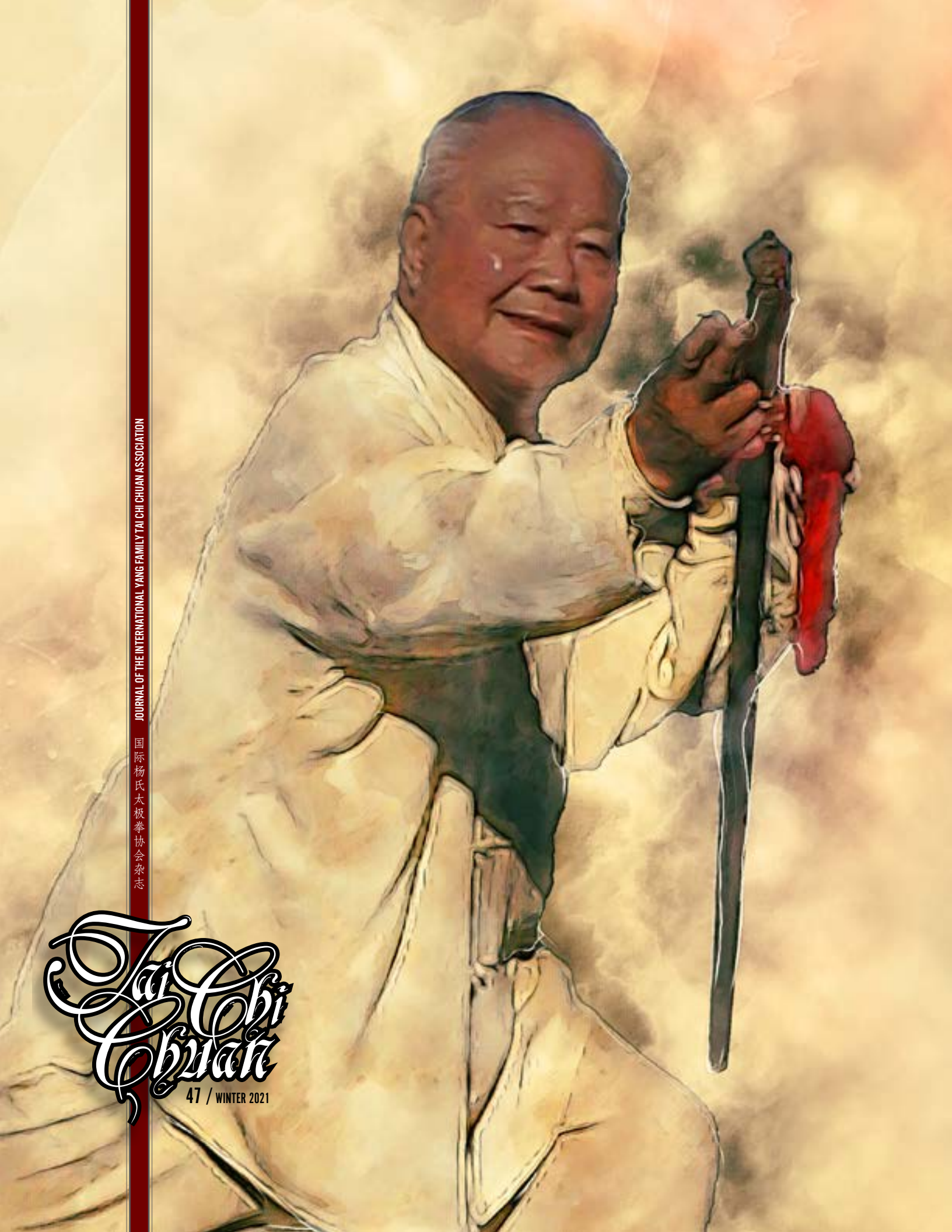


Tai Chi Chuan

47 / WINTER 2021





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TAI CHI



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President's Letter



YANG JUN, President
Transcribed by Edward Moore

The first thing I would like to mention is the pandemic that started at the beginning of last year. The pandemic has blocked normal life for us to teach seminars and classes. It has changed our lives but I really appreciate all the members and instructors who continue to support our association. Even though the pandemic has been challenging, the various alternatives to remain in touch have been helpful within this difficult time. We came together to encourage people and to help them feel better by creating several online events. First we created the online Fight With Covid 19 events with over 50 instructors and volunteers teaching and performing online. We also began to run virtual classes to try a new method to remain connected with tai chi practitioners. In July we started to plan for an online tournament. This was not strictly a tournament, but also an attempt to bring more people together, to involve more people, and to help to bring people's spirits up. This event involved people from all continents. More than 1000 were invited to attend. We really hope that this event helped people through this challenging time.

2020 has also been a difficult year for me. A lot has happened. We originally planned for August to be my grandfather's 95th birthday celebration. We planned for him to have a good birthday and to celebrate the 30 year anniversary of our first trip together to Virginia to teach. Pat Rice put a lot of energy into organizing this event starting over a year and a half in advance. We wanted to celebrate this first trip to Virginia because it was a key moment and a great influence. It started as a journey to North America but it helped Yang Fam-

ily Tai Chi spread throughout the world. It was the beginning of a new era for sharing Yang Family Tai Chi to many places outside of China.

This pandemic is sad, but even worse, my grandfather passed away November 7th and this made me feel very hurt in my heart. The most hurtful part is that, in that moment I could not travel back to China to meet him one last time. Also, I could not even say goodbye after he passed away. Many of you probably know that after I was born I grew up with my grandparents.

“ **My grandparents are the ones that nurtured me growing up and not only did they nurture me, they actually were the ones leading me into tai chi. My grandfather taught me this art and throughout the years he also led me in this direction.** ”

My grandparents are the ones that nurtured me growing up and not only did they nurture me, they actually were the ones leading me into tai chi. My grandfather taught me this art and throughout the years he also led me in this direction. I became a professional teacher in tai chi and my family lives in the world of tai chi all because of him. When he was there he was always the one that supported me and helped me whenever I had a difficult time. I feel he was my god or my sky. He helped me to block any of the storms that were there. Now that he passed away I lost the one who was supporting me and protecting me. I couldn't even go back to say goodbye to him. This makes me feel hurt in my heart. For the rest of my life I will feel sorry about it.



“ Everyone has a beginning and also an end. My grandfather lived a very good life, especially in his older age and his later moments. ”

Everyone has a beginning and also an end. My grandfather lived a very good life, especially in his older age and his later moments. China opened up during my Grandfather's life and he had opportunities to spread tai chi to the world and meet many people from many backgrounds. He used these connections as a bridge to spread tai chi to every continent. He also contributed his time to tai chi and made a lot of contributions to human health. He nurtured and educated me in tai chi and in our family art, and because of him I have direction in my life. As for the ancestors he also did well. My grandfather can go very well to report to the ancestors. Not just for carrying on the art and spreading it to more locations, but also because he passed the art on to me and also to many disciples and students. He lived a successful life and he can have a good report to the ancestors. In our culture we say you will have a summary of your life to your ancestors and see whether you did good or not good. I also believe he really lived and had longevity and made contributions to the people's health and to Yang Family Tai Chi. His personality was gentle and it was my model to learn from. Even as he has passed away, many people will remember him and he will be living in many people's hearts. I believe it, and I am happy for him too.

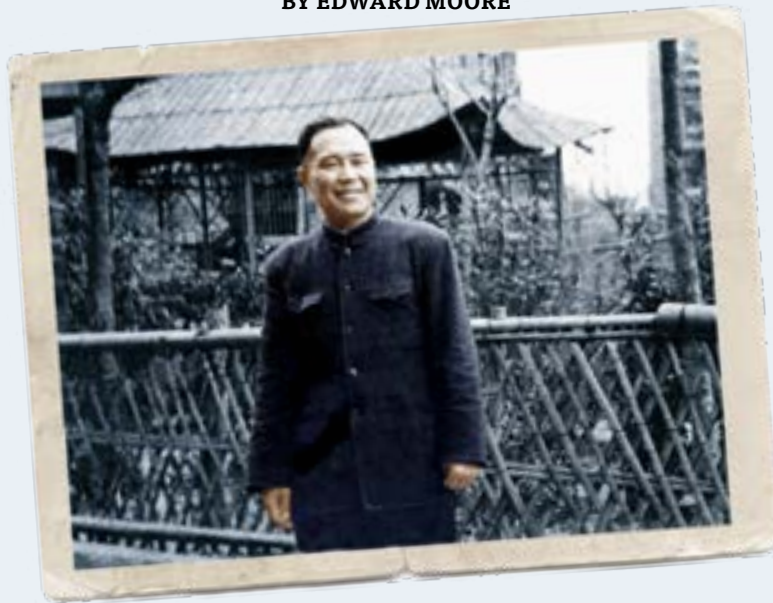
This year we also made a new version of the Director's and Instructor's Handbook. Thanks to Ray Tom for making this happen. Also thanks to Pam, Han, Martin, and Anna for online event help. Thank you all for continuing to do this in this special moment. My mind has really not stopped thinking of my grandfather, and I really wish that I can be back soon to visit him and to bring flowers and be close to him and talk to him. This is my wish.

Right now this is the beginning of a new year and I hope everyone is staying safe and bringing the spirit up. Many of our instructors are in a challenging position and I hope the new year can bring them good feelings and raise their spirits. Hopefully with the coming year everything can turn to a better direction. Good hope is what we are thinking of. I really hope that we can be back to our normal life. We will also still try to do online teaching and everyone can be in touch online.

I would like to wish everyone safe and well, and to bring the spirit up and enjoy the new year. Happy new year and I wish you all the best!

REMEMBERING ZONGSHI

MASTER YANG JUN INTERVIEWED
BY EDWARD MOORE



Edward Moore: Hello Shifu. We are here to talk about your grandfather, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, who recently passed away at the age of 95. Your grandfather spent his whole life helping people benefit from Yang Family Tai Chi and was loved and respected by our tai chi family. His hard work and dedication has touched countless lives around the world. Today, many of us remember your grandfather as a kind and patient teacher that cared deeply about sharing Yang Family tradition with the whole world. Thank you for joining me today to remember and celebrate your grandfather's important legacy. You were raised by your grandparents from a young age. Are there any memories that you would like to share about your grandfather with us?

Master Yang Jun: My earliest memory is based on a story my grandparents talked about from the time when I was young. They told me the story when I was older. When I was nearly two years old, if I remember correctly, China had some issues with Russia and all the government organizations moved from the city to the county. It was probably around the end of the 1960s. At the time I was living with my grandmother, and my grandfather lived in a different location, probably about 50 kilometers away. On the weekends my grandfather often took a bicycle to visit my grandmother and me. I could not talk yet, but every time he visited I recognised his face. Through my actions they could see my joy and happiness to see him. They often talked

“ To me respect from the heart is more important than respect from the mouth. People should not worry too much about that part. My grandfather just passed away, and inside of my heart feels hurt, but from another angle to see he actually did live a long life and at the end really did have joy in life at his senior age and he really made a lot of contributions from his teachings to many people. ”

about this when I later lived with my grandparents. Another story, not from memory but from what I know, when I was one year old my parents took me to a photo studio to take a photo for my first birthday. Even today I still have that photo. This is my earliest memory that I have of my grandparents. After that, I went to elementary school and every year they took me back to the studio to take a photo. At that time taking a photo was not something everyone could do. These are some of my earliest memories. After that I have a memory of visiting my grandmother nearby, actually about 50km away, and all you could do is ride a bicycle for 2 or 3 hours. I remember the moment I visited my grandfather. I started to have memories at this time. They went out to practice in the morning, his work colleagues. The sun was very bright in the morning in springtime and all the surrounding area was farmland. This is quite a clear picture. That is the moment I started to practice tai chi with my grandfather. I also remember my first leather shoes when I was 5-6 years old. At the time of my birthday my grandparents took me to the store to buy my first leather shoes. I got a children's sized soccer ball and my first toy gun. These are some early memories from when I lived with my parents. One part I remember is how I understood that I was different. Most of the children my age, they all had parents visit them, but I was with my grandparents. In China, the culture of addressing people is different from the West. They often address friends of parents as “uncle” and “aunt”, but because I lived with my grandparents I addressed everyone as grandpa and

grandma. I wondered why I was different, and what the reason was for me to live with my grandparents. At an early age I had a lot of these questions. I also remember in kindergarten, I was... I don't remember exactly, it was probably 1973-74 at that time. I was actually alone because my brother had not been born yet and I was in kindergarten and my grandmother made me perform tai chi for some shows there. At that time I thought no one knew what tai chi was and everyone looked at me like it was strange. These are part of my earliest memories.

