

# Tai Chi Chuan

46 / SUMMER 2020

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL YANG FAMILY TAI CHI CHUAN ASSOCIATION

国际杨氏太极拳协会杂志







# CONTENT

/ SUMMER 2020 /

YANG FAMILY  
TAI CHI

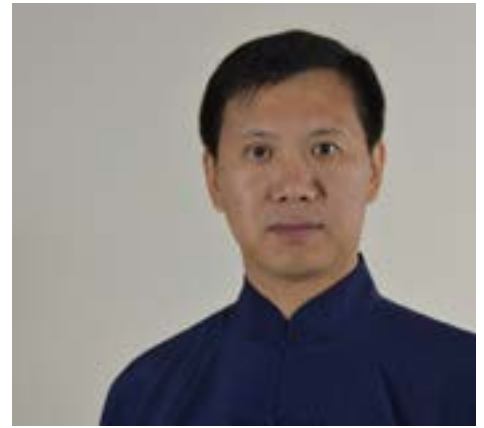


JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL YANG FAMILY TAI CHI CHUAN ASSOCIATION

- 3**      **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**
  
- 4**      **30 YEARS OF YANG FAMILY TAI CHI IN NORTH AMERICA**
  
- 16**     **CHINESE TERMS OF TAI CHI THEORY**
  
- 18**     **INTERVIEW WITH MASTER YANG JUN**
  
- 24**     **THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM,  
EXPLORING THE NEW TEACHING MEDIUM.**
  
- 32**     **IN MEMORY OF ROQUE SEVERINO (YANG YAZHI)**
  
- 35**     **STEALING BOXING. CHAPTER 14 - MASTER CHEN HAS  
A BIRTHDAY; FU JIANNAN TELLS A STORY.**
  
- 42**     **CLASSIC VIDEO**
  
- 44**     **MASTER YANG JUN'S SEMINARS**



# President's Letter



**YANG JUN, President**

*Transcribed by Edward Moore*

**A**t this difficult time we are still in the middle of a crisis as the world is working to end the virus. This virus is affecting all of us and I want to first advise everyone to keep safe and take care of yourself, your family, and also your tai chi friends. The virus will likely interrupt many of our lives and delay what we have planned to do. I have cancelled my schedule from February all the way to July and I believe many of you are probably in a similar situation. The virus has changed our daily lives but it doesn't stop us from continuing to do tai chi. Since the virus began in February, our tai chi family in the west has been joined together to perform cloud hands with many people in our Chinese community to help people, exercise, stay home, and raise their spirits.

Unfortunately, the virus didn't stop in China and it instead became a world pandemic. Many countries have declared a state of emergency. A lot of people have stayed at home to prevent the virus from spreading. This helps you to take care of yourself and also take care of others. Through our association we started what we call The Fight With COVID-19 campaign in the middle of March. Through this campaign we have live-streamed tai chi instruction for wellness and health to help people who are staying home. This has helped people to receive some health benefits through learning tai chi and has helped us to reach many people who may have never practiced tai chi before. From mid-March to May we have had many instructors contributing their time to shoot teaching videos for instruction. I want to use this time to thank all of you for dedicating your time not only to promote tai chi but also to help a lot of people to

begin to study the art at this difficult time and to do some exercise to stay healthy. This year we have two major events that we were planning to host. Unfortunately, we have to change the way that we will do this. We have postponed events for the China trip, 2<sup>nd</sup> International Elite Tournament, and at the same time this also affects the celebration of my grandfather's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. We still want to celebrate but we may need to change the way we do it. This year is also the 30 year anniversary of my grandfather and I coming to America. As the situation is not clear, it also may change the way we plan to do this. We can see many things have changed during this challenging time, but as one door closes, another opens. As everyone keeps social distance by staying home we have developed virtual classes which use the internet as a stage for our tai chi instructors so they can still teach through the internet. As we are an international organization, we will have many instructors teach in different

“ We can see many things have changed during this challenging time, but as one door closes, another opens. As everyone keeps social distance by staying home we have developed virtual classes which use the internet as a stage for our tai chi instructors so they can still teach through the internet. ”

languages. You will be able to find instructors that you prefer who speak the language that you prefer. As time goes on we will have more and more on-line instructors through our association. We may not be able to meet in person but we can meet online. I think many of us wish that this pandemic will be over soon so we can go back to the things we normally do. I hope that practicing tai chi during this unusual time will help everyone a little bit. If tai chi can help you then that will help me feel happy.

Once again, stay safe, take care of yourself, and also take care of others. ☯







# 30 YEARS OF YANG FAMILY TAI CHI IN NORTH AMERICA

2020 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Master Yang Zhenduo's first trip to teach in North America. To celebrate the occasion, some of the students from that time have come together here to share some memories and wish Master Yang a Happy 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.





# Training with Yang Family Tai Chi Master Yang Zhenduo MY DREAM CAME TRUE!

BY: HAN HOONG WANG

When I lived in China, I always wanted to learn tai chi from the masters, but I thought that this was just a dream. There was no way that I could meet the tai chi masters.

Then Master Yang Zhenduo brought Yang Family Tai Chi from China to the world with Master Yang Jun and the dream came true!

## TRAINING IN USA MARYLAND SEMINARS

In 1993, I found out that the 4<sup>th</sup> generation Yang Family Master Yang Zhenduo and his grandson, Master Yang Jun, were coming for a 12-day seminar hosted by The Wushu Academy in Maryland.

I was so excited and decided right away to go. I took off from work and bought an airplane ticket. That was my first domestic trip within the United States. I flew to Maryland and arrived on July 18, 1993. The seminar's programming included five days of hand form, two days of saber, and one day of push hands.

The seminar was well organized. On the first day, the big gym was full. Over 120 people were lined up. Everyone was excited and kept looking at the entrance. Soon, both masters entered the gym. There was a very warm applause with much excitement for welcoming our masters. Master Yang Zhenduo was high-spirited and full of energy. By contrast, Master Yang Jun, who was in his twenties at the time, and was quiet and more reserved than his grandfather. Both seemed very kind.

Master Yang shared very interesting Yang Family stories, then lectured on 10 Essentials of Tai Chi Chuan that his father Yang Cheng Fu had summarized for tai chi chuan. He also spent time on “fang song” and tai chi chuan “gang and lou” analogies to help make tai chi philosophy easier to understand.

Master Yang added the 20-Word Poem for arm requirements. The poem is simple and meaningful. It is for the sinking energy and supporting the waist and dantian. When he saw your arm, he could tell that emphasized that you were not loosening up your internal

chi and your energy was not unified. He emphasized this over and over and it was tough for us to do it correctly.

Then he conducted a detailed teaching of the hand form. He very patiently demonstrated and explained each posture. Everyone was very quiet and interested in his powerful and elegant form. Master Yang Jun demonstrated each section. His forms seamlessly combined softness with hardness, noble and graceful with peaceful spirit. We were so impressed! Master Yang Jun always led us through each part of the form with Master Yang Zhenduo's verbal instruction. That really helped us to remember the sequence. Master Yang Zhenduo called the names like the actors from the Beijing opera. His voluminous voice filled the whole gym. Even today, his voice feels like it is there when we are practicing or performing.

When Master Yang Zhenduo taught the sword and saber forms, he talked about each form's relationship with the beauty of nature, and told fascinating stories of the postures, overlaid with Chinese culture and the spirit of tai chi. Master





Yang Zhenduo's sword and saber were elegant and powerful!

Throughout the first three years' seminars, we enjoyed Master Yang Zhenduo's teaching methods that heightened and cultivated his students in various ways. We were asked to stand in the center area and demonstrate what we had learned as a group or as individuals each day. By watching his corrections and watching each other we learned a lot. He complimented us with his two favorite words in English: "very good" and "one more time." We were always encouraged.

At every end of the seminar, there was a group performance. We felt like it was an exam and we were honored to perform for our masters. Everyone worked very hard in the evening and early morning to prepare. This experience also fostered teamwork and created friendships for many of the participants.

When Master Yang saw that everyone worked hard in the mornings and evenings, he commented that this kind of learning attitude was very serious and he felt very good about it and wanted to bring it back to China to Chinese students."

### OUR FIRST CHINA TRIP -1995

After three years of training, at the end of the Maryland Seminar in 1995, the Texas and Michigan groups, along with Bill Walsh and Dave Barrett, all went with

Master Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun to China. That was the first trip to visit the Yang family in China. That was a fabulous adventure for us. Master Yang Jun picked us up at the airport in Beijing and that was the start of our 22-day trip. There were five important events during our trip:

1) Visiting the Yang family's birthplace in Guangfu. There were hundreds of people lined up along the streets welcoming us to the city as the police escorted us by motorcade. That day Master Yang was very happy, and walked with us to visit the Yang Family and Wu hao Family birthplaces. We learned a lot of the history of Yang Family Tai Chi from Master Yang that day.

2) Participating in the International Tai Chi Festival and Tournament was our next big event. The USA teams earned excellent awards in both hand and saber forms. We had practiced very hard that month. Master Yang Jun was proud and said that our forms were the standard. His words gave the students so much confidence!

3) Joining in the 15-year Shanxi Yang Family Tai Chi Association's Celebration and Cultural Exchange. We experienced tai chi with the Shanxi Association. That was the first time we saw performances from senior students and Master Yang Jun and Teacher Liang Xiufang performed the Yang Family's complete set of forms from Push Hand to Dalü. Our team performed all three forms (49 Form, Sword and Saber).





4) We had the privilege of training in hand, saber and sword forms with Master Yang Zhenduo and his two disciple assistants, teacher Liang Xiufang and Yao Junfang. Master Yang Jun also assisted in weapons. We received hand by hand corrections in each day.

5) During our training in Taiyuan Master Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun selected the first three chapters of Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Center which were Texas, New York, and Michigan. Since then, the Michigan Center and I felt a strong sense of commitment to work hard to help spread Yang Family Tai Chi to Michigan and USA.

Over the years, we had many students join the Yang Family Association China trips to explore Chinese culture and continue learning tai chi. It was special for us to pay our respect to our master and his family. His birthday parties have become great fun to hundreds of students, family, and friends. These celebrations became a big happy tai chi family gathering.

At the tournaments, we have been able to meet all the family styles of tai chi. Master Yang has a broad mind and a great loving heart to embrace all tai chi schools, such as Chen, Yang, Wu/Hao, Wu, and Sun. These tai chi styles across the country are also regarded as important tai chi families.

Yang Family Tai Chi Michigan Tai Chi

Center and I have been so fortunate to study with the Yang Family for 27 years. We were honored to host many seminars for both Masters. Many of our students have also traveled to Yang Family seminars around the world. More than 14 people became instructors. Yang Family classes are taught across Michigan. During the COVID-19 crisis these past two months, students continue to practice tai chi. Master Yang Jun gathered all Yang Family centers and schools to do tai chi and wellness exercises virtually to help release stress and stay strong at home.

Master Yang Zhenduo and master Yang Jun have touched countless people's lives and have greatly contributed to the world.

In 2002, I was honored to be in Master Yang Zhenduo's first group of thirty-four disciples, along with Mei Mei Teo and Huan Qiuya. It is my life's work and commitment to devote myself to Yang Family Tai Chi, and help to spread the art of tai chi to the community and Michigan, and as well to respect the other styles.

There were 6 people in 2005 that became disciples: Andy Lee, Bill Walsh, Dave Barrett, Frank Grothstück, Jean-Marc Geering, and Andrew Leray.

Master Yang's Birthday is near. From The Michigan Center and myself, we wish our Master happiness and longevity.







# WOW, I HAVE TO GO!

BY BILL WALSH

Master Yang Zhenduo had first appeared in the US at the invitation of Pat Rice to teach at the Taste of China. My first encounter was the following year, at the Maryland seminar in 1993, where we trained for eleven days straight. One long seminar with hand form, sword, saber, and push hands. It was the buzz around the New York City Cheng Man-ch'ing studio: The son of Yang Chengfu, the fourth-generation lineage Master, was coming back to the US and would be teaching his family form. Wow, I have to go!

It has been over twenty-five years now and I still remember that excitement. I have since sponsored five seminars around the New York area. I went to China nine times and witnessed him in his own environment. My awareness grew to recognize Master Yang Zhenduo as a man of great refinement, culture, and commitment. He accepted the great responsibility to represent his family's lineage. He never drew attention to himself but always presented himself as a member of his family doing his best to share his family's Art. When we first started to have

Yang Family centers in the US, he pondered all night what to name them, and told us they should be named after his father as the Yang Chengfu Centers. He had a great mission to bring Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan to the world and to make the world a better place. When he came to the US to teach, he didn't have much rest between programs in different cities and even other countries. He taught for six hours each day. He worked very hard, did everything as completely as he could, and looked forward to returning home to his adored wife and family.

