outside troubles. He is the worst disciple, training for six or seven years and still has no gongfu. Master has scolded him many times. The last couple of years he has been getting into trouble. If Laoshi finds out, he will not forgive him. Fang has improved slightly these past 2 years. Lately, because his mother is sick, he doesn't live here. Sometimes he comes, sometimes he doesn't. If you mention this incident, Laoshi will beat him up. I think you simply shouldn't bring this up."



Luchan was relieved to hear this. He pleads with Lao Huang, "Be sure to send my regards to the old master. If I could only meet the old master, I would be eternally grateful."

Lao Huang agreed to do so. Luchan left unhappily and walked dejectedly back to the hotel.

He had been at the hotel for more than ten days. Since he had been going there constantly, he had troubled all

the old employees. They all refused to acknowledge him. Even though Luchan pleaded with them for help, they laughed cold heartedly saying, "That person is here again."

Yang Luchan was running out of ideas when he thought of the buying-his-passage scheme. Lao Huang, and the rest of the employees could all be bribed. These were country folks; just spread some money and these old employees would all be happy.

Next day, Yang Luchan is already at the Chen's residence just after dawn. He does not even get a chance to say good morning, when Lao Huang walks directly up to Luchan.

"An iron shaft can be sharpened into a embroidery needle. You'll have gongfu once you get there. I want to congratulate you. Yesterday, I put in a few good words, so my master invited you to sit in the guest area."

Hearing this Luchan is overjoyed. His patience and pleading have paid off and now there is hope.



"It must be that Chen Laoshi thinks I'm persistent, patient and this has impressed him. Once he sees me, I'll definitely have the chance of being accepted." He respectfully follows Lao Huang through the east screen door and enters the living room to the south.

There's no one inside. It had just been cleaned, as the floor is still damp. The furnishings are not particularly lavish, but it is simple, elegant, tidy and quite impressive. Luchan doesn't dare to sit on the guest chair, finding another near the tea table to sit down.

Lao Huang pours a fresh cup of tea for Luchan and places it on the table. He instructs Luchan to drink it later. "Remember to be polite. I am keeping an eye on you." He walks out.

Luchan waits for a long time before Lao Huang finally opens the door. He leans towards Luchan, "Master Yang, our master is here."

Luchan quickly stands up.

Translated by Mui Gek Chan  
Transliteration by Dave Barrett





YANG FAMILY  
TAI CHI CHUAN

## Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan SEMINARS

### Master Yang Jun

6th Generation Yang Family and

5th Generation Lineage Holder of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan

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Aug 27, 2013 Push Hands  
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#### ROME, ITALY

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#### SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

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