EM: Did as many people practice tai chi in parks at this time?

MYJ: At that age I don't remember any parks. We were in the countryside. I went to elementary school in 1975. In 1973, we moved into the city. Before I was 5 years old I had not seen a park yet.

EM: Many of us in the West are not very familiar with traditional Chinese customs. How can we respect and honor your grandfather's memory? Also, is there anything that we should avoid doing that would be considered disrespectful according to tradition?

MYJ: You know, there is something in the culture from China which is, if we understand the Chinese culture from the point of view of respect, they have a different way of addressing people. Like in the West they have a different way of addressing the people in the culture if someone is more respected than you, we generally use a respectful address for them. I also understand that

culture is different everywhere. If people don't understand, I don't mind. If they are feeling respect in their heart it is the same thing. To me respect from the heart is more important than respect from the mouth. People should not worry too much about that part. My grandfather just passed away, and inside of my heart feels hurt, but from another angle to see he actually did live a long life and at the end really did have joy in life at his senior age and he really made a lot of contributions from his teachings to many people. When his father passed away he was young and that was a difficult time. It was a time of war, and he could be lucky and survive and he was able to continue the family legacy, and this is an important part. And he also did the most promotion of tai chi not just in China but he was the first to spread Yang Family Tai Chi to the world. From this perspective, he did have a meaningful life because he made this contribution. He will live in many people's hearts and he will be part of history and people will remember him for this. He is the one our generation should learn from and see as a model for the tai chi family.

EM: You mentioned the traditional term of respect. Can you talk about this?

MYJ: Yes, my grandfather is from the 4th generation and his passing is the last of the 4th generation. We use the term "Zōngshī" (宗师). This means family ancestor teacher. It is similar to the English language term "grandmaster". We never use this term for someone until they reach this level of respect, and we should be cautious in using this term.

There is no one else with this term besides my grandfather. It is reserved for people of a certain age, contribution, and qualification.

EM: Shifu, What you do think is important to remember about your grandfather's life and legacy?

MYJ: I already talked about part of this. I think my grandfather's legacy is important in two areas. One, he continued the art through the family because his father passed early. It was important that he continued the art, since his brother did not actually teach many people or travel, and he only taught some private classes. His second older brother who stayed in the Han Dan area (you visited there) was limited to that location. His younger brother, the 4th brother, started training later after he retired from work and his contribution is also somewhat limited. So this was part of his contribution: to carry on and spread the art in the teaching association. My grandfather is the one who was outstanding and he made the family more standard. He made important contributions to Yang Family Tai Chi. He carried on the art, he passed it to the next generation, and he made me continue on. This was part of his journey. This is important. From my perspective inside the family, if we did not have this contribution, It could be the end of the family. He also later taught my brothers. He is a very important link in continuing and carrying on the tradition. Also his teaching is more complete and his personality was more gentle and friendly. The most important part is his open heart. He doesn't really care about being famous or perfect. He didn't complain

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“ He said that all tai chi chuan, we are one family. First, he wanted to do more spreading of tai chi chuan to benefit more people. He also wanted every tai chi player to help us move in the direction of promoting the art more and benefit human health and wellness.”

about what he should get or didn't get. He didn't ever complain about what titles he didn't get. This is one part that taught me and many other people also learned from it, and I think people respect and learn from him and dedicate their life to follow him. Never complain about the profits, keep an open heart, be friendly and treat people nicely. This continued and many followed him... now we have the pandemic. The pandemic limited people from coming to the funeral. Even so, there were hundreds there. Even so, people really wanted to say goodbye to him and carry on his path and have the opportunity to say goodbye to him.

EM: Your grandfather brought thousands of people together from many different cultures and countries to share Yang Family Tai Chi. How can we continue to build on the relationships that Yang Zhenduo Zongshi created?

MYJ: Yes, this is one of the important contributions from my grandfather. The time now is actually different from before because modern technology and modern transportation have brought the world closer and the world opening up gave him opportunities to step out and teach overseas. He was the first family member to be able to travel and teach. Because of his teaching he really had the opportunity to meet a lot of people who had different cultural backgrounds. One part of his way of respecting all different cultures' backgrounds was to use tai chi chuan as a health exercise like a bridge to connect people together and build everyone into one family. He has two kinds of

saying that are important. The first is that he wished that tai chi chuan could do more to contribute to human health. Second, he said that all tai chi chuan, we are one family. First, he wanted to do more spreading of tai chi chuan to benefit more people. He also wanted every tai chi player to help us move in the direction of promoting the art more and benefit human health and wellness. This is the direction and the meaning. Also he wanted us to be unified and build close relationships to be one family. We are all from one root and together so we should be one family together. This is the direction that he gave us and all that we chose to do is carry on what his will was and unite people and cultures. To unite people for the wellness in their lives and continue to treat everyone as one family. You didn't hear my grandfather saying anything like, "that family is not good". Everyone is good, and we are proud of our family, too. We hope that everyone can be promoted together.

EM: Shifu, your grandfather lived a very long life through some difficult times. What advice do you think he would give us about staying strong and healthy in our own time?

MYJ: His difficult moment was when his father passed away when he was young. Soon after his father passed away the war started in China which put everyone in danger, including him. In this kind of situation, you don't know if you will survive or not. He went to a military academy, one of the famous ones called Huángbù jūnxiào (黄埔军校) It was a little like Westpoint Military

Academy in the US. He joined the military academy and then later quit and became a civilian and tai chi teacher. His difficulty was in the early days. Each day he didn't know if he would survive or not. At this time they only had one pair of clothes for all four seasons and in the winter weather the equipment was very limited. Things improved over time, and in the 1980s China opened the doors to the world, tai chi spread, and as the economy got better, people looked to keep their health and exercise. He was travelling and received a lot of respect from the people he taught and the way that he contributed. So, I will say that his early life was tough and when he reached the senior age he reached more respect and had more joy in his life. For us, he is a good model to study because not many people are remembered today regarding WW2. There are not many people alive who had those experiences. At that time you didn't know whether you would be alive the next day. He went through difficult times.

That's also in my lifetime when I feel the difference. The biggest change when I moved to the US was that I didn't speak the language and did not have friends. I was in a totally new area in Seattle with no connections. It was difficult for me, but my grandfather always encouraged me, saying, "the difference is there, but the difference will pass, and when you pass the difference a nice future is waiting for you". He always told us that the nice future is coming for you. It can be learned if you can continue passing through the difficult moments – there

will be hope for you. The first couple of years after I moved to the US, I really felt different. I don't know if I should stay or return, and Shimu wanted me to go back. I looked at the letters from Shiye and I didn't want to return before having some success. Success for the international association, from the supporters. Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan is a success overseas. A lot of this success is because of my grandfather's courage.

EM: You have made it your own life's work to follow your grandfather's goal of spreading Yang Family Tai Chi around the world. What do you feel still needs to be done at this time?

MYJ: After I moved to the US twenty years ago I started to do a lot of work to spread Yang Family Tai Chi throughout the world, but there is one point missing. This is not just for the art itself, but to join together China and the rest of the world. The saying goes "tai chi comes from China, the root comes from China, but it belongs to the world", but how can we make the world one family? From just the tai chi point of view we should be one family; you are not a foreigner. In the future we would like to be more like one family. We have different backgrounds but from the tai chi point of view, we are one family. We are united in this art. This is the mission we can do. Promoting tai chi is always our essential goal. How can we bring everyone together through the culture? We need to think about how we can do it. When I say we, I mean everyone. We need everyone to contribute. One person alone can't do it. ☯

“ In the future we would like to be more like one family. We have different backgrounds but from the tai chi point of view, we are one family. We are united in this art. This is the mission we can do. ”



ALL SCHOOLS OF TAI CHI AND WUSHU ORGANIZATIONS *mourn the passing of* GRANDMASTER YANG ZHENDUO

The Yang family's great master of our time and grandson of Grandmaster Yang Luchan died at home early in the morning of November 7, 2020. He was 95 years old.

He left; martial artists grieve! Without exception, teachers from all schools express their deep condolences over the loss of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo. Below follows an excerpt of electronically recorded statements by teachers and organizations of the martial arts world.

The Chinese Senior Sports Association Taijiquan Special Committee, Jiaozuo City Sports Bureau: We are in anguish about the passing of this great master of our time Yang Zhenduo! His moral virtue was outstanding, his distinguished name will be everlasting. Though his body is no longer here, we still hear his voice and see him in front of us. His martial skill is known throughout China. We express our deep grief for the great master of a generation Mr. Yang Zhenduo! We hope that the family members will stay strong in their grief!

Yu Gongbao: I am deeply sorry to hear that Mr. Yang Zhenduo has passed away. Mr. Yang Zhenduo has passed down and promoted tai chi throughout his life, while making irreplaceable contributions to the development of tai chi culture. He is a model of contemporary tai chi and

paragon of the unity of practice and knowledge. The death of Mr. Yang Zhenduo is an irreparable loss in the development of tai chi. My deepest condolences!

Chen Xiaowang: I was shocked to hear that my shishu (shifu's shidi) and great master of our time, Yang Zhenduo, passed away this morning. I am grieving deeply. On behalf of the Chen family and all its students and disciples, I would like to express our deep mourning and sincere condolences! This man's whole life was to relentlessly further the cause of tai chi, his contributions were remarkable, and he deserves to be regarded as a role-model for future generations. That he passed away is a great loss to the world of tai chi. I expect that family, friends and disciples are in deep sorrow and hope that they will take good care of themselves and each other.

Chen Zhenglei: I was pained to learn that Master Yang Zhenduo passed away this morning. I am very sad. That this great master of our time has died is a huge loss to Chinese tai chi! On behalf of the Zhenglei Tixi (体系 tǐxì: system) of Chen Family Tai Chi, I would like to express my condolences to all the disciples and family members! And I hope that relatives will restrain their grief to take care of themselves!

Sun Yongtian: It deeply saddened me to hear that Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, the leading figure of this generation's wushu passed away. In the name of all members of Sun Family Tai Chi I wish to express our deepest condolences. Mr. Yang Zhenduo is the main inheritor of Yang Family Tai Chi and a monumental personage of contemporary tai chi. For the health of humankind, he promoted the development of tai chi to the world and made outstanding contributions. His death is a great loss to the realm of wushu. Mr. Yang Zhenduo was kind-hearted and generous, both a scholar and martial artist, morally as well as artistically superb. He is a role model of tai chi and wushu that is to be venerated by future generations. Even though Mr. Yang Zhenduo has left us, his spirit and ideals of martial study remain, making him an eternal model to our studies. Eternal repose to Mr. Yang Zhenduo! All members of Sun Family Tai Chi express their deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Yang Zhenduo.

Ma Hailong: I deeply grieve the passing of the head of Yang Family Tai Chi and great master of our time Yang Zhenduo. In the name of the Wu (吴) Style Shanghai Jianquan Taijiquan Association and the name of our president Ma Wenzhao I express our profound sorrow! I also extend our sincere condolences to the family of Yang Shiye.

Gao Jiamin: The great master remains with us through the tai chi that he promoted and by his moral character and artistic achievements!

Chen Bing: I was shocked to learn that the famous and honorable Mr. Yang Zhenduo whom we loved and respected has died. I cannot help but to sorrowfully mourn him. To me it is the loss of the greatest guiding force in tai chi. I hope that his family will restrain their grief and that future generations forever remember his manner of virtuous morality. Carry on united and earnestly practice the Chinese spirit of tai chi to bring glory to the world!

Zhang Yongtao: (a grandson of one of Yang Chengfu's students): I grieve over the death of grandfather Yang Zhenduo! He is a great master of our time and has achieved immortal fame! I wish grandfather a peaceful journey!

Zhu Tiancai: I was shocked to hear that Master Yang Zhenduo passed away this morning. I am very sad. That this great master of our time has died is a huge loss to Chinese tai chi! I, Zhu Tiancai, in the name of "World Zhu Tiancai Taijiquan

General Committee, Chen Village Tiancai Taiji College” and all its disciples and family members express our sincere condolences. I also hope that his family members restrain their sorrow and take care!

(“Translators note: / TN: 节哀 jié'āi” 节哀 To restrain one's grief. A formal way of comforting at a time of loss.)