There are so many great things to say about his trainings. Each time he taught we left saying, "Now that was the best ever!" In this article I would like to focus on the many characteristics that impressed us by his humanity, the way he treated people and the refinement that drew us to him. He was very disciplined and exemplified as to how we could improve ourselves. After a full day's work, and before we went to dinner, he sat and signed all the certificates. We had just asked him about having certificates and he responded by doing them immediately.



He was always so centered. He was teaching all over the world, places he had never been, and he always found a way to meet and make the people he met happy. Nowhere did he speak the common language. He met the Mayor of Detroit, was given the keys to the city at San Antonio, and a welcoming letter from New York's Senator Clinton. In China, with five thousand people in the stands, he sat regally as the most honored. Yet, he treated every individual in our seminars with the same respect. He watched the progress of students carefully and gave corrections and his attention to students at all levels. If he saw an older person struggling to go too low in a posture, he would talk about how you don't need to go low to be correct. He would make it a virtue to know just how low to go! If the training group started to tire, he suggested a break. His grandson, Master Yang Jun, assisted him and demonstrated the enormous range and flexibility of a young, talented tai chi player. In 1995, Jeremy Blodgett and I rode, with Master Yang, from Taiyuan to Handan. It was a long bus trip, and I think they were searching for a place they could bring us for lunch. When we finally sat down, the person who sat next to Master Yang was the bus driver. It was the Chinese way of honoring the person who was working for us as we rode comfortably.

I have a funny story about him being centered. I was showing him around New York's Little Italy with all the great desserts, cheeses and meat shops. We were in a place with all those huge salamis hanging from the ceiling. I have nerve damage to my left foot, and I tripped and went barreling into Master Yang's chest. He didn't budge but just

looked at me as he absorbed my energy. Little Italy was right next to Chinatown and Chinese vegetable stands crowded the streets. After looking over the different choices available, he decided he wanted to cook for us. It was fun to watch him looking through the herbs, rubbing them and smelling them to make sure they were proper Chinese herbs. He prepared a wonderful shrimp, vegetables, and noodle dinner.

Mari Lewis recalled a time he showed his compassion. Ruu Cheng, who was from the same area of China and close in age, was a great translator. He understood the nuances of his dialect. One afternoon, as we were training, Grandmaster Yang noticed Ruu was tiring and asked if we would bring him a chair. Ruu was so thankful he invited Master Yang, Master Yang Jun, and myself to go to Shanghai Joes' for dinner. They were famous for their shrimp and pork dumplings. We had dumplings and only dumplings for dinner. They were so good! We ate more and more till we had consumed about ten orders. Ruu knew these dumplings were exceptional and that Master Yang Zhenduo had a deep appreciation and palate for good food.

During a New York seminar, Horatio Lopez, who was the Director of the San Antonio Yang Chengfu Center, was visiting my home. Master Yang Zhenduo was there also. Horatio received a call that his father had died, back in Argentina. Master Yang Jun and I were consoling him. When Master Yang Zhenduo realized what had happened, he came and sat with us. He told Horatio he understood how hard it was to lose a father and was very attentive as Horatio talked. It was a very touching moment.







Holly Sweeney recalled his ability to be theatrical and entertain us with his stories. When he talked about the Yang style characteristic of being large and circular in our movements, he would mimic the actors in the Chinese Opera, and show us how they appeared on stage with their shoulders squared and their arms curved, creating a big image. He loved the Beijing Opera and would often refer to it. To provide feedback, he would demonstrate how he moved his arm and hand in a particular posture, and with the other side of his body mimic how we might be moving. We easily got the point. All this was done through a translator but his non-verbals were so clear we always understood his meaning. The one English phrase he had down to perfection, and to our delight was, “One More Time!”

One China trip Dave Barrett wanted to have a party for the Moon Ceremony, an important Chinese festival. At that party Master Yang Zhen-duo sang a short piece from an Opera. And in 2014, at an evening of performances in Fen Yang, sponsored by Song Bin, he sang

again, this time for a long time. He has a really beautiful, deep, resonant voice, and, in the spirit of celebration, he was a really good sport. The place went wild with appreciation. A few times, at the end of the International Competitions, Holly and I performed a social dance, which was followed by Master Yang Zhen-duo coming on to the floor with Mei-Mei and then encouraging everybody to come out and dance. At the end of each dance, the couples split up and brought somebody new onto the floor.

One time during a seminar I was asked to help this really big guy who was just learning the form. There were three of them in biker vests which was very unusual. The problem was, this person hadn't really asked for help and was upset that I offered. He was making a big commotion and I was embarrassed that I had created this. Master Yang Zhen-duo saw this and invited the person to the center of the room and joined arms with him and invited him to push. He then easily demonstrated the importance of turning your waist and neutralizing a push. That was a great tai chi

lesson. He took a potentially dangerous situation and neutralized it. This angry young man was now laughing and smiling.

Master Yang taught us a great deal without saying much; he modeled it. He was professional in everything he did. He showed us how to practice, how to treat others with kindness and to respect, how to learn from each other, how to appreciate the Chinese training rituals, and how to celebrate our community over good food. Most of all, he taught us humility. He taught this by his great example, and often, told us not to have our thumbs pointing back at our own chests. When he departed, he said, “I won't say goodbye because we will meet again and I wish you well till next time. Keep practicing!” Today we are grateful for his extraordinary service as an ambassador, bringing Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan to the world, and we wish him a Happy ninety-fifth birthday! We are sorry we are not there in China and send our love and appreciation. We wish him good health and many more birthdays. Go, Yang Family!



# THANK YOU TEACHER, MASTER YANG ZHENDUO

BY ANDY LEE ZALCMAN

I was lucky enough to have a lot of great teachers, but one in particular shaped the person I am today: Master Yang Zhenduo, my Shifu. Standing up on stage, he wore a white see-through shirt, suspenders and grey pants. And while he was incredibly generous with information and guidance, what I remember most was the sound of hearing the 103 Yang Family Long form. I can still hear him singing the names loud and clear. What a super treat.

Master Yang Zhenduo's enthusiasm was infectious. From the first day of class, he was always smiling and had boundless energy. He was a taskmaster, and there was no tough love, just excitement about what he could teach us. But it never felt like he was teaching, it was as if he wanted to share this really cool thing with you. It was effortless, infectious and stimulating.

Every lover of tai chi has to start somewhere, and there was something I immediately connected with in Master Yang Zhenduo, something that resonated and made me feel a little less alone in my journey to investigate, learn, and understand the principles of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. This connection inspired me to start teaching Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan, and I haven't stopped since. He inspired me to study Chinese

at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and in 2005, I graduated with a B.A. in Chinese Studies.

I couldn't tell you what Master Yang Zhenduo, my Shifu, saw in me—why I was given extra attention and care. But in hindsight, I know it's impossible that I was the only one. He had concern for all that were there. He divided us into smaller groups so he could give individual attention. When you asked a question, the concern to make sure we ALL understood was endless. And the jokes were delightful. "I say three (3) words" Master Yang Zhenduo said in 1993, "the translator goes on and on and on. So many words for just three little words." He wasn't shy about sharing his passion about using English "One More time" or French "Oui" or any other language to bring a warmth of friendship to all. Many times, he would throw the translator for a loop. Jeremy Blodgett, who translated in the late nineties, looked at GM Yang Zhenduo and asked him, "What's 'oui'?" "It's French", he answered with a sheepish grin, "don't you know French?"

If you stopped by while Master Yang Zhenduo was on break, chances were good that some other student seeking wisdom and encouragement was there, too. Many times, we would be asked to

let the masters rest on their break, but Shifu always wanted to talk with us, whether it was to share Chinese calligraphy, talk about food, or correct your tai chi posture. He seemed to have an innate ability to find out what kind of push you needed to make you feel something.

I imagine that's the hardest thing for a teacher to figure out—how to really reach and develop each student. Master Yang Zhenduo instinctively knew how to hone in on what a student was most excited about and cultivate that. That's no easy task when you're staring down at 90 neophytes in a college gym, in the summer heat of West Virginia or Maryland, but he took the time to invest in every one of us.

When you share your own passion, and engage your pupils, ultimately that's contagious and inspiring. No matter what we were doing, Shifu could find an emotional hook—something personal and relatable—that made us want to dig in. If a teacher can motivate a student to tear through a single move, then they're doing something right.

I always thanked Shifu and Shimu when I saw them. So, don't miss out on thanking your teacher-hero. They're the ones who make us who we are.





30 YEARS OF YANG FAMILY IN NORTH AMERICA

# SOME MEMORIES OF MASTER YANG ZHENDUO

BY SUSAN SMITH

In 1995 I had been studying with Han Hoong Wang for about a year when I heard that she was planning a trip to China to study with Master Yang Zhen-duo. With my sons out of high school and encouragement from my husband, I became part of that group. Little did I know how much that would change my life. The friendships made, a deepening understanding of tai chi, the opportunities to teach and pass on a love of tai chi, the list goes on.

I will always remember the first time I met Master Yang on that trip. We had been traveling for many hours, from Detroit to Vancouver to Beijing, and then to the train station where we got a train to Handan. That evening we met with our Texan counterparts and were practicing for an opening ceremony in Yongnian the next day. We were outside and it was evening. The Texan and Michigan groups were working on tidying up the form and getting

the tempo coordinated when Master Yang Zhenduo appeared to look over our form. Talk about being nervous. But we survived and went on to share three most amazing weeks with him, including ten days of daily lessons in the disco room (!) at the hotel in Taiyuan where Master Yang would arrive on his bicycle each morning.

Master Yang Zhenduo was so kind to us, and with great spirit and energy shared many details of his forms. If only I could have retained it all. I will also always remember his great love of life which he expressed in his wonderful sense of humor, unending curiosity about other people, and, of course, his love of Chinese opera. So elegant and full of grace. The embodiment of his art.

Thank you Master Yang Zhenduo for all that you have shared over the years!





PHOTOGRAPHS AND  
COMMENTARY BY  
**PAT RICE**

**A Taste of China Faculty, 1990**, Shenandoah University, Shingleton Gymnasium, Winchester, Virginia. A Taste of China poster background, Seated: Yu Chenghsiang (1929-2010), Daniel Lee (1930-2015), Liang Shouyu, Master Yang Jun, Master Yang Zhenduo, Tsu-Kuo Shih, Back row: (Unidentified), Steve Rhodes, Shelly Huang, wife of Huang Weilun (Huang is not in photo), Christopher Pei

“A Taste of China” as an organization presented annual summer seminars from 1983-2012. The faculty included well known and highly skilled individuals who had earned accolades for their leadership and teaching expertise in China, Taiwan, Canada, the USA, and Europe. These seminars started in 1983 after Steve Rhodes had studied at the Beijing Sports Institute for several months in 1982 and everybody was fascinated by his early experiences at learning in a rare setting. We decided to share as much as possible of the atmosphere of intense study with top teachers and give participants a ‘taste’ of what it was like to be on that campus.

**The Yangs, tour along Skyline Drive, Virginia, July 1990** — Skyline Drive Scenic Highway, Shenandoah National Park, near Winchester, Virginia

Skyline Drive is a 105-mile road that runs the length of the National Park Service’s Shenandoah National Park in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. In the picture, Master Yang Zhenduo, Master Yang Jun.



After the last day of instruction, we had a ‘rest’ day and decided to take Master Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun to the famous scenic “Skyline Drive” that goes along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking the Shenandoah Valley. Our rented car got overheated and we had a forced stop for a while until a ranger arrived to assure us that once it cooled, the car would be again driveable. We then continued our tour onward to Luray Caverns, an extensive karst cave of limestone featuring natural formations of cascades, columns, stalactites and stalagmites, underground pools, lighted to show the magnificence of the largest caverns in the Eastern US.



**A Taste of China July 1990 Washington Tour Group** — Washington, DC, National Mall, U.S. Capitol Building. Kneeling, Sam Masich, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, Maristela Leal, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Front Row, Andy Chang, Miami, Florida, Huang Weilun, Miami, Florida (1953-2016), Shelley Huang, Miami, Florida, Master Yang Jun, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China, Master Yang Zhenduo, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China, Pat Rice, Winchester, Virginia, Teresa Teo, Stockholm, Sweden, Daniel Lee, Los Angeles, California (1930-2015), Carlos Bueno, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Back Row: Christopher Pei, Arlington, Virginia, Steve Rhodes, Winchester, Virginia, Roque Severino, Sao Paulo, Brazil (1954-2020), Robert Lawrence, Gainesville, Florida



After the conclusion of A Taste of China's annual summer presentations in July 1990, focused on the series of amazing lessons with Master Yang Zhenduo and including other well known masters from other places, we spent a couple days touring in Washington DC, only about 70 miles from Winchester. We collected a group of instructors and participants from everywhere: Canada, Sweden, Norway, Sao Paulo, and points around the USA. It's always wonderful when tai chi folks are together and enjoying good company in a special locale.