He Youlu: I was shocked to hear that Master Yang Zhenduo passed away this morning. In the name of the inheritors of He Style Tai Chi I would like to express our condolences. I also hope that Master Yang's family members and successor restrain their grief and yield to the changes.

Ding Shuide: Eternal repose to Yang Zhenduo Shishu!

Zhai Weichuan: I was shocked to hear that Master Yang Zhenduo passed away this morning. I am very sad. That this great master of our time has died is a huge loss to Chinese tai chi! In the name of Wu (武) Family Tai Chi associates and disciples I express our deep sorrow! A peaceful journey to him! I also hope that his family members will restrain their grief and take care of themselves!

Hebei Wang Qihe Taijiquan Association: I was shocked to hear that Mr. Yang Zhenduo has passed away. I am overcome with sorrow. Mr. Yang Zhenduo came from a family that has practiced tai chi for generations. His great-grandfather was Yang Luchan, his grandfather was Yang Jianhou and his father was Yang Chengfu. He was famous for his martial arts, and the whole world knew him. His eldest brother was Zhenming, the second eldest was Zhenji, and the fourth was Zhenguo. They all received their family's education from a young age, studied relentlessly and carried on their family's heritage, winning universal acclaim.

Mr. Zhenduo was born in troubled times and suffered many hardships. But no matter if luck was for or against him, in his heart he held himself up high from beginning to end, never losing his will to spread tai chi culture. To promote the health of the people was what he regarded as his duty. Ever since he founded the Shanxi Province Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association in 1982, the number of tai chi students in Shanxi and their level of martial skill were at the whole nation's top. In 1998, he supported his grandson Yang Jun in establishing the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association in America, which came to play a central role in the international spreading of tai chi. Mr. Zhenduo taught in person, published monographs, and had students across the world.

He was awarded the Ninth Duan of Chinese Martial Arts by China and was a member of the first expert committee of the National Wushu Research Institute. As a master of tai chi he was awarded the title of “Honorary Resident” of San Antonio,

Texas, USA. In Troy, Michigan, USA he received the “Golden Key to the City”. Mr. Zhenduo was very approachable, gentle, open-minded, and highly reputable. He is called the great master of a generation among martial artists and a model to the next generation.

Eternal glory to Mr. Yang Zhenduo!

Wang Xi’an Martial Arts Research Society: We are deeply saddened and overcome with grief by the passing of Mr. Yang Zhenduo, the fourth-generation Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan master. Mr. Yang Zhenduo was the main successor to Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan and a monumental personality of contemporary tai chi in general. He made outstanding contributions in developing and passing on tai chi. He is furthermore an old friend of Chen Village and witness to its development while also having maintained friendship with the Wang Xi’an Martial Arts Research Society over many long years. Mr. Yang was kind and benevolent, highly moral and aesthetic. He is a model of martial arts and a model of teaching that is to be respected by the future generations. Even though Mr. Yang Zhenduo has left us, his spirit remains eternally, granting its gift to posterity. The Wang Xi’an Martial Arts Research Society and all its colleagues express their sincere condolences to his family. Eternal repose to Mr. Yang Zhenduo!

Hong Kong Zhao Youbin Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association: We were shaken to learn of the death of the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan fourth generation lineage holder and great master of a generation Master Yang Zhenduo. Hong Kong Zhao Youbin Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association and all its colleagues express their deep grief and sincere condolences to his family members. Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and our association’s honorary president Zhao Youbin as well as our head coach Zhao Liang shared a family-like friendship. They were of the same breath and branches sharing a deep connection. Grandmaster Yang has promoted the tai chi cause throughout his entire life, never shying away from hard work, and sowing the seed for ages to come. Now he has suddenly died and the world of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan faces a huge loss. Fortunately, there are his successors ready to take on his will and to continuously and courageously carry forward Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan on the road to the benefit of the community. We hope that the Grandmasters family members will restrain their grief and yield to the unavoidable changes. A peaceful journey to you Grandmaster!

Zhong Zhenshan: I am deeply saddened to learn of Mr. Yang Zhenduo’s passing this morning. In the name of Zhong Zhenshan Wu (武) Family Taijiquan System, all its disciples, family members and members of Yongnian Wu Family Taijiquan Research Society I wish to express our sorrow and grief. I also hope that your family members will restrain their grief and yield to unavoidable changes to take care of themselves. Grandmaster may you rest in peace, eternal repose to you!

Beijing Xuande Wushu Team: We were shocked by the death of Mr. Yang Zhenduo, the great master of a generation of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. The Beijing Xuande Wushu Team and all its friends are deeply saddened. Grandmaster bore his ancestors' wishes, promoted tai chi, and spread it across all of China. His departure is a tremendous loss to Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. Grandmaster, we can still hear your voice in our ears and see you in front of us, your name will go down in history. We wish Grandmaster a peaceful journey!

Xianyang Yongnian Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association: We were saddened to hear that the great master of a generation Mr. Yang Zhenduo died unfortunately. We at Xianyang Yongnian Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association and all our members are deeply grieved. Senior Yang Zhenduo has spent a lifetime carrying forward and spreading Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. He has made painstaking efforts to sow the seed for ages to come. He became an outstanding representative and model of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. We sincerely express to you our deep grief about Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and extend our heartfelt condolences to Grandmasters family members. We will forever cherish his venerable memory. Grandmasters name is everlasting.

Liang Shouyu (Canada): I was surprised to hear of Master Yang's passing! In my heart I will cherish his memory. He truly bore himself like a grandmaster. May he leave in peace! He will be remembered forever!

Wu (吴) Style Taijiquan Professional Committee of Beijing Wushu Association: We were shocked to learn that Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan 4th Generation Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo has passed away on November 7. We are very sad and express our deep grief! Mr Yang Zhenduo was the main inheritor of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan and a monumental personage of contemporary tai chi. He made exceptional contributions to the development and transmission of tai chi and that he left us is a severe loss to the world of Wushu. Mr. Yang was kind and benevolent, highly moral and aesthetic. He is a model of martial arts and a model of teaching that is to be respected by the future generations. Even though Mr. Yang Zhenduo has left us, his spirit and achievements in martial study will forever enrich the martial world and be a source of inspiration to future generations. Eternal repose to Mr. Yang Zhenduo!

Haikou Traditional Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association: Our hearts ached when we suddenly learned that Yang Zhenduo Shiye died. Mr. Yang Zhenduo was kind, courteous and broad-minded. His martial skill was superb, and he taught with tireless zeal spending a lifetime on the transmission and promotion of tai chi. He made indelible contributions to the health of humankind and was a model of contemporary tai chi. We wholeheartedly thank Shiye! Thank the Yang family! We feel terrible having lost Shiye! We wish Yang Zhenduo Shiye a peaceful journey! ☯



Françoise Desagnat

MEMORIES OF GRANDMASTER YANG ZHENDUO

How could we possibly say how important Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo is to all of our lives? “Zōngshi” is the traditional title of respect for Master Yang Zhenduo, which means “master of great learning and integrity”, and great learning and integrity only begins to describe his impact on our world. Zongshi worked his entire life to promote Yang Family Tai Chi, and each of us is directly affected by his efforts each time that we practice tai chi. Every day of our lives that we further our tai chi journey is connected to the compassionate teachings of Zongshi. His influence first encompassed our teachers and then us. I first chose to study with Master Yang Jun in Seattle because I was immediately impressed with his character. Of all of the martial arts schools that I had visited and taken classes in, I had never encountered a teacher who so immediately made me want to be a better person. Better each class, and each day. I also knew that this feeling would last a lifetime. Shifu taught me to never speak badly of other martial-arts schools, to avoid petty arguments and contests, and to always stay focused on the positive aspects of our training and tai chi culture. The most important things that I learned from him, as the weeks turned into years were not about martial techniques, but about character, honor, and intention. The times that I was able to learn from Shifu’s grandfather, Zongshi, It was immediately clear where Master Yang Jun had inherited this kindness and strength. It seems remarkable in a modern world where seniors and young people are more disconnected than ever before that Zongshi and Shifu could have such a strong and direct connection through tai chi chuan. Zongshi’s life goal was to create a world family through tai chi, and we are all connected together today as proof of his success. In the future, it’s up to all of us to support Master Yang Jun as he continues to carry out his grandfather’s work, which is so close to his heart. Because of the pandemic, it is difficult for us to meet, so, as journal editor, I have asked disciples and students of Zongshi all around the world to come together here by sharing thoughts and memories of this great teacher who will always be an inspiration to us all.

Yang Yade, Edward Moore

I first studied with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo (Shiye) in July 1998. I traveled down to Winchester Virginia for a week-long seminar sponsored by Pat Rice. It was amazing! Shiye's teaching was captivating and thorough. His energy was invigorating. I knew then that this was the teacher that I needed to dedicate my studies to. For the next several years I continued to study with Shiye when I was able to travel to see him. I was fortunate to attend the China trip in 2005 for Shiye's 80th birthday celebration. The dinner in his honor in Taiyuan was spectacular. It was a very memorable evening, honoring our grandmaster and being with good friends.

After the birthday celebration, we traveled north to Wutai-shan in Shanxi Province. We were graced with Shiye teaching class the next morning after we arrived in Wutaishan. Master Yang Jun (Shifu) translated for him. Shiye used Guiseppe Turturo quite often that first morning to aid in demonstrating the movements in the Long Form and to give corrections when needed. Shiye always seemed happiest when he was teaching tai chi to his students. On the second morning there, after we had practiced the long form, I went to sit down up front to get a good view of Shiye teaching. Shiye had said something to Shifu and then I heard Shifu calling someone up to the front. My roommate, Robb Wagg was the one to tell me that I was being called up to demonstrate. I got up, went to the front and I thought, "Wow, Grandmaster is calling me to demonstrate!" Then I turned around and realized that everyone was looking at me. "Oh, no, Grandmaster called me up to demonstrate!" To say I was a bit nervous was an understatement. Shiye asked me to demonstrate from "crossed hands" into "embrace tiger, return to mountain", then into "fist under elbow". I did my best and went through the moves. When I finished, he asked



me if I was nervous. I replied yes and he said not to be. He then said that generally I did well, please do it again. This is when the lesson for me began. As I went through the moves a second time, he would stop me to make corrections and explain how to improve. He did not criticize, yet was firm in his corrections. He was gentle and encouraging. I performed the moves one last time, doing my best to stay calm and incorporate the corrections Shiye gave to me. When finished, I could tell he was genuinely happy with my improvements by his smile. Shiye's smile was infectious. He beamed of positive energy that made everyone around him smile too. It was truly an honor to have such a special experience with Shiye. While very public, a "private" lesson like that is a very cherished moment. We were ever so lucky that Shiye was a knowledgeable tai chi practitioner, a wonderful teacher, and a gracious, gentle soul.

Michael Coulon (Yang Yahua)

Center Director, Manchester New Hampshire Yang Family Tai Chi Center

Although we did not have the privilege of meeting Grandmaster Yang Zheduo in person, his legacy and enlightenment have touched our lives deeply and in a very positive way. As we embarked only recently in this personal growth journey of a lifetime of learning tai chi, the Yang Family's values and teachings have given us purpose, reflections, and direction for our family to embrace this beautiful practice physically, mentally and spiritually. We wish Master Yang Zhenduo a beautiful journey onwards as his legacy lives with us forever!

All the best

Roberto Manjarrez,

on behalf of the Manjarrez Martinez family in Mexico



We are saddened to hear that Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo has passed away. Since first meeting him in 1993, we were grateful for these last decades to attend his workshops both in the USA & China, his teachings of tai chi chuan will always remain in our hearts and memories. We continue to teach his lessons of knowledge and in remembrance of his wisdom, kindness, and patience to our current students. May your spirit rest in peace, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, with your ancestors in the sacred heavens.

With great respect and thankfulness,
 Andy Lee,
 Inner Disciple of GM Yang Zhenduo
 Students & instructors of Taichiusa/Yang Family Tai
 Chi Center in NJ, USA

GRANDMASTER YANG ZHENDUO

Memories: ***What should I share?***

By Andy Lee Zalcman (Inner Disciple of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo)

What should I mention?

What should I share?

Should I mention?

In 1993, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun were in my home.

Also, in 1994 and '95.

Should I mention?

In 1996, I was in their home.

At 6 am Master Yang Jun taught me the sword.

That, in the remaining parts of the day, Shifu taught me. Shifu and

Shimu fed me. Asked questions. Got answers.