**Yang Family and A Taste of China Directors, Winchester, Virginia**  
Shenandoah University, Shingleton Gymnasium, Winchester, Virginia, 1990, A Taste of China poster background. Master Yang Zhenduo, Master Yang Jun, Pat Rice, Steve Rhodes

Steve Rhodes and I were grateful for the cooperation of Master Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun in making a difficult journey to Winchester. And for their willingness to trust our ability to introduce them to the larger international community of tai chi chuan. We were also grateful for those international participants, likewise eager to meet the Yang family and to learn from them. This special seminar with Master Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun turned out to be a landmark event in the development and spread of the Yang Family. Also, they eventually influenced the way that tai chi chuan is experienced by many practitioners. For most who came to this event, it was the first time they'd been present for an in-person in-depth study with a great and deservedly famous master of the Yang family style. Master Yang was acknowledged as a superb teacher by everyone who had participated.





**Yang Family and A Taste of China Directors, Washington, DC** National Mall, Washington, DC— Washington Monument in background haze. Steve Rhodes, Master Yang Jun, Master Yang Zhenduo, Pat Rice

Even on a hot July day in Washington DC, photos are mandatory to memorialize the occasion. We visited the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, and other landmarks on the National Mall, and everyone enjoyed traditional foot-long hot dogs sold by street vendors, and lots of lemonade.

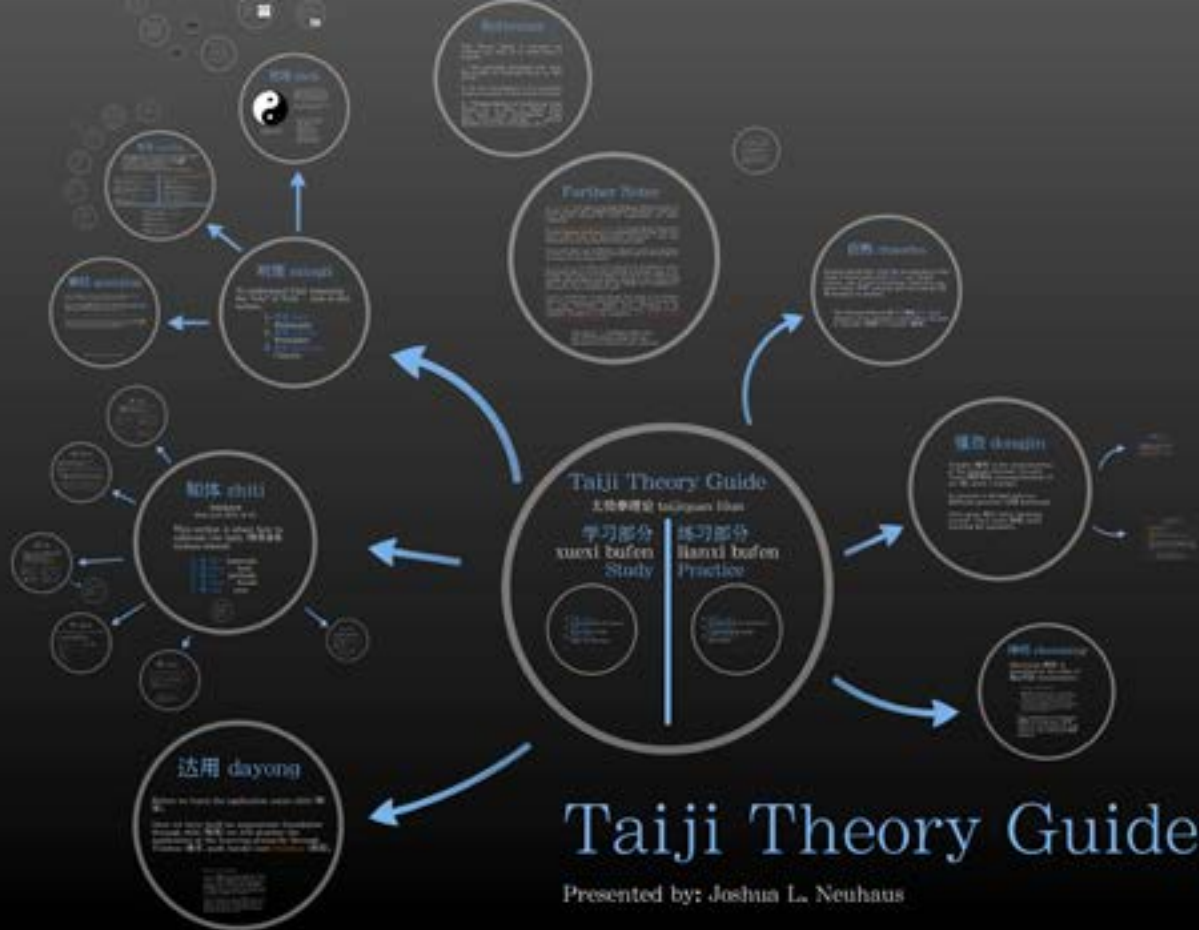


**At the request of Grandmasters, Master Yang Zhenduo, he and Yang Jun try pizza at an Italian-American restaurant — Winchester, Virginia**

Master Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun, Across from Yang Zhenduo: Master Abraham Liu (1915-1917). To right of Yang Zhenduo: Master Weilun Huang (1953-2016) To left of Yang Jun: Christopher Pei, special assistant to the Yangs and essential in helping to arrange their visit.

It was their idea to try pizza, they said they liked it! ☺





# CHINESE TERMS OF TAI CHI THEORY

BY: JOSHUA NEUHAUS

**T**his article is the first chapter in a series of articles to be published in this journal aiming to further understanding of tai chi theory by supplementing the tai chi theory presented by Master Yang Jun in his English language seminars with underlying Chinese key terms and sentences. I am basing the knowledge that I will be presenting you with on seminars in Chinese language that Master Yang has given in China in recent years. I have been studying Chinese at university since 2015 and it is thanks to the help and patience of Master Yang's Chinese students that I was able to collect this wealth of Chinese tai chi terminology in written form.

I have created a presentable open source mind map encompassing Chinese terms I have learned so far on Prezi.com. There is no need to sign up and it will stay free to view:  
<https://cutt.ly/TaijiTheory>.





“ Moving Step addresses the rules for making transitions from one stance to another in three ways ”

This first chapter will be dealing with 步法 (bùfǎ: footwork). Footwork in tai chi theory is part of 知体 (zhītǐ: knowing the body) which encompasses 手 (shǒu: hand), 眼 (yǎn: eyes), 身 (shēn: body), 法 (fǎ: methods) and 步 (bù: step). Our orthodox learning process starts with the footwork followed by body, methods, hands and eyes – in that order.

步 (bù) and 步法 (bùfǎ) in this context just mean the same thing – the method of stepping. The single syllable words rely more on context for interpretation and are inherited from traditional Chinese, whereas modern Chinese prefers to put two syllables together.

Footwork is split into three topics:

1. 定步 (dìngbù: fixed step),
2. 活步 (huóbù: moving step) and,
3. 脚底生根 (jiǎodǐ shēnggēn: rooting. Jiǎodǐ 脚底 means “under the feet” and is usually omitted in translation.)

**定步 dìngbù (fixed step)**

For fixed step there are three 共性 (gòngxìng: commonalities) and three 个性 (gèxìng: specifics) which depend on our stance, i.e. bow stance or empty stance.

The commonalities are:

1. 丁八步 (dīng bā bù): one foot straight one diagonal. The character 丁 (dīng) is visually representing the cardinal directions whereas 八 (bā) represents the intercardinal directions.
2. 脚踩涌泉 (jiǎo cǎi yǒngquán): feet tread on bubbling well.
3. 开胯圆裆 (kāikuà yuándāng): open hip and round crotch.

The specifics are:

1. 两脚的站位 (liǎng jiǎo de zhànwèi): the position of the two feet.
2. 重心的分配比例 (zhòngxīn de fēnpèi bǐlì): the relative split of weight.
3. 外形 (wàixíng): the outer shape.

**迈步 màibù (moving step)**

Moving Step addresses the rules for making transitions from one stance to another in three ways:

1. The raising and planting of leg and feet (提腿落脚 títuǐ luòjiǎo) must be steady (均匀 jūnyún). 如履薄冰 rúlǚ báoīng: It should resemble walking on thin ice.
2. The order (顺序 shùnxù) in which heel, ball and toes touch and leave the ground. 迈步如猫行 màibù rú māoxíng: Our walking should resemble the stride of a cat.
3. The leg cannot be raised too high when taking a step (提腿高度不能高 títuǐ gāodù bù néng gāo), just enough to slightly leave (微离 wēi lí) the ground will do. 如履趟泥 rúlǚ tāngní: It should resemble wading through mud.

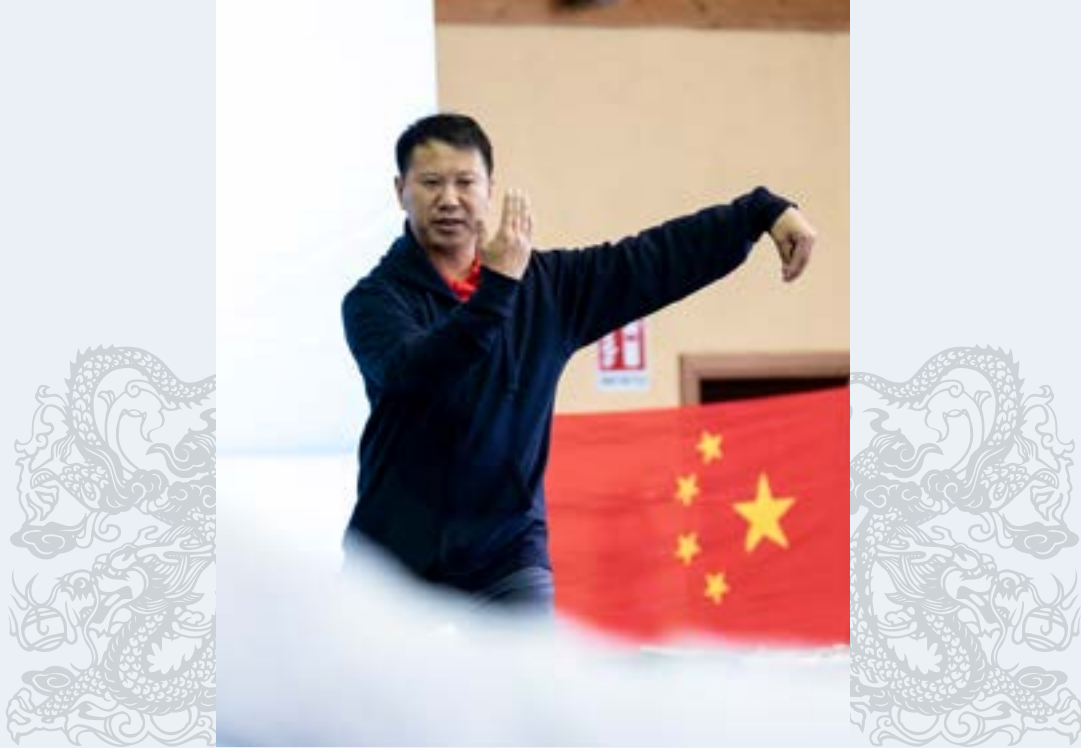
**脚底生根 jiǎodǐ shēnggēn (rooting under our feet)**

This last section about rooting introduces two more key concepts:

1. 蹬撑 (dèngchēng): push-support. The relationship between our two feet is that one is pushing, and one is supporting.
2. 表现中定 (biǎoxiàn zhōngdìng): express stopping movements from footwork.

This concludes the first chapter. Learning Chinese terminology has been a great help to me in structuring my understanding of tai chi theory and I hope you can find some time to create learning cards for yourself from this!





## INTERVIEW WITH

# MASTER YANG JUN

BY: JIM PAYMAR

Jim Paymar (JP): Good morning, Master Yang Jun, a pleasure that you are here today. I understand that you have been studying tai chi chuan for a very long time. Can you tell me how your teaching began, who was your teacher, and how many generations your teachings go back?

Master Yang Jun (MYJ): Hello, Jim. Nice to meet you. Actually, this is a bit of a long story. First of all I was born at a dark moment in China during the Cultural Revolution. My parents had no choice because they couldn't raise me and go to their work. So by chance, I grew up with my grandparents. My grandfather is Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo. Growing up with my grandparents I had the opportunity to see many people following him, studying with him, and I started on the path of my tai chi journey.

JP: This goes back in your family for six generations. Your family founded the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan.

MYJ: Yes. About the Yang Style Tai Chi, actually the founder is Yang Luchan. About 200 years ago he went to Hunan province 湖南省 (húnánshēng), Chen Village 陈家沟 (chénjiāgōu) and actually learned their art before it was called tai chi chuan. When he came back to his hometown, it was called "sticking fist" and "soft cotton fist".

JP: What does that mean?

MYJ: Sticking fist means that they are sticking together. Cotton fist (绵拳 mián quán) because it is soft. That was its name. After he went to Beijing, people recognized it more as tai chi chuan.

JP: You have been training and studying it since you were five years old?