Should I mention that Shifu asked me what I wanted to learn?

Should I say my answer was... "I said one move."

What should I mention?

What can I share?

So many special – Special moments.

Teaching me the Chinese names of my fingers and laughing together

as tears filled our eyes ...

Memories that bring a smile to my face and tears to my heart.

Shifu taught me to be aware when you leave this earth that you have made a difference in the lives of other people, a positive difference.

And YES!!

Shifu accomplished that.

We are a living example of that positive difference.



Nanna, as Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo called me, capturing the sound of my name Anna in a mix between An and Na.

Working hard alongside Claudio Mingarini in 1998, we brought Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and his grandson Master Yang Jun to Italy, organizing from 8th to 14th June the first Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan seminar directed by Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun in Italy.

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo taught for 7 days with extraordinary dedication, he wanted everyone to learn. Everything about him communicated, the gestures, the facial expressions, the words (I almost seemed to understand Chinese!) The energy he emanated.

“One more time” he said, and we repeated the sequence, we repeated, we repeated many times, always guided by the commands sung by his powerful and matchless voice. Those commands still guide my practice today, they resonate within.

Not only did I participate in the seminar, I was also at the forefront of organizing and managing every aspect of the event, including the menus. I remember that Master Yang Zhenduo showed his appreciation for Italian cuisine, he was intrigued by our way of cooking and eager to know. I took a risk, moved by a feeling of love that filled me with joy, I asked the hotel kitchen to prepare typical dishes of the Italian tradition. I wanted to let the Grandmaster know everything. One day I discovered that he liked ice cream. Since then I made sure that there was always ice cream at the end of the meal! After a trip to Rome, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun together with Claudio Mingarini dined at my house. On that occasion he told me about the zhacai zha-cai (榨菜) which in China is used in soups and gave me the recipe (obviously the interpreter was there) We took a picture all together before the greetings, the ones that had to be printed to see them.



Meeting Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo changed my life, and so it was for many: he left in everyone a spark of his light that he knew how to infuse with the simplicity that the great masters have. Always with a smile, the same one that I find in my heart when the echo of his commands guide my practice and he calls me Nanna.

Thank you Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo
Anna Siniscalco, Yang Yamei



My first seminar with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was in July 1996 in New York. From there I began to follow him around the world.

After so many years it is difficult to remember exactly, but I think I took about thirty seminars with him, including private classes, in six different countries, in about 15 cities.

After sharing hotels, breakfasts, lunches, dinners and seminars year after year, at the seminar in Sweden in 2004, I said to him, thanks to Mei Mei's translation: “I will be grateful all my life for your teachings.”

Anyway, after that time I took a few more seminars with him in China and at the Symposium in Nashville in 2009.

In 2006, as Director of the Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Chuan Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I had the honor of being able to present him with a bronze plaque in commemoration of the 70 years since the disappearance of his father, the great master Yang Chengfu, next to his grave in Yongnian, China.

On that occasion, Master Yang Jun and two colleagues, Dave from the United States and John from Scotland, were also present, as well as the person I believe cared for the graves of the Yang family, including the grave of Grandmaster Yang Luchan, patriarch of the family Yang, who was also in that place.

Claudio Palacios, Director
Yang Family Tai Chi Center,
Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo in New York City

We mourn the death of a great man who selflessly carried out the duties of the Fourth Generation Tai Chi Master of the Yang Family. Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was a great tai chi chuan master and many will write about his skills as a martial artist and his ability to teach. I would like to write about the other aspects of his life that I found compelling. My focus will be about his character and the ways he expressed his humility, compassion, and forgiveness. He was always showing Master Yang Jun how to be an ambassador outside the classroom as well as in the classroom.

Starting in the 1990's he traveled the world bringing Yang Family Tai Chi to the far ends of the earth. His drive to spread the art was enormous. He traveled to the United States and held seminars in Michigan, Texas, and New York. He went to Brazil, Italy, France, Germany, and Sweden. Besides being a very taxing schedule, he always knew how to adapt to the different cultures he was visiting. He knew how to be himself and to act appropriately wherever he was. Whether he was being interviewed on the radio in New York, being introduced to the Mayor of Detroit, or communicating with students who didn't speak the same language, he always made them feel better after they were with him. He trusted his hosts to help him with his mission to bring tai chi chuan to the world. He believed that the more people around the world practiced tai chi chuan, the more peaceful and harmonious the planet.

I would like to relay some of the stories from his visit to New York City. I lived in lower Manhattan, in an area called Soho, which was bordered by Little Italy and Chinatown. Little Italy was slowly shrinking and Chinatown was consistently expanding. The actual events I will relay happened over several days but I

will string them together to create a story of experiences we had together. Grandmaster Yang and Master Yang Jun arrived a day or two before a seminar in order to adjust to the time zone and to rest from the travel. Usually, one day would include some sight-seeing.

One such day we started off by visiting the Egyptian exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in midtown. We viewed statues and sculptures from the "Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids." From there we took a walk in Central Park, which is a beautifully planned park almost three miles long and a half mile wide right in the middle of the city. It had big lush green meadows, children's parks and a lake. The masters were happy to see people relaxing and enjoying the fine weather. Some walked their dogs, while others rode their bicycles or tossed a frisbee. New York can be so intense and the Masters were happy to see it had a pressure valve.

From here we took the subway downtown to have lunch in Chinatown. A New York subway ride is one of the most diverse environments in the world. In one subway car, you will see people from China, Africa, Mexico, Europe, and South America. As the train moves along, it shakes, bumps, and sparks. It is hard to hold a conversation sometimes and you find yourself looking at all the different kinds of people. Sometimes someone is performing by singing or playing an instrument. If you are with others, it can be hard to verbally signal them it is time to get off, that our stop is coming. Without thinking I did what I usually do. I squeezed the knee of our Grandmaster to let him know we had to get off. Immediately I knew nobody had ever done that. He looked at me a little funny and then smiled, realizing I was giving him the signal to depart.

In Chinatown, we went to Shanghai Joe's. Ruu Chang, a seminar colleague of similar vintage as our grandmaster, and who grew up in the same area of China as our teacher, was my advisor and helped me to act appropriately in hosting Grandmaster Yang. Ruu said, "You must bring him to Shanghai Joe's and order a few serving of their shrimp and pork dumplings". As usual, this was good advice. We were close to the big B&H Electronic stores so Master Yang Jun was excited to have a look at the latest products. We all tried to hold a video camera as still as we could but Master Yang Jun was the best! A few years later, we were hosting a seminar at Hofstra College on Long Island and Ruu invited the Masters to another Shanghai Joe's. We had eight servings of these special dumplings.

On the way home we stopped in Little Italy. We were in a store that had three-foot long salamis hanging from the ceiling. It specialized in different cuts of meat. While we were viewing the choices, I lost my balance and tripped. I actually trip a lot since I have nerve damage to my left foot. I went barreling into GM Yang Zhenduo and I just went rolling up his body. He never moved and I never moved him. This was probably another first. Again, he looked at me funny and smiled.

Across the street there were carts and tables with the fresh vegetables of Chinatown. As we looked them over our teacher decided he would cook for us. It was fun watching him looked over the spices and crushed leaves in his fingers or rolled them in his palms and then smelled them. He cooked shrimp and noodles with Chinese vegetables. It was great watching his knife skills as he chopped the vegetables.

After, as we were sitting around, Horatio Lopez got a telephone call relating that his father had died. When Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo realized what had happened, he came and sat with Horatio. He showed his concern and listened as Horatio spoke. He then told us that he remembered when his father had died and how hard it was to lose a father. It was a tender moment.

In the morning I was up before everyone and decided to practice the form. As I approached the third section, our grandmaster came down the stairs to have breakfast. When he saw me doing the form, he stopped and watched me. It was a solemn moment. I felt it was not about me but that he was representing his ancestors and honoring how far and wide the practice has spread. When I had finished, he gave me a correction, and we went to the kitchen for breakfast.

It was a pleasure to be a host and sponsor their visas. It was an extraordinary chance to witness an off-duty grandmaster. He made it easy. He made everyone comfortable. He told us in class not to be pointing our finger at ourselves and he modeled his own beliefs. He was caring and compassionate and gave equal time to students of all skill levels. He loved traveling to excite the world about his family's art and always directed attention to his ancestors. He was equally looking forward to going home to his beloved wife, Hu Ruidi, and his Chinese community.

Bill Walsh



And so another spirit steps through the veil into the garden of the ancestors.

Just by the lotus pools, his place awaits.

Cherry blossoms carpet the ground.

His spirit is free and near.

In our hearts and minds our memories of Shiye are dear.

Cindy Frusha



Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo memories – First seminar in Italy, June 1998.

The first time Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo came to Italy was a great event for us that we had been dreaming and preparing for years.

We had chosen, near Rome, a special place, a sports village, on a hill in the green, with a beautiful and particular panoramic view of a natural oasis that could be seen in the plain with woods, lakes, and rivers, surrounded by green mountains.

On the first day he arrived in Italy, after a long trip from China he was very tired, very serious and spoke very little. When we got to Alviano (a beautiful medieval very little town), the place of the seminar, it was already dark and it wasn't possible to see anything, much less the surrounding landscape.

I, Claudio Mingarini 杨雅仁 Yang Yaren, as the organizer of the event, Anna Siniscalco 杨雅梅 Yang Yamei, who helped me a lot in organizing this first event in Italy, and all helping instructors, were very worried in being able to guarantee an excellent stay in a special place, as well as in organizing a successful seminar.

The following morning, when at dawn Grandmaster Yang was already practicing tai chi chuan on the terrace of the hotel together with Master Yang Jun, he could finally see in all its splendor the colors, the mountains and the surrounding woods, with the beautiful oasis downstream with an incredible variety of fauna and flora that lived there and flourished naturally.

His wonderful smile returned to illuminate his face and in the same way his good humor seemed to be increasing day by day generating a general growing enthusiasm of those present, coming from all over

Italy and different parts of Europe, North and South America.

In addition to the magnificent seminar that we followed, entranced by the beauty of tai chi chuan and the mastery, clarity and depth with which it was taught, we were all deeply grateful to Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo for the availability and welcome he showed towards us. The same was true with Master Yang Jun.

Then, after a few days of seminar, with a growing familiarity and enthusiasm on the part of all, one evening after an outdoor buffet, organized with all the participants on the large panoramic terrace of the hotel, at the beginning of a wonderful sunset, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, certainly aware of the great affection and respect he was surrounded by, began to tell us life stories and anecdotes full of profound teachings of wisdom that left everyone fascinated and to listen to him in full participation.

After more than two decades the memory of those moments and those words remains more alive and precious than ever, as well as the memory of those unforgettable moments that continue to warm our hearts.

After also reciting pieces from the Peking Opera House (where he had studied when he was young) and talking for over an hour, he asked us in a cheerful and affectionate tone if we wanted to say or do something.

Gradually, still enchanted by the tales and the way of doing and being of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun, the people sitting on the ground around him got up and, together with all the others

who were listening sitting on chairs or standing, started thinking about what to do to express their joy and gratitude. Trying to find common points to share with the others on what to do, most of the present were protagonists of a moving natural explosion of joy and they began to do funny things, jokes, singing songs, etc. Dancing and playing in honor of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun who were enjoying the evening perfectly at ease, serene, smiling and having fun.

Many beautiful and also funny things happened in the colors of a wonderful unforgettable sunset. In the following days, opportunities for sharing continued, thanks above all to the availability of the Master who, with great joy for all, dedicated and shared so many precious moments with us that will remain forever in our hearts.

In 1998, thanks to the mastery of the Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun and their generous availability, the first seed of what would later be a splendid new spring of the Yang family Tai Chi Chuan in Italy was planted, with a progressive growth in quality and quantity up to have today 4 Yang Chengfu Centers, various Affiliated Schools and numerous Centers where traditional Yang family Tai Chi Chuan is taught with over a thousand practitioners.

We had the great honor, together with Giuseppe Turturo Yang Yayi 杨雅毅, to host Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo in Italy together with Master Yang Jun four times.

I wish, with deep gratitude, to thank Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo for his great and generous heart, mastery, humility, humanity, and brilliance of spirit that characterized his whole life, spreading a teaching something that goes far beyond the technique and that has changed my life and that of many others.