MYJ: Yes (smiling)

JP: Five years old?

MYJ: Yes. I actually started... had my first lessons after I visited my grandfather. I was five. Not really because I liked it, it was also because I had the opportunity. At that time I stayed with my grandfather in the countryside. At that time China still was in the Cultural Revolution.

JP: What year is this?

MYJ: I would say it was 1973 or 1974. At that time my grandfather worked at a communist party college, and they were all pushed into the countryside. I don't exactly remember what was happening. I think we were preparing for some war, maybe with Russia. I don't remember exactly. All of the government and important units had to be pushed out of the city.



JP: And did they stop people from doing tai chi? Did they think it was a bad thing?

MYJ: For my grandfather, from what I know, he didn't really say it like that. Chairman Mao said it in one sentence, about climbing mountains, swimming and playing tai chi, so I would say that tai chi was not prohibited.

JP: So when you started taking tai chi from your grandfather, how many hours a day did you practice?

MYJ: At the beginning, it was not very hard. In the morning, it was about one or two hours of learning. Because all the important organizations had to be moved out to the countryside, my grandfather went out to practice every morning. I stayed in my room. I remember I was scared to be by myself. I always wanted to be with him, together. So that's how I started to learn tai chi.

JP: Tell me about the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. How is it different from what the other masters are teaching? We have five other masters here. What is the difference between how you teach and the way that they teach. Is it all similar? Tell me about that.

MYJ: First of all, we say that we are all one big family. It doesn't matter what style you practice, we have the same theory, which is based on the same philosophy, we also have the same principles. Even in the system of practice, we are all similar. The styles, they have connections with each other. They all have learned from each other. Generally speaking, we are all one big family; it's the same.

JP: Tell me about the philosophy of tai chi chuan. Tell me about what you believe is the essence of tai chi chuan.

MYJ: I would say that most of tai chi chuan philosophy is what we call tai chi chuan theory, which is 阴阳 yin yang philosophy.

JP: What does that mean?

MYJ: The yin yang philosophy was created five thousand years ago and was developed until three thousand years ago when they completed The Book Of Changes, which is called I-Ching (contemporary spelling: 易经 yìjīng). Yin yang theory comes from this philosophy and continues to the present day. This philosophy talks about an overall picture and details how to understand a thing from two different angles. For example: when you think of temperatures, you think about warm and cold,

and if it's about size, you think about big and small. So, if you are talking about small, you are still talking about size. With this philosophy, if you see one thing, don't think about it from only one angle. Think about it from different angles. That's why they say that in tai chi yin yang theory, from one thing you need to see two sides. Two sides combined together, that's tai chi. One

JP: Now, tai chi is a form of martial art. But when we see it often, and I did practice with you the other day, you are very slow, very methodical. It does not seem like a martial art. How do you describe it? How do you define tai chi? Is it a martial art? Is it a physical exercise? Is it a mental exercise? Is it a spiritual exercise?

MYJ: All of what you said! Tai chi actually includes all of these practices and meanings inside of it. Remember what we said about the philosophy of seeing one thing. You need to see if from two different sides. In tai chi, we practice soft, but we also ask you to do hard. In tai chi we ask you to do "still" but we also ask you to do "moving". We also ask you to do "slow" but we also ask you to do "fast". So everything we do in tai chi, we ask you to see it from two different sides. So we have a sequence, a form, which, as you saw, is slow, smooth, even. This actually helps you to nurture an internal understanding of coordination, and also calm down your mind and to take out your stiffness and become soft. This kind of practice calms down your mind and makes you comfortable and to not make fast movements to create "excitement". When you calm your mind, you see things clearly. They are more centered. A balance of your mind and also of your body.

JP: It has been said that if one uses hardness to resist violent force, that both sides are certain to be injured. Instead, tai chi students are taught not to fight or resist incoming force, but to meet it with softness. To follow its motion while remaining in physical contact until the incoming force of attack exhausts itself or can be safely redirected, meeting yang with yin. Can you explain to me what that means, what that is all about?

“ Tai chi actually includes all of these practices and meanings inside of it. Remember what we said about the philosophy of seeing one thing. You need to see if from two different sides. In tai chi, we practice soft, but we also ask you to do hard. ”



“No one can say that yang is better than yin or yin is better than yang. This is what the theory tells us, and is put into the art. So, if you can neutralize your opponent in that way, then you maintain your flexibility. But how can you neutralize your opponent? It depends on how you’re able to make changes.”

MYJ: First of all, in tai chi chuan practice, we identify a few things. First, mind must be calm. Second, sink your qi down. Also be agile; moving flexibly with unified energy, and with your energy unified together. This is about the five areas that we need to put in our practice. When opponents come into you, how can you maintain your flexibility? In the theory, we understand that yin can control yang, and yang can control yin. Both are equals. No one can say

that yang is better than yin or yin is better than yang. This is what the theory tells us, and is put into the art. So, if you can neutralize your opponent in that way, then you maintain your flexibility. But how can you neutralize your opponent? It depends on how you’re able to make changes. But how are you able to make changes? It depends on you being able to move. How can you be able to make movements? It depends on you being able to maintain flexibility. How can you maintain your flexibility? You need to lightly touch with the opponent. When you are heavily directed into the force-to-force, creating a heaviness between you and your opponent, then

you are losing flexibility. You are not agile. Then you are not able to move. Then at that point we are looking instead at who is stronger, who has the best position. So that is why the key to understand this art is if you can maintain this neutralization. Then you should be ok.

JP: How many forms are there in the Yang Style of Tai Chi Chuan?

MYJ: In the creation of the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan, in the beginning, they had a lot of forms. But through the Second Generation, they modified them. They called it the “old form” and modified it in two directions. One they called the “middle form”. The other, they called the “small form”. In the third generation, which is Yang Cheng Fu’s time, tai chi chuan started to spread to the general public. At that time, Yang Cheng Fu mostly simplified the practice into one form which is what we are doing today. This is what we call Yang Family Traditional Tai Chi Chuan.

JP: Are you constantly changing the forms? Are you holding on to the ancient traditions or are you constantly evolving into something new as you learn more?

MYJ: First of all, since this is a tradition, we always want to carry on the art as close to the original as much as we can. But the art is always developing. Around the world there is nothing out there that is not developing. Everything, even our languages, they keep following the moment in time. They are constantly modifying. But no matter how much you’ve changed, you always can find its roots. So this is also a yin and yang. Change with no-change. We want to keep the no-change but we want to follow the need to modify it. So this covers both sides. That’s why we have just one form based on Yang Chengfu’s teachings, but following today’s needs, there are around this form, many small sequences, shorter sequences. So that is why in this Symposium, we have asked every master to create a “tai chi gong”, which is only ten movements. The short form makes it easy for all people attending to learn them without having to struggle to learn so many movements. So the root, I would say, is only one. But following the needs, you can create many many ways of doing it.

JP: So I’m going to ask you how old you are.

MYJ: 51.

JP: 51. So you’ve been practicing for 46 years.

MYJ: Yes.

JP: So when we practiced the other day outside, how did you start the form? Do you think about it or is it a natural physical phenomenon that you begin because you’ve been doing it for so long. Do you even think about it?

MYJ: No, I’m not thinking anymore.

JP: You’re just doing it?

MYJ: (Laughs) I’m just doing it. So when I’m standing there, and I know I’m going to practice, then everything seems like it automatically moves. My mind comes to be thinking less.

JP: Neutral.

MYJ: Yes, neutral.

JP: Is it a meditative state that you go into when you are doing tai chi?

MYJ: No, the mind is quite simple.

JP: Just quiet?

MYJ: Just quiet.

JP: But the body moves?



MYJ: Yes. But the body moves. But everything around me, I'm clear.

JP: And when you get done with the practice, do you think about what you have just done, or is it that you feel better? How would you define the end result of doing all of the forms?

MYJ: After practicing, I believe that most of the tai chi practitioners have the same or similar feeling that is a little bit like their batteries being charged. You feel that your spirit has risen, and that internally they feel energized, but calm, and they feel kind of "ready". Also, because we use abdominal breathing for practicing, everything feels internally a kind of fullness, charged, this kind of feeling.

JP: People talk about qi, energy. How do you define qi?

MYJ: When we talk about qi, this is a complicated area for people to understand. It also depends on which direction you are talking about. For example, the universe as we understand it was created by qi. Even as we are standing on Earth, if we zoom out to see the universe, we are just dust. It is part of the qi. And also, every part of our body, and everything we've created is from qi. This comes from Chinese ideas about qi understanding. Then, when we talk about Chinese Medicine, they also have a different idea about qi and how it circulates around your body, how the qi passes through your meridians and how it is connected with your blood. This last part of the explanation can be quite complicated, since they talk about good qi, cold qi, hot qi. They have to be balanced. Then you can stay healthy.

JP: The yin yang.

MYJ: The yin yang. Because Chinese Medicine and tai chi chuan, they use the same philosophy. They just apply it to medicine in this area. In tai chi chuan when we talk about qi, generally speaking, it is more directly connected with our breath, with our energy. This makes it easy to understand for many practitioners. It doesn't matter if your cultural background is Chinese or Western, we can all have the same understanding about the same idea.

JP: When your grandfather, Master Yang Zhen-duo, founded the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association to spread the word, to get more people to know about Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan, why did he decide to do that?

MYJ: We have one mission. My grandfather often says it and writes it in his calligraphy. He says that tai chi chuan is one of the Chinese

Traditional Martial Arts. It is also a healthy exercise. It is also a way to do meditation. It helps in people's health, and he wishes to help popularize it for all human beings' health so that more people can practice it and receive its benefits.

JP: Since he started this International Association, there are now more than 80 centers and schools in 5 different continents and 24 countries, and we have 22 of the countries represented here at the International Symposium. So is tai chi chuan growing around the world? Are more people getting involved?

MYJ: Yes. We have this idea that it comes from China, but it belongs to the world. Through tai chi chuan we really want to build this bridge that connects people with different backgrounds together. Through tai chi chuan we can make a big family.

JP: But the culture in China is much different than culture in the West. So how do you bring that together so that people can feel the essence and understand the philosophy of Tai Chi Chuan?

MYJ: That is one of the advantages of tai chi chuan, because a lot of times when we talk about the culture or sometimes about the art, they are not moving. With tai chi chuan, we don't talk about the philosophy right away. The way we connect with the culture is in a simple way; by saying it is a health exercise. You use your body to perform it. From this point of view, this makes it easy to spread, and for people to get used to it. Then when they are involved with tai chi, in learning Tai Chi, when they want to understand tai chi, then there are the Principles. Then there is a philosophy. Then through this practice in the physical field, it is easy to adopt and understand its connection with the theory. So in this way I don't see the difficulty. I don't see that Western people cannot learn tai chi. I don't see that only Chinese people can do it. For sure, the majority of the tai chi players are still in China, but if you go everywhere around the world, in every corner of the world there is someone practicing tai chi chuan.

JP: How do you envision tai chi chuan growing in the future around the world, and is it important that more people become involved? Because we have a very violent world, there is a lot of

“ Because Chinese Medicine and tai chi chuan, they use the same philosophy. They just apply it to medicine in this area. In tai chi chuan when we talk about qi generally speaking, it is more directly connected with our breath, with our energy. ”



conflict, a lot of people are suffering, it's not a good thing for human kind. So how do you envision tai chi chuan helping to neutralize, to bring a more calm state of the world?

MYJ: If everyone would learn tai chi chuan, especially if countries' leaders would get involved with tai chi chuan, and had a tai chi way of thinking, that is, to understand both sides of thinking, the yin and yang, then I believe that there can be more harmony. If a lot of people practiced tai chi chuan, they all would receive the health benefits. Then I believe this would be good for every human being and every nation. We should do better work to spread it further, to involve more people who can join our tai chi chuan practice. The difficulty I see today is the management of it. How can we do that? Even as we say today that it has spread to 5 continents, and to people of many countries, we are still in the small percentages, in small numbers.

JP: So maybe if we start a class for President Xi, President Trump, President Putin, President Erdogan, and get them to learn Tai Chi...?

MYJ: (Laughs) Yeah, if we had this opportunity, really we could, I hope, through the tai chi way of thinking, and that people could see the same things through different angles, maybe we could bring harmony and be unified together. Nobody wants war. It doesn't matter what your cultural background is or where you live, everybody wants peace, we all want a good life, a safe, stable life, where we can all enjoy our short time on Earth. I do think that one side of tai chi chuan is to nurture your body. The other side is to adopt the tai chi theory, adopting the tai chi techniques, and to apply them in the physical and virtual worlds.

JP: What do you think are the biggest challenges in preserving the traditions of tai chi chuan and bringing it into the future?

MYJ: This is a concern for all of us, because things in the world today are changing fast. Because as the world changes, we follow the people's needs, like modifying it, making changes to make it fit with people's needs. But when we make any changes, we always want to preserve the art itself, from the traditional point of view. So that's why I believe that

through some of the documents, through some of the physical practice, we should always put the traditions into an important priority place. Then, from the traditions to our practice, everything is rounded.