Claudio Mingarini



I met the Grandmaster on the 2007 China Tour in Yunnan, following my teachers at the Yang Chengfu Center of Roma; on that occasion I was captivated by the great personality of Grandmaster Yang and the rare ability to transmit the essential through his teaching. Then luck brought me to him a second time: in 2014 I was in Taiyuan for work, and there I had the honor of meeting again the Grandmaster and his family, thanks to the interest of a colleague, as his mother is a disciple of Grandmaster Yang. I was welcomed into the house of the Grandmaster and his wife and Master Yang Bin and his wife.

They welcomed me with great warmth and sincere naturalness and kindness, it was a wonderful meeting. The grandmaster answered a few questions about tai chi chuan: even in the private version he showed a wonderful magnetic energy that captured all the attention. I told him about the sincere affection and trust towards the Yang family that my teachers Claudio and Anna transmit to us. I showed them photos and brought a message of gratitude from his first Italian students of Roma, from the first to the last generation. The wife of Grandmaster Yang was very nice and loving, offered us tea and cookies and treated us like family guests. I will always be grateful to the grand-

master, his wife and the whole family for the warmth, generosity, and the ease with which they welcomed me. I keep a sweet and strong memory of that moment, as was the teaching of Master Yang Zhenduo.

Master Yang Bin and his wife were present at the meeting, so next Sunday I practiced the form in the public park next to him along with hundreds of Chinese practitioners, with the guidance of the voice of Master Yang Zhenduo. For me it was a great joy, and it was very exciting to be able to share the practice even without speaking.

Costanza Longo, Roma



We are very fortunate to have met Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo. He was a very humble, down-to-earth man with a good sense of humor and a gentle, warm personality. We are so grateful for his vision and willingness to share his gift of tai chi chuan to the world! With great respect, love and wishes for his peaceful rest. Our heartfelt condolences to Master Yang Jun's family and to all the Yang Family Tai Chi teachers and practitioners.

Our Best,

Donna Yee and Calixtro Romias
Stockton, CA, USA Yang Chengfu Center



I have been a tai chi chuan practitioner for 14 years. In 2009, when I started learning from the Yang Family, I heard a recorded CD of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's voice for the first time as he called each movement of the 103 Form. The sound of his voice was my first inspiration: firmness, precision and a leading voice of love for the tai chi art all at the same time.

All my teachers have always referred with deep respect, love, and admiration to Grandmaster Yang. I am thankful for the generosity of the association and translators for the publications in the magazines with all the rich interviews and Grandmaster's writings that are available for our continuous learning. It is great material that takes us closer to his thinking and to his person.

I saved for four years to fly 19,000 kilometres from Argentina to China (with a low level of English and alone) and unaware of many things, but absolutely expectant to share the tour and 4th International Tai Chi Chuan Tournament on July/August 2012. That was an amazing experience! It opened the doors to a new dimension for me. Meeting Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and all the teachers, instructors, brothers and sisters in tai chi from around the world...the trips, the culture, the geography, the most gratifying experience of feeling among family. It was also the date of the Master Yang Jun's Fifth Generation Disciple ceremony. It seemed incredible to be in that impressive room with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, sharing his great-grandson's birthday party and

then his own, where I didn't have the courage to get closer to shake hands, but I admired his happiness, simplicity and behavior. I was excited to be so close to him in the incredible group photo with several hundred people! During the tournament, I contemplated the way that he warmly looked at us, together with his wife and the big tai chi family. He walked so closely to where I was so I could take this photo. It was like this!

The experience in that trip marked my life and I will always keep his wise smile in my heart as an absolutely inspirational source. I will remember his look, his love for the art and culture, his sensibility and warmth, his tai chi chuan mastery, the mission that drove him to invite everyone to develop virtues and turn into better humans!

Master Yang Jun, what happiness to have such a grandfather! With all respect, feel the warm hug from all of us. The great tai chi family offers you comfort, and let's you know that Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo will always be accompanying you on your way.

Fabiana Silvano,
Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was an excellent master and a great example of a supreme human being.

I first met Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo in 1999 when he came to Brazil with Master Yang Jun for the first time to minister the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan seminar in South America.

At that time I used to practice another Yang style of tai chi chuan, but during that seminar I was delighted with the attitude, teachings and humbleness of the Yang Family masters. After the seminar, I decided to go deeper, follow and teach only the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan tradition.

After that first contact, I participated in other seminars with him in Brazil, China and the USA. Those were very

special experiences with a lot of learning, but two events were more remarkable for me: in 2005 in China, during the celebration of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's 80th birthday, when we were graced with a tai chi chuan seminar with him in the Wu Tai Shan Mountain, an inspiring and beautiful place; and in 2015 also in China, in celebration of his 90 years, an enriching, transforming and unforgettable experience.

His indescribable contribution in the tai chi chuan world, in martial arts and in our lives will remain forever. His generosity, ethics, wisdom and humility honor and inspire the martial arts universe and all of us who knew him, admired him and tried to follow his life example.

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's legacy and precious teachings will continue to benefit millions of people around the world. His smile, simplicity and wisdom will remain in our hearts forever. He has become an immortal and his legacy will be eternal.

I appreciate the opportunity of having known and learned a lot from that true master, it was an honor and a privilege. I wish Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo to continue his journey of light and wisdom in peace, as he has always lived.

Xiexie, Shiye!

Fernando De Lazzari,
Yang Yaxin 杨雅信

I heard many stories about the incredible life of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo from people who have personally known him. His absolute concentration and dedication to disseminate and share throughout the world the treasures of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. A few years ago I met Master Yang Jun three times and I was pleased to recognize in him the same vocation and mission.

Thank you all. Believe in yourself and trust in your abilities.

Frances Goods,
Italy

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was a wonderful person who possessed a great spirit. He left a huge legacy and an important mission. With a smile he will see the great Yang family and its leader, Master Yang Jun, committed to making it happen. A warm hug to Master Yang Jun and all the great Yang family.

Giordano Caltagirone

Beginning in 2004, I had several opportunities to spend time in Taiyuan training with one of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's disciples, Yao Junfang. While there, I attended a workshop, held in the parking lot of a strip mall. A new store opened with the obligatory firecrackers, but the grandmaster continued his teaching unphased. Every Sunday, I would attend his classes in Yingze Park. At that time there was a CD of Grandmaster Yang calling out the moves to the 103. After returning to my home in Michigan, I would begin each day by practicing to the sound of his voice, which remains with me long after I have worn through several CDs.

Initially, my Chinese was limited and I misunderstood the time that the afternoon session of the 2004 workshop was



to begin. As a result, I missed out on the group picture. But Grandmaster Yang agreed to the attached photo, taken with Yao Junfang and my friends in Taiyuan, all of whom would become his disciples in 2005.

Glenda Liu Quarnstrom



There are meetings that can change your life. Sometimes it's difficult to recognize them and usually we only understand it after some time. The one with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was one of those and when I first met him I immediately had the perception of having met someone really special because of the energy of his being and his big heart. I first met him in Stoccolma and I can easily say that in that moment my life changed. In fact, I started practicing the Yang family Tai Chi and I began the journey that, in 2012, brought me to become Master Yang Jun's disciple. I will always keep in my heart the memory of a wise and polite man who was very traditional but always with an open mind.

One of the greatest of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's qualities was his ability to put everyone at ease. When I was with him I always felt like I was at home even if I was kilometers far from my house. Talking with him, I always had the feeling of being listened to and understood. I suffer a lot from this loss, but it has been a real honor to have the possibility of practicing with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and honor to receive his teachings.

Giuseppe Turturo

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was not only a grandmaster but he was a great human being.

In 1988 I learned the 103 Form. In 1994 I took over the courses from my tai chi teacher, Mrs. Vietta.

After I was asked to teach some courses, I felt I had questions and needed to find out more about the Yang style. My colleague, Martin, suggested that I visit Frank Grothstueck's course in Cologne. This led me to my first meeting with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun in 2001. At this seminar there were many participants who already knew the Grandmaster. For me, it was the first time. This was my first meeting ever with a grandmaster. I instantly felt great trust in him. In Cologne, he showed us the traditional Yang Style.

One of the most memorable experiences I had the honour of making was during that very first course. The master asked for someone to come forward to check their stand. No one came forward as they all had simply too much respect and awe for this great man. I was so happy over his declaration that I would "make the right decision" regarding my courses in Wiesbaden, I was also simply unaware at that time what and who this grandmaster was, that I volunteered and went forward.

He told me to stand well and stretch out my arm. Then, he pushed down on my arm with his energy. I had the feeling I was sinking deeper and deeper into the earth, so great was his energy. He said: "good, good". When he

was finished, and I should lower my arm, I couldn't. It remained stretched out and he laughed, and pressed it gently downwards. An unforgettable memory.

Another time, at a tuishou seminar, he had noticed that I had no idea of what I was doing in the partner exercise. Yang Jun watched us and he must have been puzzled at how unknowledgeable we were. Actually, I had not wanted to go to the seminar, knowing that I needed much more time to understand tuishou. I decided to join the seminar when I heard that Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun were going to be there.

Grandmaster Yang sat at the other end of the gym. He came to me, walking calmly, and then held out his arm for me to practice tuishou with him. In the meantime, my awe for him had grown very deep, but I didn't have any time to let that freeze me up, because he started the exercise immediately. I stayed glued to him and I couldn't believe that suddenly I was able to do it. I thought, now I can do it. Naturally, that wasn't true. I went back to my partner to practice but it didn't work.

I will never forget this energy from the grandmaster, which I clearly and distinctly felt.

It took me years to be good at partner work.

My enthusiasm for this form of body art continues to this day. I feel a deep connection of the heart with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and the Yang Family.

Christa Pfau,

Lehrerin bei der Europäischen TaijiDao Gesellschaft, (ETG) e.V.

Although I lack the personal connection of many of your other contributors, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo has been a long-time inspiration for my tai chi practice. This began back in the 1990s when my teacher, Pam Boyde began playing VHS tapes recorded by A Taste of China of Yang Zhenduo instructing traditional form with a very young Yang Jun demonstrating the moves. Although all instruction was in Chinese, the body language and movements were clear and eloquent. I was extremely excited at the prospect of attending a seminar with both Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun in Seattle in 2003. Alas, this was the year of the SARS epidemic and it was decided that it was too risky for the Grandmaster to travel. But a few years later I had the great privilege of attending the grandmaster's 80th birthday celebrations in China when he came out of retirement to teach us international travellers. The actual celebration was epic, with students and masters from all over China and worldwide putting on an amazing show in a large arena. It culminated with everyone taking to the arena floor to dance at the end, including Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, a very graceful waltzer!



TCY Chief Instructor Pam Boyde with Grandmaster YZD in China.

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo returned to North America for the International Symposium in Nashville, Tennessee in 2009. Pam and I were present for the historic moment when he named Master Yang Jun as his successor, as the lineage holder for Yang family Tai Chi – a very moving occasion. Like all members of our worldwide tai chi community, I was impressed by the grandmaster's warm presence, kindness, and efforts to create an international tai chi family. In this, he has definitely succeeded and left an enduring legacy.

Helene Dobrowolsky

Remembering Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo

My memorial for Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo included a globe of the world and a paper table napkin that the grandmaster had written the sequence and names of his 13 movement form. The globe of the world was to remember his slogan: “make friends around the world with Yang Family Tai Chi” that was on the tournament banner in Taiyuan in 1997. The grandmaster made that slogan true for all of us who followed his teachings around the world and grandmaster always emphasized that he wanted us all to be friendly with one another and treat each other with appreciation and respect. The precious napkin with his handwriting was a perfect example of his generosity and concern for all who studied with him. I think the year was 2000 and I had heard Yang Zhenduo had created a short form with senior students in mind. At dinner, after he had taught a full day of classes at a seminar in New York, I asked him about this form for seniors and he wrote it out on a napkin for me. It was



a perfect example of how he made time for everyone and really cared about answering all our questions. I will never forget what a kind and dignified man he was and how much he influenced positive changes in my life.

Sincerely, Yang Yahui



Deeply cherishing the memory of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo

My heart is heavy, but it is full of many fond memories of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo. I remember his humbleness, greatness, generous teaching, wonderful smile, and wisdom, and the joy he and Master Yang Jun brought us in seminars across the U.S. and in Taiyuan.

I am one of the lucky tai chi lovers who was able to attend Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun's seminars in the United States from 1993 to 2001.

I remember Maryland in 1993. The first seminar, a 12-day workshop on Traditional Hand Form, Sword, Saber, and Push Hands, sponsored by the USA Wushu Academy. As soon as I heard the news, I put everything aside and flew to Maryland. I was very excited to meet Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun.

The first day, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo told the history of the Yang family and explained the Ten Essentials of Tai Chi Chuan.

He then taught in detail and introduced us to the traditional hand form. His teaching was very clear, he demonstrated and explained each posture patiently. His performance is natural, generous, and elegant, enticing all of us. To deepen the student's interest in understanding tai chi culture, when teaching the hand form, saber, and sword, he told us classical legends and stories, and combined them with the names of the postures. Our enthusiasm for learning was high. Everyone was eager to attend the next class.

In Maryland, I participated in 103 form, sword, and

saber seminars for three consecutive years. Grandmaster was very happy to see that everyone came back and progressed quickly. He told us the importance of how to understand the essentials and follow the requirements in practice. He used an old Chinese saying "不以规矩,不成方圆" from Scholar Menzhi: "without a compass one cannot make a circle, without a ruler one cannot make a square." Metaphorically, things must follow certain rules. This old saying generally refers to problems that occur when there are no rules to follow.

He inspired us to learn by analogy. "举一反三, Learn one example to apply to three more"

He told us how to practice without a teacher. In Chinese: 三人同行,必有我师, when three people practice together, there is my teacher. Practice together, learn from each other".

I really liked to hear these sayings that I first learned in elementary school. These are common old Chinese sayings, but they can be used when learning and sharing tai chi and for anything else we do.

He constantly praised and encouraged everyone to progress and raised their spirit. He used the English phrases "very good" and "one more time". He was very kind, always correcting in different ways and always patiently.

With the development of Yang Style Tai Chi in North America since 1996, week-long seminars took place every year, co-sponsored by Yang Chengfu (YCF) centers in Texas, New York, Michigan, Oregon, Virginia, New York, Montréal (Canada), and Buffalo NY.

Grandmaster was the first person in the Yang family to go abroad. As recognition of his contribution, he was awarded the title of honorary citizen of San Antonio, Texas in 1996; the mayor of Troy awarded him with the golden key to the city in 1996, and the governor of Michigan in 1999 honored him with a certificate of appreciation.

Grandmaster was over 70 years old then and long-distance flying is very hard, but after he and Master Yang Jun got off the plane, they just started class the next day in spite of jet lag. Then after completing a seminar in one location, they continued their travels to the next one. He said, "Because of our hard work and dedication, we are recognized by the students, and their support also encourages our emotions. Therefore, whether we are in the classroom or on the road, go shopping, to the restaurant, or to an evening party, we are very happy!" We all felt it. At parties, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo always sang Peking Opera. His voice was so strong and beautiful, he was like a professional opera singer! He also danced very well! Master was versatile, he liked to cook. He cooked bean paste sauce noodles "杂酱面" at my home, his knife skills were very good, he cut vegetables very thin and neat, the noodle dishes were colorful and tasted very good! He loved Chinese brush calligraphy. His calligraphy was as vigorous and majestic as his tai chi chuan. At 70 he told me that he would write better at 80. I saw he was still writing until at 95.

China Trips and gatherings in Taiyuan have been like festivals for tai chi friends from all over the world.

I have gone back to China with my friends, 8 times in Taiyuan, one time in Wenzhou.

The first time our Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo invited us to China was in September 1995 in Taiyuan for a small class of Grandmaster Yang's students, two groups from Texas and Michigan, Bill Walsh from New York, and Dave Barrett from Oregon. Everyone also participated in two international tai chi activities in Yongnian and Taiyuan. I watched the wonderful performance of Teacher Yang Jun and older students and participated in morning exercises.

There was another important event: Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo established Yang Chengfu Tai Chi

Centers. The first three YCF centers selected were Texas, New York, and Michigan.

I felt very honored that Michigan was selected. I also have had the honor to host many of Grandmaster's seminars from 1996 to 2001 to carry out my commitment to promote the Michigan Center and to help spread Yang Family Tai Chi in Michigan and the USA.

In 2002, five thousand people from China and abroad gathered in Taiyuan for the 20th anniversary of Shanxi Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan and Grandmaster Yang Zhen Duo's 75th birthday.

On the front of the venue, the big banner hung high said, "Tai Chi in the world is one family", as advocated by Grandmaster. It was from Grandmaster's generous mind and sense of fraternity. Tai chi is better when the world can appreciate the uniqueness of all tai chi styles.

The festival was very special. We had the rare opportunity to see highest-level performances by grandmasters of the 5 styles. Grandmaster senior students performed. Chinese spectators and masters were very proud to watch 180 foreign students from the Association perform the 49 form, and they gave long lasting applause to welcome and cheer them.

The 1997, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012, and 2015 China trip memories remain in Michigan student's hearts as well as my own. .

Taiyuan events have been great gatherings and fun festivals for all of us. Tai chi links all people and connects all nations.

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo dedicated his energy throughout his life to the spread of Yang Family Tai Chi and sharing of rich Chinese culture with the world. He made great contributions to human health. His noble morals, superb martial arts knowledge, and skills are a model of tai chi chuan culture. His generosity and kindness, selfless dedication, and love of life are our eternal models.

Thank you, Grandmaster. We will follow your noble latest wish to "Unite your energies, help each other, and develop", and we will do our best to contribute in our small way to human health.

弟子, Your student, Han Hoong Wang
11/17/2020

My souvenirs with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo

Many students had the chance to meet Shiye many times in their life as tai chi chuan students. For me, I know it's three times but those three times will always live in my heart.

The first time was very special because it was in Paris in April 2004. This was one year after I joined the International Association, when I attended the International Seminar organized by Duc & Carole Nguyen Minh. As people know, Duc and Carole generally organize this kind of Seminar each year in April, but this one was very special as Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo directed it and it was his last seminar outside of China. What did I keep in my memory about this Seminar? His fajin. When he explained one movement, he showed the meaning just after, and then showed the same movement, but with Fajin. I said to myself "I hope one day I will have this kind of fajin!"

This Seminar was a "very special moment" because as the beginner I was, I met some of the instructors and leaders such as Claudio Mingarini, Director of Roma Center, Giuseppe Turturo, Director of the Milano Center, Frank Grothstueck, Director of Cologne Center, and obviously Duc and Carole Nguyen Minh.

I apologize if I don't mention other Instructors and leaders because at that time I was a beginner in Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan.

Shiye was not familiar with my country, Madagascar but he agreed to take a photo with me and Shifu Yang Jun. To this day, I keep this photo religiously in my tai chi photos.



Three years later, 2007 in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, I had the opportunity to lead a delegation of Madagascar students during the International Tournament of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. As I had bought Grandmaster's book in Paris one year before, I took this opportunity during the "Farewell Session" to take a picture with him and with Grandmaster Ma Hailong. I also asked Grandmaster Yang to put some words on the book.

I am very proud to show you this book because he wrote "Try to practice your tai chi like in this book." This was an unforgettable moment because I remember that before putting his calligraphy on the book, he called for Shifu Yang Jun.

The third time I met Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was some 8 years ago during another International Tournament in which I got the Gold Medal in my category, "Men's Category over 65". It was afterwards that we celebrated Grandmaster's 86th birthday with all the participants. Please appreciate this photo taken during the Anniversary Night Session with Shinai and the Madagascar delegates.

Rest in Peace Shiye,

Yachang Hugues
Madagascar Center

I first met Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo in 1996 at a seminar hosted by Bill Walsh in New York City. I vividly recall my first impressions being "I have finally found the best teacher." I also recall a statement from Andy Lee, whom I met at the seminar, who responded to me saying "I feel like I have wasted 10 years of tai chi study" with a reply, "no you haven't, it has prepared you for a new journey." This has proven to be the essence of my relationship with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo. I was so impressed with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's teaching and knowledge at the New York City seminar that I immediately enrolled in his scheduled summer seminar in Michigan, hosted by Han Hoong Wang. Consequently, I continued my study at every seminar, each time learning more and sensing his teachings settle into my mind and body. This week I reach the age of 81 feeling fit, healthy, and strong, largely because of how I have learned to integrate Yang Zhenduo's teaching, humor, and ethics into my life and personal relationships. His presence remains clearly in my thoughts and my daily practice.

James Fox
Academy Instructor Director Emeritus

I am sad that this great master's life has now come to an end. May I share with you my first impression of Master Yang Zhenduo?

In 2000, I was able to join Master Yang Zhenduo's Seminar in Cologne. At that point in time, I had nearly learned the 103 Form and was still a beginner.

I was deeply impressed by Master Yang Zhenduo who radiated a unique combination of friendliness, power and authority. He was so patient with everyone who asked questions or did not understand - but also very demanding in that we had to follow his movements exactly. His examples of "how not to do" were really funny - so you could remember them more easily.

It was a great pleasure for me to have met Master Yang Zhenduo that early in my "tai chi life" and I have been a member of the association ever since.

Best regards,
Dagmar Berndt



I personally shot these pictures of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo during the 2005 China Trip on the occasion of his 80th birthday at the three day Wutaishan seminar. It was a memorable experience with a remarkable and outstanding teacher that I will always remember,

Warm regards and my sincere condolences for this great loss.

Fabio Guadalupi, Rome Italy
Yang Family member since 2000

My first workshop with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was a decisive moment in my life. I was 24 years old when he came to France for the first time to give a workshop in 1984. I had already been practicing tai chi chuan for 3 years in Paris with James Kou, creator of the first French Federation of Tai Chi Chuan. Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo gave many workshops in France, thanks to James Kou. The teaching of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was a great revelation for me.

He was always happy and smiling, available for his students, answering all our questions. I was captivated by the grandmaster's way of moving. As a young practitioner, seeing his body move with such energy was fascinating. I thought to myself, what a great master! When he explained a movement, his whole body expressed what he meant about the movement. When he answered a question, his soul answered the question. He fully embodied tai chi chuan.

I remember we were a small group during this training and he agreed that we take turns to share lunch with him. It was a great honor for me to witness such simplicity from a human being. I have been attending his seminars each time he returned to France.

Since this first workshop in 1984, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo has always been present in my practice and my teaching. For me, these teachings come from a lineage of masters with which I feel deeply connected. Now I am happy to study with Master Yang Jun in the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan, and very proud to pass on this heritage as head of the Cherbourg affiliated school.

Jean-Yves Foray
Association SPIRALE
Associate Instructor Yang Family Tai Chi School of Cherbourg

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo Shenandoah Valley 1990

To enthusiastic applause Yang Zhenduo and his grandson Yang Jun entered the gymnasium. The Grandmaster had a beaming smile and vital radiant energy. Yang Zhenduo was 65, an age when many Americans retire. It was apparent he was at the top of his game and nowhere near retirement. Yang Jun was 22. At present, Master Yang Jun looks younger than his 52 years -you can imagine how young he looked in 1990. I was 43- we were all 30 years younger.

We are taught in Yang Family Style Tai Chi to do the long form or any sequence with a neutral expression, unlike some martial art systems that prescribe an angry face with dragon eyes. Not that one should be laughing, overly jolly, or grinning. A neutral expression is the order of the day.

Yang Zhenduo gave a demonstration of part one of the long form. I was taken with the smoothness, grace, strength, and also his expression. His face had such a pleasant and serene look, nothing nearing a grin and not really a smile. Certainly not a smiley smile, more of a subtle Buddha smile. I believe Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's "neutral expression" is a Buddha smile, that is Yang Zhenduo's neutral.

I was standing in the "single whip" posture as Yang Zhenduo walked along my row. He abruptly stopped next to me. Adjusting myself into what I thought was the perfect example of the posture, I settled myself into a balanced position, centered and rooted. Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo touched my shoulder with one finger and adjusted my wrist with his left hand. I felt my energy and weight sink to the floor, not to the floor but into the floor. My entire body clicked into place. Everything came together and all felt right, a palpable epiphany. His expression was "neutral". He maintained his neutral Buddha smile but his eyes smiled widely with a knowing twinkling gaze. That moment gave me a small insight into the depth of tai chi. In an instant I knew that there was really something to this art that was deeper than I was aware of, and caused me to become dedicated. He changed my life, all to the good.

I am forever grateful to Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, Master Yang Jun, 5th lineage holder, and the entire Yang family.

Lloyd Kelly

I took this picture at the first International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium in Nashville, Tennessee, 2009. This is one of my favorite photos of grandmaster Yang Zhenduo with his wife. If a picture says a thousand words, for me this one says a thousand words about who he is.