JP: Is there a lot of reading involved? Do you study books? Or is it just the physical practice?

MYJ: Yes, there are the Tai Chi Classics. And also the theory in tai chi chuan is quite rich and deep. You can read it, but at the beginning, if you don't involve the physical feeling, you won't understand a word. And after you practice, you may think you understand every word, but actually you do not understand it. You still have to feel it deeply. And gradually, through your feeling you can actually understand what the classics mean to you.

JP: There are many places, including where I live, where there are not a lot of tai chi centers, so if you wanted to learn tai chi, but there aren't centers around, how do you go about learning?

MYJ: That is one of our challenges. Today we have a lot of people teaching tai chi. But every instructor teaching tai chi has different skills, different understanding. This also creates some confusion for the people that are learning. But at the same time, we are in the modern world, and we also have lots of abilities, for example, the Internet. Today we have a lot of people live-streaming teaching and also online teachings, online courses, and live chats and teaching at the same time. I think it's a lot easier now than in the past. In the past, you could learn only if you had a teacher present with you. Today we have books, we have video, we have online streaming. These are already very convenient. But I still think this is not enough. In the future, I really hope, and this is one of my ideas, in the future, technology will develop so we can have a wearable device with you, and if your posture is not right, they can give you a signal correcting you. That can be very nice. You have seen Star Wars, right? An image can come up live and connect with you. That way it would be easy for you to have your teacher always with you that can tell you if your posture is right. This would be great! I hope that the technology in the future, when it is smarter, not only for everyone's use, but also for specifically the tai chi area. They could record all the movements from all tai chi masters how they did them, store it someplace and when you worry about your movements, they can give you the idea on how to do them correctly. That would be very convenient.

“ Nobody wants war. It doesn't matter what your cultural background is or where you live, everybody wants peace, we all want a good life, a safe, stable life, where we can all enjoy our short time on Earth. ”



JP: How many students have been part of your practice over these 46 years? How many people have you taught, do you think? Hundreds? Thousands?

MYJ: Oh, I don't know.

JP: Any idea?

MYJ: I have no idea.

JP: In all the classes that you've taught over the years?

MYJ: Hard to say. Just two weeks ago I taught a class to one thousand people.

JP: One thousand people!

MYJ: Yes. This is hard to track. China has a big population. During the end of April and the beginning of April, I traveled to the local areas for teaching and for one-day teachings. People came together from different areas for four or five of these one-day teachings. Most of those teachings had over one thousand people.

JP: What is the most important thing that you want to pass on to your students?

MYJ: First of all, we have students that are just interested in tai chi. But we also have students that are disciples. Those students should have a different opinion about tai chi. For general students, my wish for them is that through tai chi chuan practice they can do well and improve their health benefits. But for disciples, they also have a duty, a duty of carrying on the art, of spreading the art. We are like... I forgot the word... like fathers of a church. This is how they spread it to the world. Because every one of them, over a long time has done the hard work. From one location to another location, in spreading this idea. We are the same as monks, carrying on the tradition and legacy and we want to spread it.

JP: And to spread the word, and to get more people to know about tai chi, you've talked about technology. Tell me, is it important that you hold these International Tai Chi Symposiums where you bring all people from around the world together to learn from each other. Does that help to bring in more students and to bring in more interest in tai chi chuan?

MYJ: Yes. I believe so. First of all, what we're doing with the Symposiums is to bring two sides together. One is from the Western point of view, the scientists point of view, and how they understand tai chi chuan. We want to push more into this direction. But also we want to keep the tradition, to bring the knowledge from the source; the masters together; one. We want all these people to become unified together, one big family. And two, so we can talk from different angles, to make more people understand the benefits of tai chi chuan. Through these events, I hope we have more influence into people's ideas about what tai chi chuan is.

JP: And social media, is that a way of helping people to learn about tai chi chuan?

MYJ: Yeah, social media is one of the ways to spread tai chi chuan. It is a very good tool for marketing and advertising. Actually, I still prefer in-person. I am not against any technology. But I still feel we are not just teaching this kind of art. But also, through teaching, we can have a personal relationship. And this, to me,

is one very important area. How can I travel around the world? It is because we can be personally in touch. If everything is through the media, then I would feel alone.

JP: One final question: If you had to define, describe tai chi chuan in one sentence, or one phrase, what would that be?

MYJ: Tai chi chuan is moving culture.

JP: A moving culture. That does what?

MYJ: Bringing people together.

JP: And do you believe that if more people did tai chi, that we'd have a more peaceful world?

MYJ: I would think so.

JP: Thank you very much.

MYJ: Thank you.



“ For general students, my wish for them is that through tai chi chuan practice they can do well and improve their health benefits. But for disciples, they also have a duty, a duty of carrying on the art, of spreading the art. ”



THE  
VIRTUAL CLASSROOM,  
**EXPLORING THE  
NEW TEACHING  
MEDIUM**



The  
Virtual  
Classroom



BY: EDWARD MOORE

**B**ecause of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual teaching has become even more necessary as a way to reach those who are not able to attend a class in person. This has become an important way to reach out to thousands of students who would otherwise be isolated. This virtual learning experience can be important to the quality of life of those who are quarantined at home, since it can help to provide a positive, healthful exercise in a time when many people can easily fall into patterns of physical inactivity and depression. Although online-teaching is not entirely new to our association, the pandemic has made it necessary to explore this teaching possibility more than ever before. In March, Yang Family Tai Chi's Fighting COVID-19 Campaign was launched by the association as a response to the pandemic to help people stay safe at home, relax, and stay healthy. This campaign has focused on teaching the "cloud hands" exercise, and it featured association teaching from around the world. More recently the Yang Family Tai Chi Virtual Classroom has been launched with the goal of offering on-line classes in forms, theory, principles, and philosophy. This branch of the association will involve senior instructors from around the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added stress and difficulty to thousands of people's lives as they are stuck at home and preoccupied with the health of their families, but the virtual classroom gives us an opportunity to do something positive in this challenging time. Having the ability to study tai chi remotely will help people to relax and exercise, which boosts the immune system and improves mood. It also helps people to stay home, where they can be safer from the virus. Since the virtual classroom experience is new for many of us, it may be challenging at first to teach or learn in this unfamiliar way. We have asked association teachers in China, Italy, and the US to share their experiences so far with the virtual classroom. We hope that their observations will be helpful to teachers who are thinking of trying the virtual classroom, as well as students who are considering signing up for virtual classes.





“ I watched every video and attended every class. I learned tips from every instructor. I also saw master Yang Jun’s class. A Standardized approach to learning and teaching tai chi chuan has been taught in each class by the instructors. ”

HAN HOONG WANG. DIRECTOR, MICHIGAN TAI CHI CENTER.

“More than 100 instructors have participated in the Fighting COVID-19 live stream classes and wellness exercise videos campaign. Every one of the instructors has worked hard. Some were filming the wellness exercise and some were teaching a livestream course. These past two months have been very busy for this group.

I watched every video and attended every class. I learned tips from every instructor. I also saw master Yang Jun’s class. A Standardized approach to learning and teaching tai chi chuan has been taught in each class by the instructors.

The campaign has raised very positive energy in this difficult time. It has reached more than 1,000,000 people, both members and non-members globally.

The New Virtual Classroom for our association is providing a brand new teaching program. Anywhere in the world, anyone has the opportunity to meet an instructor and learn!

The New Virtual classroom is a new development overseen by Master Yang Jun, and we hope to have all instructors be part of these teaching in the near future. It will be a good learning experience for each other, and a new way to train from the teachings of Master Yang Jun.

Master Yang Jun sees these live stream classes as a vehicle not only to raise the awareness of and spread Yang Family tai chi chuan, but also to raise the profile of our accomplished instructors internationally.

Another benefit for instructors is that these classes will garner some income from their hard work and also support the association to function.

Being part of the Fighting COVID-19 classes was my first time teaching virtually with video and film. I learned a lot, and it has been very challenging for me. I also think that without good preparation, there is no way you can do very well. Even you do prepare you can still make mistakes, but learning from those mistakes will be a big step forward. Sometimes you need to be challenged in life to give you the strength to learn something new. You can do more for tai chi for yourself and for the community.”

GIUSEPPE TURTURO,  
CENTER DIRECTOR. MILAN, ITALY.

“I believe it is a very special experience. You have to use your imagination and try to make the various movements understandable, which is not very simple because you don’t have the student in front of you, so you have to be very meticulous and precise in explaining the movement without ever taking anything for granted. The big challenge is to be able to transmit the sensations that develop through movements and try to describe

them without having to condition the practitioner. The slowness of movement helps us, but often it is not enough. Without a doubt, it is not like following a regular class with the students who listen to you, observe you, and you observe them and listen to their questions. I honestly find this experience very fun and above all enriching. We will listen to the opinions of those who follow, and we will try to treasure them to improve ourselves more and more.”

TALKING ABOUT VIRTUAL TEACHING WITH  
NANCY LUCERO, MIKE LUCERO, AND DD HILKE

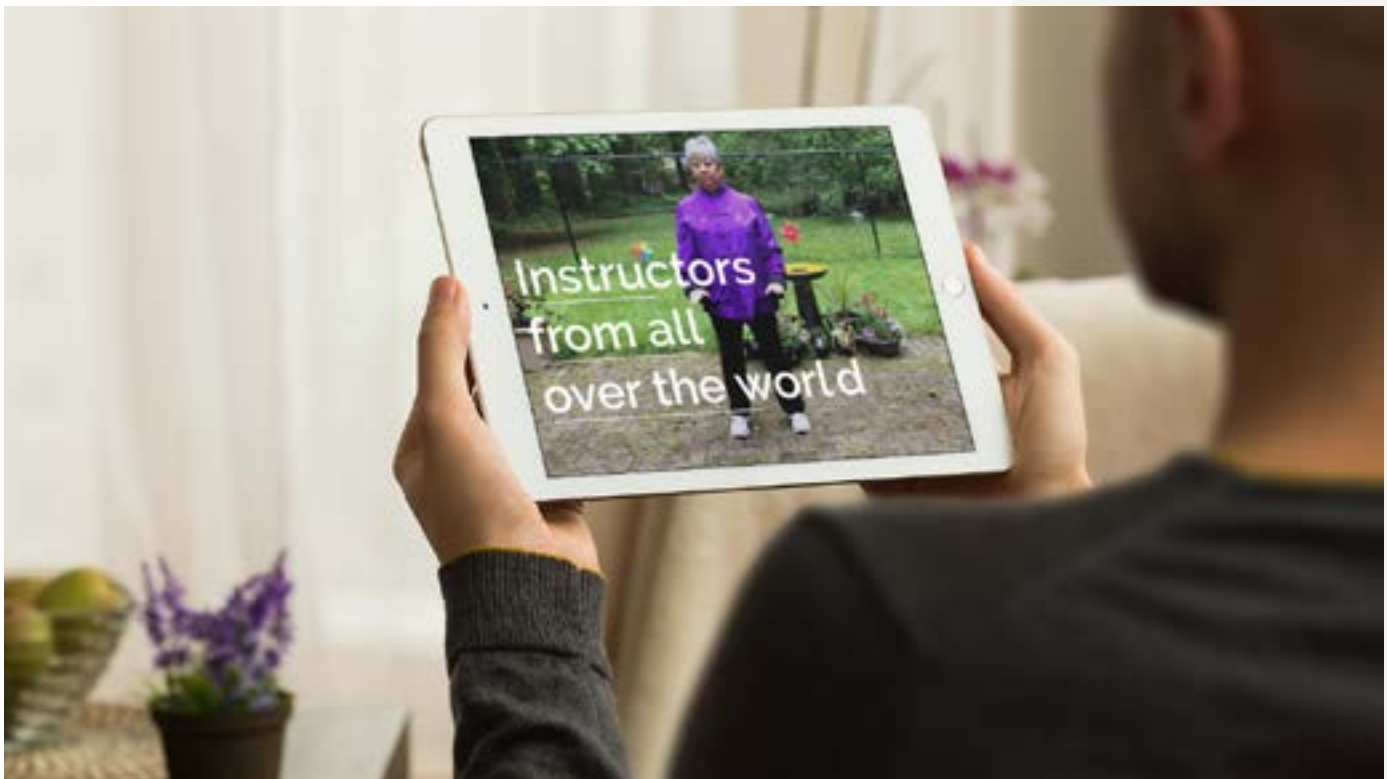
**Questions from Edward Moore: What has been more or less challenging about the process?**

“The challenging parts of online teaching are many. While offering online classes does allow us to continue teaching, there is a ‘void’ that is the result of online teaching. One cannot escape the lack of personal interaction that happens during each class. When teaching in person, students help give feedback to the instructor in many ways – questions, body language, facial expressions,

showing or expressing the movement, so their instructor can see what exactly is going on to help them correct and understand what to do. Online teaching does not allow this type of personal interaction. This, for me (Nancy), is the biggest downside of teaching online. I love being with students, experiencing and learning tai chi together and seeing the light on their faces when they ‘get it’ as well as the look on their faces when they complete a movement that they’ve been struggling with or when they finish a section. Nothing can replace this aspect, for me.