One memory of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo that stands out in my mind is from one of the first seminars I attended in the late 1990's. To present his seminar, Master Yang needed a translator, and at this particular seminar, the translator was an elderly gentleman, Ruu Chang. The seminar started smoothly with Ruu's translation but In the middle of the seminar Master Yang interrupted and very discreetly asked for a chair to be brought in. He must've felt that it was too long for Ruu to be on his feet. Once the chair arrived, Grandmaster again, very discreetly asked Ruu to continue translating from the chair. This small gesture left a huge impression on me. How thoughtful, how kind, how attentive. I felt that



besides tai chi I was learning an important lesson in life; and, without knowing, I was on a lifelong tai chi journey following the grandmasters of the Yang Family!

Mari Lewis, Yang Yaju

A New Dragon From the Sky

The sun rises gracefully under a cloudless blue sky as it does every morning. After I wake up, I calmly prepare myself for my morning hike in nature with my dog Luna who accompanies me. I am fortunate to live near a beautiful stream in nature, which ends up on a large lot where I practice my tai chi daily.

Suddenly my phone rings... I look at my phone screen, rubbing my eyes to see who would call me so early. The screen reads “Yang Jun”, I understand then that there is a time difference and I hasten to answer:

“Hi Yang Jun, I hope you are doing well! What’s up!” It was then that I immediately felt that something was wrong, he announces with a tight throat and his voice filled with emotion: “My grandfather has passed away. I felt all the pain and dismay he was feeling at that precise moment and it brought me back to distant memories as I first met this great man, Yang Zhenduo...”

I was one of the people who helped Michel Trembley organize the grandmaster’s first visit on Canadian soil. I was barely 27 years old at the time and the arrival of a master directly from China impressed me very much. I had worked on all the visual promotion of the seminar, flyer, banner, guide, communications, and advertising. In short, everything that was visual. My sensei was really excited to host such a luminary and he wanted everything to be perfect. The whole tai chi and karate school was in a frenzy, as we expected, more than 100 participants from several countries! This was a first for our small town, where even the mayor of our town came to give a welcome gift to the masters and the event appeared in our local newspaper.

On the morning of the first day of the seminar, I went there by bike because the event was very close to my home. I remember having fallen while climbing a curb on the sidewalk. I scratched my arm on the asphalt and made a wound on my forearm as big as a telephone. This did not prevent me from going there to finally meet this famous great master! I remember the presence and the charisma that this man gave off, “He’s a real dragon” we said to each other, Yang Zhenduo was leading with patience, passion, and vigor, alongside this young master who accompanied him. Yang Jun was 27 at the time, and demonstrated the movements with impressive technical perfection. The seminar was perfect in every way. At the end of this intensive week, I showed many of the effects



of tai chi huan on my body... my injury was completely gone! My skin had regenerated at an incredible rate considering the extent of the injury. Since that day, as we had learned from Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo: “Every day, you eat, you drink, you practice!” These were the circumstances of my first meeting with Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun.

I had the chance to see and know this man better over the years, to make friends in almost every country, and to find that no matter where I went to attend his teaching, he always had the same presence, the same feeling of a dragon standing in front of me, a dragon who always had a smile on his lips and who exudes kindness.

As I write these words, I can’t help but think of my friend for whom, his grandfather held an important place in his heart. I am in thought, in energy with you. Succeeding such a great man must be daunting and difficult. Losing his mentor, his grandfather, and in immense pain. I would like to offer my condolences to the whole family. To the disciples, friends, and students of the grandmaster.

It was an honor for me to design the funeral portrait of this generous man who marked the lives of many around the world.

For my part, I will mark in my diary the date of November 7 as being the day of the three forms: “Once again” I will make my form three times in memory of this great master who shared with the earth the treasure that is the art of tai chi chuan developed and practiced by the Yang Family.

— Yáng lǎoshī zàijiàn —

Marco Gagnon



Dear Yang Family, I was so sad to learn about the passing of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, but I know from his smart smile in the photo that he will be with us for a long time. I did not have the chance to meet him but I spent a long time studying tai chi with his videos, specially those with master Yang Jun, his grandson.

It is nice to see both of them working together. and to see Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo transmit his patience, precision, and kindness.

Thank you Grandmaster! You will stay in our hearts and our minds as an example.

Kindest regards,

N. Moll-Jourde, France



During the time that I lived in China I had the opportunity to meet Shiye, the late Grandmaster Yang Zhengduo on several occasions. The people who loved and respected him always surrounded him while he patiently and kindly talked with them and they took pictures with him. It was in the summer of 2017, a few months after I was honoured to become Shifu's, Master Yang Jun, mensheng 门生 (that is, one stage before becoming a formal disciple), and I went to Taiyuan in order to participate in Shiye's birthday celebrations. Before the main event, Shimu, Master Fang Hong, informed me that a group of disciples were going to Shiye's house to meet him and pay their respects and that I could go. I was very excited. I went to the location and there I met Shifu, Shimu, and a group of my brothers and sisters waiting by Shiye's house. Together we went inside. This was my first time to be so close to Shiye in an informal and family setting. To make the story short, I would like to share with you my deepest feeling from that day in Shiye's house. Before, I had already witnessed that Shiye was very humble and kind, but during my visit that day when I was so close to him, I felt that I was in the presence of a tai chi master known very well all around the world with a lifetime of the highest honours and achievements and respected by millions of people in China and worldwide. Yet he is so humble, friendly, kind and caring like my own grandfather. I will never forget the feeling I had that day. A true master that dedicated his whole life to create a better world through teaching and spreading tai chi, and at the same time being so kind, gentle, caring and humble with a big and loving heart. May his kind soul rest in peace.

Meghdad Abdi

The Master

His motion silk

His step dragon light

No sound no thought

As the world spins

Yang Zhenduo plays tai chi

Without sound or thought

He flows unstopping

Unbound from this earth

Martin Middlewood



The precious memory of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo

From the moment I first met him, seeing his gentle face and that wonderful, calming smile – I knew I was in the presence of a great man. The way he commanded the seminar, the energy that radiated from his body, watching his movements – precision at its finest! Even though he didn't speak English, his teachings and corrections came across loud and clear.

I remember, very distinctly, the first time he visited our Redmond Center – it's one I will remember forever. We were getting ready for our weekly scheduled practice; we all lined up and Master Yang Jun said his grandfather would call out the form. We were in for a treat – a BIG TREAT! The moment he started to call the form the sound of his voice engulfed the whole room and it commanded our bodies to move. We had no choice. His voice consumed every inch of that room. His voice guided and carried us through the form as he called each and every movement. Needless to say, this had a very profound impact on my life.

His life, like his voice, was a supreme example of tai chi – one that has made a huge difference in the lives he touched. Every time I think of him, every time I see his picture - my heart smiles. I will miss this great being. He came into my life, touched it in a gentle, caring way and with his grandson, Master Yang Jun, gifted me their family art form.

Thank you, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo. Your work in this life is now complete. Through your teachings and with the guidance of Master Yang Jun, it is now up to every one of us to carry on your life's teaching so that others will know you and Yang Family Tai Chi as fondly as we do!

I humbly salute you, one final time...

Nancy Lucero
Redmond Center Director

So impressed with the wonderful work that Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo did. His ability to encourage his students, inspire them, and contribute countless hours of instruction for their improvement was incredible.

Upon hearing the news of his passing, I went online to Youtube and did each form with him.

He was a treasure indeed.

Pete Schiot
student of Mike Shunney

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo enriched the ever present and growing spirit of this universe with his kindness and dedication to the teaching of his family art. His legacy will live forever in each one of us that had the fortune to know and learn from him. My deepest condolences to his immediate family and to all the members of the Yang Family community around the globe for the loss of this great human being and father figure.

Richard Vazquez

Heaven Has Smiled on Me

Meeting Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo changed my life. I didn't know such a pivotal point was occurring at the moment of introduction, but I was astonished that somehow, within the first five minutes of our casually translated exchange, I had been accepted as a student and he was giving me his card with his phone number to call for completing those arrangements.

It was 1988, I was in Hangzhou as the athlete member representing tai chi chuan for the U.S. Team competing in the Invitational Wushu Competition, and Grandmaster Yang was attending as an important guest of honor. I didn't know yet who he was, but he was in conversation with Master Jou Tsung-hwa, whom I had known in New Jersey for several years, and as I greeted Master Jou, he in turn introduced the gentleman as "the son of Yang Chengfu." And then Master Jou asked if I would like to study with this man. I quickly said "of course, is it possible?" "I'll ask," he replied. Grandmaster Yang agreed and invited me to join a group of students from France and Switzerland who were currently in Taiyuan for a six-week course of study. I made my way there as soon as I could. And just that easily, our fates were joined.

When I began learning from Grandmaster Yang, my ten years of tai chi chuan up to then provided me with just enough basics to keep up with his intensive teaching. He was tolerant of my insufficiencies, and seeing my sincerity to improve, he assigned one of his advanced students to assist me at first. Twice a day, he arrived on his bicycle to our outdoor training place. Many of those days Yang Jun came into our session after his school classes, and we learned from him, too. Once a week we joined the large crowd of students who came just at sunrise to Jinzi Park to learn from him. From the esplanade of the Ming library, his voice boomed out over the vast space, and we followed his commands through the traditional routine. Usually he would then select a student to come onto the platform and illustrate a movement, and as he made corrections, everyone got the benefit of that individual lesson. He did this with precision and by classic principles, and he approached the student with kindness and humor—an unforgettable lesson both in tai chi chuan and in pedagogy.

I received permission to interview him for 'Tai Chi,' a U.S. publication that was devoted solely to tai chi chuan. A translator was provided, various officials were present, and I took notes as competently as I could as he immediately began speaking of the great depths of tai chi chuan's principles and benefits. I mailed my multiple pages of hand-written notes to the publisher, Marvin Smalheiser, and he produced an article in the next issue that was well-received.

I also took that same opportunity to present an official invitation to Grandmaster Yang to the United States, to Winchester, Virginia, where I was partnered with Steve Rhodes in producing an annual event that we had named A Taste of China. It featured multiple seminars by well-known instructors and The U.S.A. All-Taijiquan Championships, a tournament we had designed exclusively and uniquely for the internal styles of Chinese Martial Arts. All the governmental encumbrances on both sides were eventually satisfied and in June of 1990, Grandmaster Yang and Yang Jun arrived in Washington DC for their two-week stay.

On the way from the airport to Winchester, we stopped at a Chinese restaurant for dinner, and when the fortune cookies arrived in what we thought was the usual end of a Chinese meal, Grandmaster Yang popped his into his mouth without opening it. He promptly spat it out exclaiming, "There's paper in here!" and so we learned that fortune cookies are not a Chinese custom.

The teaching by Grandmaster Yang, his first in North America, drew participants from Europe, Central America, and South America, as well as from many places throughout the U.S. and Canada. We knew immediately that we were in the presence of greatness. And so from that first introduction there arose numerous invitations to him to go to localities in many countries, supported by well-positioned leaders. His popularity and influence became wider and wider, until after thirty-plus years, his following has spread worldwide and Yang style practitioners number in the thousands. The effects of his family heritage and his personal authenticity brought about an immeasurable expansion of the art of tai chi chuan.

His instruction was traditional, consistent, clear, and enlightening. His teaching approach was characterized by unwavering patience, as he gently corrected and enthusiastically repeated single movements and short sequences. We looked forward to hearing his single phrase of English, “one more time!” even though we came to realize that would be one of many more times, until he was satisfied that we’d gotten as far as he could take us in the moment. He was visibly delighted in our good results as he required us to aim for excellence in performance and depth in understanding. He was warm and friendly, inviting us to enter his space and to make it our space, too: to learn together. His ‘big heart’ was always in evidence and showed in his face with a great smile.

During that first visit, Grandmaster Yang agreed to allow us to record and produce and sell a professional video of him teaching tai chi chuan history and principles, and movements of the traditional routine. It was an acceptance of our management of matters that to him certainly were held as a great treasure, and we were honored and very moved by his trust in us. And until other individuals began posting parts of that video on YouTube without authorization from him or us, it was a mutually beneficial pact. It remains a significant resource to his teachings and his powerful forms.

Several subsequent visits to Winchester by him and Yang Jun—now the family lineage holder and a master in his own right—allowed many tai chi chuan enthusiasts to learn all aspects of their traditional family style. The family soon expanded their travels and teachings, holding numerous workshops in places large and small, promoting events in China that included tours to cultural heritage sites as well as intensive instructional days. Since then, they have instituted expansive international symposiums that included the representative lineage holders of other tai chi chuan styles.