I have learned to become more comfortable with teaching to the back of our Ipad, because I know who is on the other side (I say hello to every student before class). Keeping this and them in mind while I teach is helpful. I have to draw a lot on my prior teaching experience – remembering what flaws or confusions students have had in the past with each movement and going from there. When students become more comfortable, they begin to ask more questions. This is great, because it helps to clear up any confusion they may have, and makes it easier for the entire class to be on the same page.

“The challenging parts of online teaching are many. While offering online classes does allow us to continue teaching, there is a ‘void’ that is the result of online teaching. One cannot escape the lack of personal interaction that happens during each class. ”







“ Without simple physical contact, you cannot timely correct the students movements, and you also can't express the feeling of energy delivery (达劲 dájìn) through physical contact. ”

- Gong Chengyi

The plus side is amazing. To realize how many people we can touch is surprising, and gratifying. Students can login in the privacy and comfort of their own home and attend class. No driving, no hassling with traffic, no having to get ready – it's easy – just login and you're there. The other surprising aspect is we can reach so many more people than those who can otherwise attend our school classes. There are students from Hawaii, New Zealand, Arizona, Canada, Oregon, Texas – distance is no longer an issue. That's one of the most beautiful things about teaching online classes. Reaching both near \*and\* far.”

#### How about the technical side of things?

We've been so lucky to have a long time student and instructor at our school who already had experience with the Zoom Platform to help us with the technical side. When we first started online classes we knew very little about Zoom. Students had issues logging in, getting connected to audio and video, making sure computer settings were correct, being able to mute and unmute themselves. DD Hilke has been a huge lifesaver to all of us. She has spent every class as our technical guru (she likes to call herself Help Desk) helping all of us stay connected.

#### DD's INPUT:

If possible, have at least one assistant who can manage the technical issues of class instruction. These can include: camera view, spotlighting, muting sound, recording, sharing computer sound, fielding questions to the instructor, and the possible loss of WiFi or Zoom during the class.

An assistant can also help to create a quality Zoom experience for the attendees by opening the room early and acting as a friendly presence when the instructor is busy. It can also be helpful to assist students in using Zoom controls and functions, as well as microphone or camera issues.

Do realize that Zoom does a great job at transmitting music or other recordings directly from your computer, but there are settings to turn both on and off as you prepare for class. If you don't, your music may sound quite nice to you, but will come across quite distorted after Zoom's clever speech algorithms adjust it.

#### Do you see yourself doing it more in the future?

For me, online classes will certainly be offered in the future. We are in uncertain times right now and online classes help fill



the void of in person classes. If we discontinue them, I think many people will be extremely disappointed.

### Are there things that don't seem possible to teach virtually?

Sure – weapons and push hands. Weapons will always have the issue of space. Push Hands will always have the issue of finding a partner to work with. Of the two, push hands, I think, will be the most challenging. We are lucky that summer is approaching which means we can have online classes outside and hopefully students will be able to do the same. We will see how it goes next month when we offer weapons classes.

### Any funny stories?

Of course! One of my dogs, Bella, likes to bark during some of the classes. Luckily, she doesn't do it for very long. To lighten things up, I include her as I teach. I'll say something like "now Bella thinks this part is very important for you to remember" – I think we all get a chuckle out of that.

### Any general advice from your experience

Be like Nike and "just do it!" Online classes reach further (distance wise) than one can

when teaching only at a local facility. In-person classes usually draw only those nearby. Students from all around the world can attend which means that we are touching more lives.

If I had a choice between a Zoom class versus a Zoom Webinar – I'd choose the Zoom class. Why? Because we can see the students and welcome each to the class. They can ask questions and if necessary, we can see what they are doing when they are experiencing a problem. Feedback tailored to the student is easier. With the Webinar, it's just me and the back of the monitor/phone/ipad. I've learned how to adjust and teach in 2D, however, nothing comes close to being able to see a student's face and smile.

### INTERVIEW ON THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM WITH CHINESE TAI CHI STUDENTS AND DISCIPLES

Interviews and translation by Joshua Neuhaus

I have interviewed four members of the Yang Family Association that live in China about their thoughts on online classes. I was glad to find that their opinions were quite different from one another despite sharing similar

experiences. They gave praise to the possibilities that online teaching offers but they also outlined the many disadvantages they personally experienced. I think that most of it seems in line with what Master Yang Jun might have answered if he were asked these questions and it makes me wonder what answers I might have gotten had I asked people outside of our association. One thing is for sure, we all have good reason to look forward to being reunited with our classmates and teachers.

Due to COVID-19, tai chi teachers and students of the whole world have encountered an unprecedented situation. Teachers abroad (in the West) now all have to give classes online. Has the daily life of China's tai chi students and teachers changed? Are there more online classes than before?

**Gong Chengyi:** "At present, the epidemic situation in China has already been brought under control. The daily life of tai chi chuan teachers and students is not much different. Admittedly, the epidemic is not completely over yet, and when looking at the big picture, there are still some restrictions. The restriction is that no more than 30 people can gather for a class. The number of online courses has increased a lot due to the previous outbreak."

**Li Yuanzhi:** "During the epidemic in China, the offline teaching of tai chi chuan stopped completely as people couldn't gather outside. Some teachers switched to online teaching and continued their teaching either live or in recorded videos. It goes without saying that online classes and online forms of teaching have increased."

**Zhao Ruiyuan:** "Before the secondary response of epidemic prevention and control in China, friends of tai chi chuan mostly practiced at home. After the control level had been lowered, the restrictions were gradually lifted, and normalcy has by now basically been restored."







“China’s epidemic control has been very good and now, after having gradually returned to offline interaction in tai chi chuan, we are able to have both online and offline classes.”

Before this return to normalcy though, there was an increase in online classes.”

**Wang Huifeng:** “China’s epidemic control has been very good and now, after having gradually returned to offline interaction in tai chi chuan, we are able to have both online and offline classes.”

*In face of the present situation, what do you think about the virtual classroom? Have you encountered difficulties or benefits?*

**Gong Chengyi:** “In the current situation, online classes are a great way to continue teaching and practicing tai chi, without having to gather in one place.

Advantages: online teaching can reach a wider audience, the number of participants can be higher and being able to pause and review the video freely can also increase the effectiveness of teaching. If the class is not live, the teacher can also make multiple recordings according to the students’ needs, so as to ensure the completeness and comprehensibility of a lesson.

Shortcomings: With online teaching, the interaction between teachers and students is insufficient and the teacher’s feedback is delayed. When students are studying at home, the learning atmosphere is rather poor. Because of the specific angle the

video is shot from, the teaching demonstration will deviate according to the viewers’ angle. This deviation of the viewers’ angle is disadvantageous to the students’ understanding of the movement. Without simple physical contact, you cannot timely correct the students movements, and you also can’t express the feeling of energy delivery (达劲 dájìn) through physical contact.”

**Li Yuanzhi:** “Online classes are not a very good way to teach tai chi. Due to the shooting angle and other factors, the angle and direction of movements will not be perceived correctly, and the demonstrations will be less practical and feasible to students. Problems that the students encounter in their learning process cannot be understood by the teacher, and what’s more, they can’t be corrected. In terms of promotion though, online classes are a great way of spreading tai chi chuan.”

**Zhao Ruiyuan:** “In the long run, the presence of online teaching will become the norm.

The advantage of online teaching is that it is not limited by time and space, and that the teaching costs are low. The disadvantages are that teachers and students can’t develop a good exchange, that the teachers can’t judge how well their instructions are re-

ceived, and that they can't correct their students' mistakes in time. The way of teaching is roughly the same as in the regular classroom though, and in terms of effectiveness, the contrast between advantages and disadvantages for both cases is comparable."

**Wang Huifeng:**

"The advantage of online classes is that there is no danger of contact, but in turn the learning effect is lacking. The difference to the regular classroom lies in the level of understanding. Offline teaching is received better."

"Will you still give/take classes online after COVID-19?"

**Gong Chengyi:** "I would choose online classes if I was limited by my physical location or for beginner level studies and promotion of tai chi chuan."

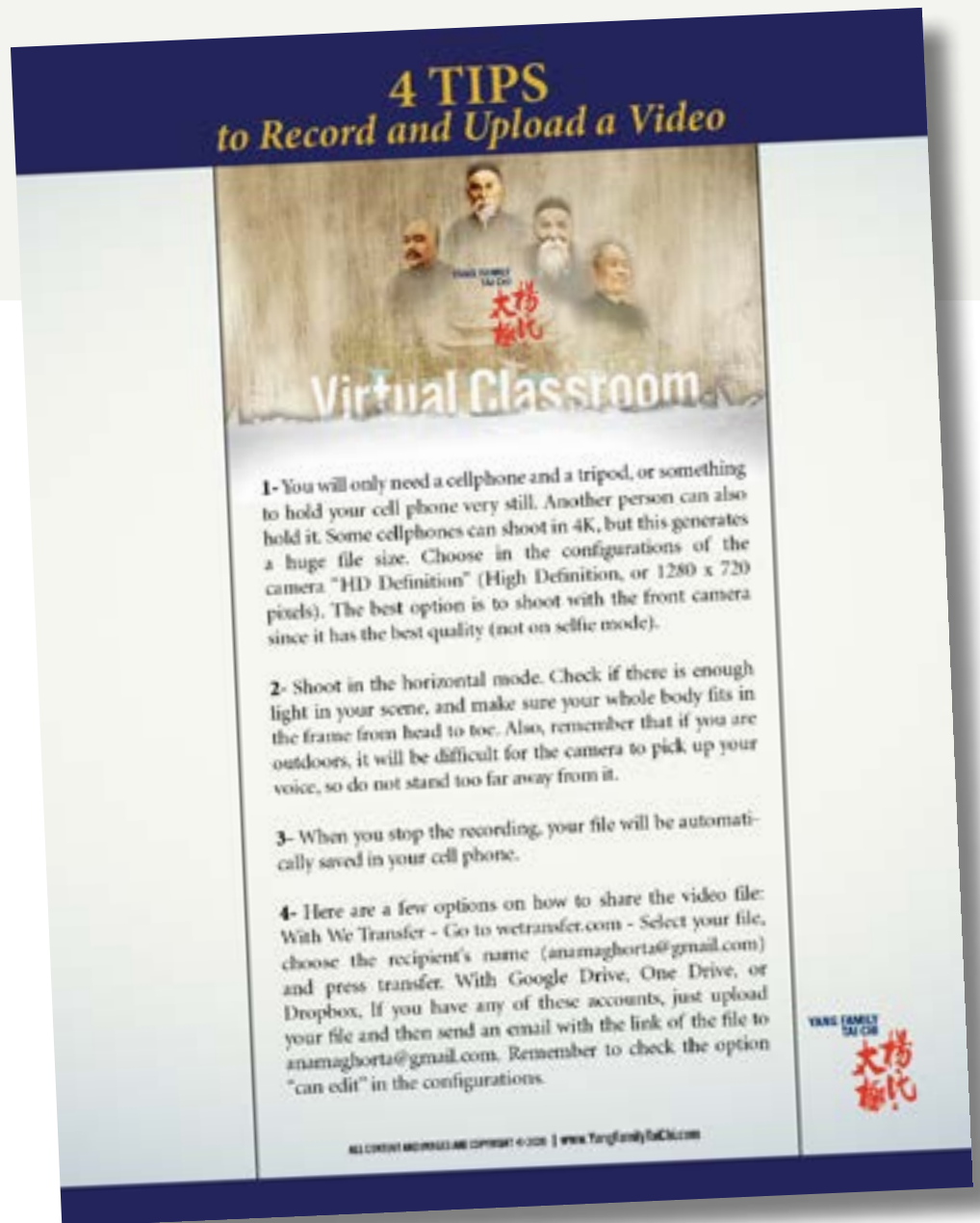
**Li Yuanzhi:** "Except for needs of promotion, I would not take online classes."

**Zhao Ruiyuan:** "As we are keeping pace with the times, online teaching has become a part of normalcy. If I would take online classes, it depends on people, place and time."

**Wang Huifeng:** "I am constantly trying my hand at online classes and will continue to do so in the future."

Do you have any funny stories or have you experienced technical issues?

**Gong Chengyi:** "During an online class teachers mostly just face the camera equipment, this kind of situation is different from facing the students to teach and can make the teacher nervous. They might find themselves at a loss of what to do or start speaking incoherently. With gradual adaptation though, this kind of tension will improve."



With respect to hardware, one needs to pay attention to the position of the camera, the sound equipment needs to be managed, as well as the angle of the lighting and so on. In terms of software one needs to pay attention to the network speed and fault tolerance of real time transmission. In post-editing one, can use Picture-in-Picture to display multiple angles at once."

**Li Yuanzhi:** "Personally, I have only recorded classes to be uploaded later and did not try teaching live. In terms of hardware and software, there was basically no problem."

**Zhao Ruiyuan:** "Because I have not given too many online classes, I have not encountered any issues regarding software or hardware yet."

**Wang Huifeng:** "I started teaching online and a lot of funny things happened. I kept forgetting words and in live classes I just couldn't stay on topic. The most difficult thing really has been answering students' questions. It takes a lot of time and energy and ultimately the results are not good. Martial arts are different from fitness, there is a lot of philosophy and the body needs to be involved, the virtual classroom can't let students experience that. ☺"





IN MEMORIAM  
**ROQUE SEVERINO**  
(YANG YAZHI)



### 收徒仪式

DISCIPLE CEREMONY

YANG FAMILY  
TAI CHI CHUAN



BY: YANG JUN

I still remember the first time I met Roque (Yazhi). It was in 1990 during my very first visit to North America. Yazhi began his tai chi journey early in life when he was 17 years old. He had been searching for Yang family members to learn from when he saw an ad for the seminar my grandfather and I were teaching in the U.S. He came to our seminar with a translator as he spoke no English. During our meeting, he told us he was dedicated to studying Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan and wanted to promote it in Brazil. We were very happy to meet each other.

A few years later, he sent his wife, Angela (Yajing), to China to meet me and my grandfather. She received training from us. My grandfather and I taught our first seminar in Brazil in 1998. It was our first visit to South America. When we created the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association in 1999, Yazhi and Yajing were among the first group of members to join the association.

Yazhi was a scholar with a great ability to deeply understand and teach philosophy. He was very dedicated to studying the Yijing (I-Ching) and how it related with life and tai chi chuan. He was also dedicated to achieving any goals he set. Starting from nothing, he and

Yajing overcame many challenges and successfully developed a Yang Family Tai Chi Center in downtown São Paulo and also a large temple with lodging where guests can study. Today, Yang Family Tai Chi is deeply rooted in Brazil and South America and Yazhi played a key role in that achievement. That's the reason I chose both Yazhi and Yajing to be in my first group of disciples. He was the oldest in the first group, so he also became my first disciple. I named him Yazhi, meaning "wisdom". I understood he had great wisdom and that his strengths were understanding things deeply and achieving everything he set out to achieve. Our international association began 20 years ago and now we have many instructors, centers, schools, and I have many disciples. Many of the instructors and disciples were originally trained by Yazhi and Yajing. I'm very appreciative of this great contribution.

Yazhi was always very supportive of my family and me. He and Yajing traveled to China many times to participate in association events and visit my grandfather. I remember he always offered to take care of me and my family if for some reason we could not live in the U.S. or China. He always welcomed

us to live in Brazil if we needed to. He wanted to take care of us and always made us feel welcome. He was such a kind-hearted man. It didn't matter that he didn't speak much English and there was a language barrier. His energy, actions, and presence always spoke the language of kindness.

Today I feel such a great loss. The coronavirus spread so quickly throughout the world. When I heard Yazhi became ill, I kept hoping for his recovery and heard he was getting better and would be leaving the hospital soon. Then suddenly, he was gone. It was a great shock to me and many others who knew him. I still cannot believe it. His life was much too short. Yazhi was my first disciple and I lost him. All my disciples feel they lost a brother. In China we would say we lost a general or an arm. For me, it is like I have lost one of my arms. Together, we had a mission to develop Yang Family Tai Chi, but now he is gone and I feel so much sadness. His memory will live forever in my heart and I will always feel deeply grateful that I had the opportunity to meet and work with such a generous, talented person who made such a difference in my life and the lives of so many people.





---

BY: GIUSEPPE TURTURO

There are many ways to define this person, sincere friend, brother, teacher, and others, but none of them can express the beauty and depth that he has transmitted with his way of doing and with the teachings that he has generously shared.

We spent very good times together in Sao Paulo and China, and also in Italy. His sympathy, his ability to ease moments of heaviness and uncertainty, clearing your heart of any worry or fear.

The world needs people like him, people who know how to dedicate themselves to their neighbour, who help the others leaving them in deep serenity.

I thank you for the gift of your friendship, for letting me learn your teachings, and above all, for having transmitted to so many people those values and meanings that this life sometimes conceals.

Even if your physical body is no longer among us, your spirit echoes in our hearts; we all, Italian brothers, thank you for your gifts, for teaching us to live more harmoniously, and for giving us the opportunity to learn how to transmit these values.

So long my friend, brother, we'll surely meet again, and continue to talk and share beautiful moments. Thank you. ☺





# STEALING BOXING

- CHAPTER 14 -

**Master Chen has a  
Birthday;  
Fu Jiannan tells a  
Story.**

Stealing Boxing (偷拳) was written by Gong Baiyu (1899-1966).

\*Gong Baiyu 1899-1966 was a famed martial arts novelist from Shandong Province. Stealing Boxing contains a fictionalized account of the lives of Chen Changxin and Yang Luchan in the Chinese martial arts novel tradition.

-Translated by Ken Ning and adapted into English by Edward Moore.





October 17<sup>th</sup> would be Master Chen's birthday. It was coming up very soon, so the disciples had gathered together to discuss what they would like to do to celebrate. Geng Yongfeng, Fang Zishou, Tan Yongnian, Qu Jinshou, and Zhu Ruifu all came together to discuss the plans to set up a party. They talked for some time, and then Fu Jiannan arrived. He was the oldest disciple of the master and all the other disciples were excited to see him. .

Fu Jiannan had studied tai chi chuan very seriously, and had mastered the empty-hand techniques of the Chen Lineage. He ran a delivery store, and had arrived at Chen Village bearing many gifts for Master Chen's birthday.

Fu Jiannan was tall and healthy, with a purple-toned face, thick eyebrows, and a strong jaw. He was about forty-one years old. He greeted the master with gifts that he brought,


and also asked to greet the master's wife. Master Chen smiled and sat down. Fu Jiannan could see that the master's cheeks were a little thinner. He was getting older, but he seemed just as healthy as before. They sat together and Fu Jiannan asked the master some questions about his daily life.

Master Chen laughed in reply and said, "You've been working outside Chen Village for some years, how are things going?"

Fu Jiannan replied, "I'm glad to have the blessing of Shifu." and he briefly talked about what had been happening lately with his family and business. Next, he stepped back and greeted his younger gongfu brothers, asking them about their martial arts skills and what they all had achieved since they last talked. They cheerfully spoke of their training together. Fu Jiannan then found his third tai chi brother, Geng Yongfeng, and they spoke alone for a while about Master Chen's recent health. Geng Yongfeng told




## STEALING BOXING



him that the master had not received any recent apprentices, and that the master's health seemed much better than in previous years.

On the day before the master's birthday, Fu Jiannan bought a few tables of wine and food. As they ate and drank he wished Master Chen a happy birthday while also celebrating a reunion with his younger gongfu brothers. This simple and warm-hearted party brought a lively atmosphere to Master Chen's house. Master Chen and the disciples relaxed as they drank with joy and talked about everything. Fu Jiannan told Master Chen about the strange things that he had seen in the martial arts world in the past seven years that he had lived outside the village. He spoke about the new martial arts experts who had recently become well known. He also talked about the outstanding talents and specialized skills of the various martial arts schools that he had seen.



Fu Jiannan said "I have also noticed that our tai chi style is very highly respected in the martial arts world thanks to our master's reputation. Since I am recognized as a disciple of this style, many people outside the village have invited me to teach them, but as a disciple I am also weary to pass the knowledge on to them. At the beginning I also taught a little, but I stopped after receiving a handwritten note from Shifu. In the past few years I have been helping out at the Changan Yongsheng delivery store. The chief of the store, Wu Jinying, is a famous master of the Wudang martial arts school. Although he is different from our own lineage, he shows mutual respect, and I also respect him. I worked four consecutive years at the Yongsheng delivery store and saved money from my wages so that I could open my own store. The place that I opened is called The Qingyuan Delivery Store. The delivery store flag is a yin yang symbol. I adopted the name of the store from Master's name since the name has such a good reputation. I understand that thanks to Shifu's well known and honorable

name, no martial arts people would want to cause us trouble. Because of this, the delivery store has not been destroyed, although a life was nearly lost once.

Master Chen was happy to hear that Jiannan actually has become a head of the business and yet still has not forgotten his tai chi roots. Not only this, but he had also included his master in the name of the delivery store. These things showed that his apprentice did not lack gratitude. Master Chen frowned and then said with a smile, "You're making a joke!" but in his heart he felt very pleased. When Master Chen heard that someone was almost killed at the store, he quickly asked, "How was it that someone at the store nearly died?"



Fu Jiannan replied, "It all started from one of the most troublesome things in the martial arts world, a disagreement between two students from different masters. Two men were discussing martial arts in the delivery store one day. One man was Chu Lin of the Shan-zuo Tan Men Iron leg school, and the other was Qi Wansheng of the Xingyi style. The more they talked, the more they boasted and disagreed. The more they disagreed, the deeper they dug into their own opinions and refused to give up. Finally, they started to compete in the store. They fought against each other desperately and both of them were injured. Fortunately, I was able to solve the problem by turning them out of the store.

I stood between them, asked them to go their separate ways, and asked them to consider the argument over. This kind of factional battle is unfortunately worse than personal hatred. Fellow disciples, I have been living outside the village for sev-

**I have also noticed that our tai chi style is very highly respected in the martial arts world thanks to our master's reputation.**





eral years, and I have seen several martial arts masters that have been ruined because of this kind of heated dispute. The youngest disciples in the clans want to show their courage by fighting to preserve their prestige of their school. After the initial clash they often meet again and act out in revenge. I feel that it is really very sad and annoying.

Master Chen listened to the story and sighed deeply. He turned to the gathered disciples, saying, “Are you all listening? This is valuable experience.”

Fu Jiannan nodded in agreement with Shifu and said, “I recently heard that a famous martial artist named Ma Weilaing has come out of Honghuabu near the border of Shandong. He has studied Bagua Palm and founded his own school. This person is not very old, but I have been told that he is very powerful. Has Shifu heard about this person? People are saying that his master is Xiangyang Liang Zhenqing.”

After listening to this, Master Chen sadly said: “On the Yangtze River the old waves urge forward the new waves. A new generation replaces the old. I don’t know any of these people you have mentioned. As for me, I can’t talk about martial arts anymore. Since ancient times heroes have been known while they are young, I am fifty-nine years old this year. I’m getting old!”

All of the disciples spoke out loudly together saying, “Shifu is not old!”

Fu Jiannan made a toast to the master with a smile and said, “Why did Shifu say this? Even if a tiger does get a little older, ambition is still there. In gongfu older martial artists are often better. Youngsters in the martial arts world may have impressive skills, but their confidence is exaggerated, and their art is not refined. When they meet a really strong opponent, their skills are outmatched because they lack experience.

Master Chen smiled and nodded knowingly. He turned to Fu Jiannan and said happily, “Historically in our martial arts, the senior teacher is respected. It is because of gongfu that he has reached the higher level. After all, he has profound and unique knowledge, and is widely versed. There is a moment of humility. The disciples go out of the school, trek into the martial world, and follow the master’s admonitions. They would never dare to challenge others. In recent years, I have often encountered difficulties and always dealt with them easily. It seems that no one in the martial arts can fully depend on the skills under his hands. He has to also observe being polite and friendly so that he won’t have problems everywhere he goes. However, there are really angry people out there sometimes. There is one kid that I have heard of who is very odd and who tells ridiculous lies. His eyes are very strange and unlike anyone else’s. It’s very unusual. When you talk to him about gongfu, it is as if all the words are very sacred, like he is listening to the Tao. He talks with eyes closed. It is difficult to refute him in front of a large crowd and it’s really unbearable.”


The disciples were all listening intently. Fu Jiannan said, “I have met a ridiculous guy like this at the home of a gentleman in Jinan. He dresses up like a martial artist clown on the stage; when he talks about gongfu, it is almost like soaring above clouds and flying through fog. The ancestor of Wang Chan is his grand master. He is so ridiculous that he makes the martial arts experts almost laugh off their teeth, but he is not ashamed. Guess

“Historically in our martial arts, the senior teacher is respected. It is because of gongfu that he has reached the higher level. After all, he has profound and unique knowledge, and is widely versed. There is a moment of humility.”





## STEALING BOXING



what? He is trusted by the house and has received much respect.” Fu Jiannan turned to his younger gongfu brothers and said, “Young brothers, when you meet this kind of person, What should you do?”

Fang Zishou said quickly, “Just make a joke with him and say, ‘true or false, let’s fight a match!’ This would reveal all of his lies.”

Master Chen made a heng sound (Humph) and said, “So, this is your answer.”

Fu Jiannan said with a smile, “Fourth brother is still like that.”

Master Chen asked, “Still can’t change the old temper?”

**“ He was confused, and arguing with the Wudang newcomer. The fight started in front of many people. After only two moves, the guy fell down on his butt and said ‘ouch!’ ”**

Fu Jiannan continued, saying: “Fourth Brother is still so young. Remember what happened? I remember Shifu’s words at that time. I was also joking, and had followed and held him all the way. He was confused, and arguing with the Wudang newcomer. The fight started in front of many people. After only two moves, the guy fell down on his butt and said ‘ouch!’”

The disciples burst into laughter.

Master Chen said, “Recently, the styles of the martial world have diverged and some promote themselves. However, the more accomplished you are, the less conspicuous you are. The ones who show off themselves are often those who have no roots. As far as tai chi, bagua, xingyi, and Shaolin are concerned, the traditions of these boxing families can be very complicated.

These four families are far from being close. Division and separation within their own schools causes them to start to split up. The main branch of Shaolin, Shenquan (Super Fist) was originally from Fujian Putian, Dengfeng, There is also Shaolin in the South China Sea and Shaolin in Emei. So many are fighting and arguing with each other under the same roof. Look at Confucianism, there are not such things as this there!”

Tan Yongnian laughed and said, “There are also schools of Literati Confucianists, Tongcheng, Yanghu Literary School, Jiangxi Poetry School, Prosperous Tang Dynasty, Late Tang Dynasty, Middle Tang Dynasty ...”

Before Tan Yongnian finished talking, the little brother Zhu Ruifu stood up in a joking way and said,

“Do they also want to compete? Are they going to join in?” Seventh disciple Qu Jinshou quickly spoke up next, “Bring out the ink brushes to spar for a while! Throw ink bottles, it’s fun!”

Master Chen had a big laugh and said, “You young people don’t understand anything, there’s not even half a bottle of vinegar in your stomachs, you joke about other people, what do you know?”

The disciples couldn’t help but blush. Zhu Ruifu sat down, his face red from blushing. He said, “I only know how to play with blades, spears, staffs, and batons. The art of joking, I know nothing about it.”

Master Chi Chen said, “You also know how to eat! Wushu is two words. Do you dare to say that you understand?” He took a good look at the disciples. All of them were very energetic. When it came to real gongfu, the potential of the eldest disciple was really not bad, but his family was poor and he had to go out to work. The fourth disciple’s family was





the best, but his talent wasn't great. The third and fifth disciples were fine, but they were a bit slow to catch on sometimes. Seventh disciple Ying Wu and eighth disciple Cu Hao were good, but they unfortunately could lack courage and patience at times. The second disciple was the most pleasant. He had good family resources and he loved to practice. He also had a calm personality, but his parents were aging and sick, so he had to leave the teacher's door early to go home to help his parents. Talent is a rare thing, and it is not easy to choose an apprentice. Master Chen thought to himself, "Who can carry on my family arts?"

The oldest disciple spoke up and said, "Shifu, although Shaolin has many different factions that often disagree with each other, they can rely on the famous names of the Fujian and Songshan factions. The Shenquan and the Eighteen Arhats have become more and more refined and they have spread out widely to north and south. The Bagua and Xingyi schools however have become less and less known lately. Will they continue to endure? It's like taking one step at a time.

The eighth disciple Zhu Ruifu said, "Big Shixiong, you have been abroad for many years, and you have seen a lot of things. Why don't you talk about the strange things that you have encountered in the martial arts world? Please enlighten us!"

Fu Jiannan smiled and said, "I've tried to pay attention to the world of martial arts, but most everything I know comes from what Shifu told me. The Shaolin four factions are very popular now, and our tai chi style has also been growing in the north recently."

Master Chen's spirit seemed to refresh after hearing this, and he replied, "Does our tai chi style also have successors in the north? Who is known to have skill?"

Fu Jiannan said, "There are no famous people, but more and more people are interested every day. The reputation of our tai chi system has been rising day by day since teachers have opened up and are teaching. Unfortunately, there is some ignorance among certain factions concerning the unique skills in our style. Those who are not able to study it sometimes have a jealous heart and claim that tai chi in Henan is not the true lineage of the Wudang Tai Chi.

Master Chen said, "Oh! Where do these rumors come from?"

Fu Jiannan replied, "It was actually the warrior from the Dengzhou Mansion in Shandong who took this point of view. His name is Hei Niu Mitan."

When Master Chen and his disciples heard this, they looked at Fu Jiannan together and asked, "Who is that?"

Fu Jiannan looked at Master Chen's expression, and then said, "I myself went to Dengzhou Mansion and visited this famous teacher. Sure enough, he actually used tai chi's good name and advertised himself as part of the lineage. I made up my mind not to show my true self and only pretended that I had come to his door to learn the art.


When we met, I spoke with him a little and I saw that this is the kind of person in the martial arts world who is teaching students for money only. This kind of person should not be taken seriously. There are many rumors of his skills and techniques in the martial arts world, but it seems likely that these rumors




**“ I myself went to Dengzhou Mansion and visited this famous teacher. Sure enough, he actually used tai chi's good name and advertised himself as part of the lineage. I made up my mind not to show my true self and only pretended that I had come to his door to learn the art. ”**



## STEALING BOXING



originate from him. I went to him and asked to see his techniques. When I talked to him afterwards, I made a small suggestion as to how he could improve. I could tell after this that he hated me to the marrow of my bones. He assumed that I was coming to challenge him, and he forced me to compete with him. He dared to use the technique of long fist, which he changed around in order to deceive amateurs. Also, the first form he used was changed into a tai chi-style 'grasp the bird's tail'. The fourth form, 'roc spreading its wings' was changed to the "white crane trembling" of tai chi, and the retracted form was changed to tai chi's "tai chi diagram". It seems that the whole form is totally based on the changquan (long fist). It's clearly not legitimate, but he's so arrogant that no one dares to criticize him.




Master Chen frowned with disapproval. Fu Jiannan continued saying, "I realized that with this kind of shameless person, I had to teach him a lesson. First, I used the "big red fist" to entice him and allow him to show his skills. Then I unfolded tai chi chuan's moves and started to follow him. I touched hands with him and at the same time began directing him in order to teach him a lesson on the real tai chi chuan. I used only one move, "apparent closing up", and with this, I threw him down to the ground. Then, I told him that this was the real tai chi chuan, the Chen Family Martial Art that is from Chen Jia Gou (Chen Village). As he dusted himself off, I said, "If you have time, you can go to Chenjiagou. Master Chen is now retired but he still has several apprentices who are willing to give advice."

The group of disciples who were listening to the story said, "Well done! Did he say anything else?"

Fu Jiannan said: "He naturally had some shameful words to say. After he fell down, he



**I realized that with this kind of shameless person, I had to teach him a lesson. First, I used the "big red fist" to entice him and allow him to show his skills. Then I unfolded tai chi chuan's moves and started to follow him. I touched hands with him and at the same time began directing him in order to teach him a lesson on the real tai chi chuan.** ”



bitterly said, "The green mountains and flowing water will not change. Three years from now, you will be talking about my master, Lu Wu. You will want to come see my skills with your own eyes!"

Master Chen said, "Do you still remember the techniques he used?"

Fu Jiannan replied, "I think I could recall most of them, although his boxing moves seemed to change erratically as he performed them. I may have forgotten a few, and they may not be consistent."

Master Chen said, "It's okay. I would like to see which moves he used. You can only perform what you remember, so show me what you can."

Fu Jiannan got up and went outside. He walked out into the empty training field to show Master Chen the strange techniques of Hei Niu Mitan. ☯



This video features  
**MASTER ZHAXI**  
 (1932-2019)



[https://youtu.be/2\\_YD\\_s86GOQ](https://youtu.be/2_YD_s86GOQ)

She is from Qinghai, Tibet, and her Tibetan name is written as Tashi in English. She was born in 1932 and began to study tai chi in 1974, at the age of 42, when she was desperately ill, suffering from rheumatoid arthritis and later lung cancer. She was taught by Zhao Bin, a senior disciple and nephew of Yang Chengfu. Tai chi saved her life and her health improved dramatically as a result. She began serious study of Yang style of Tai Chi Chuan.

Tashi would practice 6 – 8 hours a day. In 1986 Tashi received 2nd place in the first National Yang Style Tai Chi Competition. After the death of Zhao Bin, she furthered her studies in Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan with Yang Zhenji, Yang Zhenduo, and the famous Fu Zhongwen. She became the first Tibetan tai chi master ever, and was widely recognized and much celebrated. Link and bio provided by Gang Huang



All tai chi chuan enthusiasts are invited to submit articles, letters, and pictures for publication. Both critical and complimentary letters concerning the form and content of this journal are welcome. Please send correspondence in electronic format to: editor@yangfamilytaichi.com

2020 © International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association.

Association. Any reproduction, in whole or in part, of the herein publication, is strictly forbidden, without the written authorization of the publisher.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
YANG JUN

EDITOR  
EDWARD MOORE

ASSISTANT EDITORS  
BRUNO REPETTO & JOSHUA NEUHAUS

PROOFREADING  
JOSHUA NEUHAUS  
BRUNO REPETTO  
SUSANNA WEGNER

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
MARCO GAGNON

CONTRIBUTORS  
HAN HOONG WANG  
BILL WALSH  
ANDY LEE ZALCMAN  
SUSAN SMITH  
PAT RICE  
JOSHUA NEUHAUS  
JIM PAYMAR  
GIUSEPPE TURTURO  
KEN NING



**HOME OFFICE**  
P.O. Box 786, Bothell,  
WA 98041 USA  
Ph: +1 (425) 869-1185  
yangfamilytaichi.com

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Chairman  
**GM. Yang Zhenduo**

President  
**GM. Yang Jun**

Secretary  
**Fang Hong**

**PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY BOARD**

Therese Teo Mei Mei  
Angela Soci  
Claudio Mingarini  
Audi Peal  
Pat Rice  
Carl Meeks  
Nancy Lucero

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Fang Hong**  
VP Administration

**Pam Boyde**  
VP Operations/Executive Manager

**Han Hoong Wang**  
VP Instruction & Standards

**Ray Tom**  
VP of Policy





# 2020 SEMINARS

## SEPTEMBER 4 - 6

— Weston CT, USA —

**TTM-1, The United States Teacher Academy Headquarters National Event**  
Master Yang Jun live streaming virtual seminar on tai chi theory, fundamental exercises, and instruction in tai chi gong.

Academic classes on anatomy and biomechanics of the lower back and hips, and tai chi pedagogy will also be offered online. The dates for these two classes will be announced.

For more information please contact  
Mari Lewis  
[mari@yangfamilytaichi.com](mailto:mari@yangfamilytaichi.com)  
mobile: 203-247-7326

## SEPTEMBER 18 - 20

— Cuernavaca, Mexico —

**SWORD FORM**  
Contact: Daniel Corona  
Phone: +52 5556735682  
[daniel@yangfamilytaichi.com](mailto:daniel@yangfamilytaichi.com)  
[www.kungfu.com.mx/](http://www.kungfu.com.mx/)  
[calendario-de-eventos-2020/](http://calendario-de-eventos-2020/)

## OCTOBER 10 - 13

— Siegen, Germany —

**OCT. 10 - 12 • HAND FORM**

**OCT. 13 • PUSH HANDS**

Contact: Uli Hoffmann  
Phone: 49-271-22550  
[ulihoffmann@taiji-schule-siegen.de](mailto:ulihoffmann@taiji-schule-siegen.de)

## OCTOBER 16 - 18

— Rome, Italy —

**INSTRUCTOR SEMINAR**

Contact: Claudio Mingarini  
Phone: +39 347 363 5333  
[claudio@yangfamilytaichi.com](mailto:claudio@yangfamilytaichi.com)

## OCTOBER 29 - NOV 1

— Toulouse, France —

**OCTOBER 29 • PUSH HANDS**

**OCT. 30 - NOV. 1 • HAND FORM**

Contact: Thierry Huguet  
Phone: +33 675 038 283  
[thierryhuguet@yangfamilytaichi.com](mailto:thierryhuguet@yangfamilytaichi.com)  
[youtu.be/2m-L7YSSdeQ](https://youtu.be/2m-L7YSSdeQ)

## NOVEMBER 7 - 8

— San Ciprián - Lugo, Galicia, Spain —

**HAND FORM**

Contact: Miguel Angel Rojo  
Phone: 0034 670 24 95 54  
[budo@newstyle.e.telefonica.net](mailto:budo@newstyle.e.telefonica.net)

**NOVEMBER 10,  
PRINCIPLES CONFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER 19 - 22  
ESSENTIAL FORM**

— Sao Paulo, Brazil —

Master Fang Hong  
will lead this seminar  
Contact: Angela Soci  
Phone: +55 11 991822692  
[angelasoci@sbtcc.org.br](mailto:angelasoci@sbtcc.org.br)

**YANG FAMILY  
TAI CHI**