I personally joined their teaching seminars in numerous cities and countries, as I enjoyed the best of all combinations: excellent instruction, pleasant surroundings, congenial colleagues, and good friends. I advanced in my practice and under-

standing of tai chi chuan to a degree that would not have been otherwise possible. I was enriched in all parts of my life by these connections, as I experienced the ways of other cultures and met hospitable hosts. I was assisted in my knowledge and development by very capable coaches and distinguished professors, and I was delighted by exchanges with practitioners at all levels.

I had opportunities to lend my assistance to the formation of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association, and I contributed my formalized expertise in administrative oversight of tournaments and rules for ranking students, as well as in design of training and authentication for judges.

I advanced professionally in teaching my own groups of students in my small town, as I learned about teaching by observing the Yang family’s traditional ways of passing on information as well as noting their innovative adaptations to contemporary educational methods. I use whatever I can in teaching students new and long-time, and I also encourage them to become teachers.

Now at the end of Yang Zhenduo’s life, we find ourselves at a special moment in the history of Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan. We anticipate the continuation of the legacy in Master Yang Jun as the designated inheritor of the family tradition and the keeper and perpetuator of the family style. We participate in its further spread through Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo’s disciples, through his students and their students, through his descendants and their disciples, and their students, and on through the generations to come. As I mourn his passing from us and I grieve the loss of this great man, I am comforted by sharing such sorrow with many others, and I am reassured by the promise of the future.

When I contemplate how significantly all aspects of my life have changed since I decided to learn from him and to follow his teaching, I can feel happy that Heaven has smiled on me, and I am forever grateful.

Pat Rice



In August 1998 Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo came to Montreal for the first time for the 10th Anniversary to the Yang Chengfu Tai Chi Center in Montreal.

He arrived in Montreal after teaching seminars in Winchester Virginia, San Antonio Texas and Portland Oregon.

When Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo arrived in Montreal we had 350 students registered for his seminar and we had to close the registration because too many people wanted to have a chance to meet him.

Everybody in Canada knew that an incredible tai chi master was coming.

We had to divide the event in 7 seminars to accommodate 50 students maximum per seminar.

Upon arrival in Montreal, we took Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun to Chinatown.

We thought that Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo would enjoy a few martial arts movies ideally in Chinese.

We found a movie rental place in Chinatown, I went inside the store to find out if they had some martial arts movies. Then I asked a Chinese person at the counter if they had some martial arts movies in Chinese and then I mentioned I had a guest, a tai chi master outside the store visiting Montreal and I

thought that he would enjoy some Chinese martial arts movies.

Then I mentioned that his name was Yang Zhenduo and the old man at the counter answered “yes for sure and I was born yesterday...”, basically he could not believe that this Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo was really in Montreal and at his store!

Then I asked him if he would like to meet Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and he sceptically looked at me and said “yes”.

Then I invited Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun inside the store to choose their movies for the week.

Then the person at the counter was blown away to see a truly respected master from China coming into his store... in Montreal.

Everybody at the 7 seminars had the opportunity and privilege to meet a true master, always smiling, coaching everybody to embrace a path of balance, kindness and harmony.

Master Yang Zhenduo will be forever remembered and respected as a symbol of perseverance, respect and kindness.

Yang Yazhong, Sergio Arione
Yang Chengfu Center Montreal, Canada

One More Time

In July 2009 the 10 Year Anniversary Celebration of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association was to be held in the Seattle area of Washington State. Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's presence would highlight the occasion. Having heard the many stories related by Master Yang Jun of his beloved grandfather, I eagerly anticipated his arrival as we completed our preparations.

On the day of the celebration there were performances and speeches expressing gratitude and admiration to Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and Master Yang Jun. Their untiring efforts to share the benefits of Yang Family Tai Chi with the world had touched all of our lives. The example of their lives inspired ours.

On that day, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo very kindly and graciously consented to autograph my copy of his book, *Yang Style Taiji*. As I presented the book to him, I also offered a pen. He returned my pen and took out his own special pen to write the characters. His signature appeared on the page showing a flowing beauty as well as the strength of his character. As I was to discover in the years to come, he created beauty and strength in the world in many ways!

His signature in this most important book is a cherished treasure from my first meeting with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo.

Of course once I had listened to the words of the grandmaster, and experienced his presence, my heart longed for "one more time!"

The highlight of China Adventure 2015 was to be Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's 90th Birthday Celebration in Taiyuan. This was my chance! I made plans. Taking part in the celebration along with the hundreds and hundreds of friends and practitioners who had gathered together from around the world was exhilarating. I had never witnessed so many people at a birthday celebration in my life! To see the way Grandmaster's kindness and wisdom brought this multitude of people together was truly inspirational. My mind opened wider as I saw the bigger picture.

I don't believe it was part of the plan, but Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo delighted everyone when he arose from his seat and walked around the entire room, greeting his friends and followers as they joyously lined his path.

A treasured momento from that celebration reminds me every day of Grandmaster's ability to draw us together for the common good. He gave us another fine example of how



to elevate our lives from the mundane and how to be kind and gracious.

In March 2017 "one more time" became the last time that I was to meet and draw inspiration from Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo.

The highlight of the 2017 China Adventure was the Grand Opening of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association Asian Headquarters in Kunming, Yunnan, China. The progress of the development of Yang Family Tai Chi in China was impressive. The beauty of the new headquarters was enhanced by the smiles and friendship of the citizens of Kunming and the many guests and practitioners who gathered there in celebration. The smile on the face of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo brightened the occasion and all of our hearts.

It was there in Kunming that Master Yang Jun accepted me as his disciple and Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo became my Shiye. I felt at that time how fortunate it was to be accepted as a disciple in the presence of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, to have him for my Shiye. There aren't any words that I can share that would express adequately what I feel in my heart every day as I renew my resolve to try to follow his example.

So now, even as we mourn the loss of our beloved Grandmaster, Shifu, Shiye, we all surely feel a renewed dedication to walk forward into the future with the bright star of his great spirit to guide us.

With deep gratitude and reverence,

Yang Yashi, Stefanie Russell



Unforgettable memories with Shifu

It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the passing of my Shifu, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, a visionary teacher and an exemplary role model of the martial arts code of conduct. His great legacy will forever be celebrated and remembered by generations of tai chi chuan practitioners from around the world.

Many stories of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo will be told and written and here I will humbly share a few of my countless memorable moments with him.

'A Taste of China' 1990

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo always taught us that one of the benefits of tai chi chuan was bringing and making friends together, which he successfully did in Winchester, Virginia. Many thanks to Pat Rice, who organized 'The taste of China' in 1990, we got to meet for the first time, the direct descendant and 4th generation of Yang family, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo and 6th generation, Master Yang Jun. I also met many friends from that year who are now my tai chi brothers and sisters. Some well known masters and teachers in America, like Ben Lo and Abraham Liu also came to meet him. As many of us there only learned Yang style tai chi chuan from the lineage of Cheng Man Ching, we were curious and excited to meet and learn from the direct lineage of Yang family Tai Chi Chuan. In that seminar, many unanswered questions on Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan were clarified. Grandmaster Yang was very precise, simple and clear in explaining and demonstrating the correlation of tai chi energy training with the 10 principles. I remembered there was a big buzz when he taught us to lean our upper body in 'grasping the bird's tail'. Since most of us there had trained for years in Cheng Man Ching's Yang style, which

required an upright upper body, it was a drastic change!

Taiyuan August 1991

One of my most unforgettable memories was the time I spent two weeks with Shifu in the summer of 1991 in Taiyuan. He would pick me up from my nearby hotel around 5 a.m. with his bicycle to go to his backyard to train, then later breakfast in his house. After breakfast, he would instruct me till lunch time. We ate lunch together prepared by Shimu and sometimes Shifu. Then Shifu would take a nap and I would practice alone what he taught me earlier. After his rest, he would continue teaching me till early evening. He taught me the whole 67 sword form and learning it personally one on one with him was quite an experience and honor. One day during his afternoon rest I practiced 'flying the tassel' in 'Little dipper' more than 500 times. His recommendation was to practice 500 to 1000 times! During that time I got a glimpse of the daily and simple life of living in China. One day a watermelon seller came by and Shifu picked and bought 10 watermelons and I was given to eat a whole one! At home in Sweden, we usually buy half or a whole watermelon and I would only eat a slice. I was astounded that Shimu bought 100 eggs at a time, choosing them carefully. She and Shifu would make their own noodles and dumplings. His love for his wife was also very touching and sweet for me to witness. He was also very proud of his grandson Yang Jun. On Sundays, we went early to the park where hundreds of his students would train together and received instructions from him after. Even without a microphone, his voice would boom across the park. Here I also met many of whom became fellow disciples.



Stockholm, Sweden 1995-2004

We were fortunate to have 5 seminars in Stockholm with Grandmaster Yang. Several Association directors today met him for the first time in Sweden. For the French participants attending, Shifu, with a happy, proud smile would call out 'encore une fois!' instead of his infamous 'one more time!' There are lots of fond memories with Shifu in Stockholm, from his passionate tai chi chuan teachings, to his love of food and Chinese opera and shows. We had the honor of hearing him sing Chinese opera on a few occasions and we put on shows which made him laugh heartily. We trained diligently and seriously during his seminars but we also had lots of fun and shared good food together. Our Swedish seminars were also held during

June where we celebrated Shifu's and Yang Jun's birthdays, also Midsummer day with maypole dancing and flower crowns. He liked the Swedish maypole dancing so much that he requested that we perform it in Taiyuan at the 2002 Shanxi Association 20th year anniversary and 2nd international competition.

My Shifu, who was both a great teacher and a kind protective father to me, will always be remembered, honored and respected in my heart. I, and tens of thousands of his students, will keep his legacy alive by continuing to develop and promote Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan together.

Therese Teo Mei Mei,
1st generation disciple

I was only ever in the room with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo once in my life. It was back in the old location in Redmond Washington in the early days when Master Yang Jun had recently moved to the US. I can remember the power of his presence and how serene and inspiring his form was. I remember seeing him together with Master Yang Jun and feeling what an amazing opportunity it was to be together in the room with them. They were a part of tai chi history. Living history. I was very sad to hear of Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo's passing, but sadly, life is all too short. Where there is birth there is death. But I take solace in the fact that he touched thousands and thousands of lives in his time here on earth and has left behind a legacy that will never be forgotten. I only hope his family can get through these difficult times.

Trevor Mearns





CHINESE TERMS OF TAI CHI THEORY

— CHAPTER 2 —

BY: JOSHUA NEUHAUS

In this second chapter we will move on in our study of the body from footwork to the body. If you realized how strange the last sentence seemed using the word “body” twice while meaning different things, then you are one step closer to understanding how helpful knowing a bit of Chinese could be for the study of tai chi. In this sense we will continue to introduce important Chinese key phrases that underlie the tai chi theory Master Yang teaches.

Referencing the last article 知体 (zhī tǐ: knowing the body) encompasses 手 (shǒu: hand), 眼 (yǎn: eyes), 身 (shēn: body), 法 (fǎ: methods) and 步 (bù: footwork). When compared 体 (tǐ: body) means the entire body and 身 (shēn: body) is – in this particular case – only about the upper and middle body.

The theory on 身 (shēn) is split into two branches,

1. 身形 (shēnxíng: body shape) and
2. 立身 (lìshēn: setting up the body [angle]).

身形 shēnxíng (body shape)

Our body shape is explained by four of the 10 principles:

虚灵顶劲 (xūlíngdǐngjìn): empty, lively, pushing up, and energetic.

沉肩坠肘 (chénjiān zhuìzhǒu): sink the shoulders, drop the elbows.

含胸拔背 (hánxiōng báibèi): pull in the chest and slightly round the back.

松腰松垮 (sōngyāo sōngkuà): relax the waist and hips.



立身 lishēn (setting up the body [angle])

The translation of 立身 (lishēn) is somewhat challenging. 立 (lì) literally means to stand upright or to bring something into an upright position. But the concept of what is considered upright is subject to interpretation. Ultimately, justifying the body's position is all about correlating body and footwork.

The subject of 立身 (lishēn) is further split into two sub-topics:

1. 立身中正 (lishēn zhōngzhèng): centering the body.
2. 尾闾中正 (wěilú zhōngzhèng): centering the tailbone.

The first part, 立身中正 (lishēn zhōngzhèng), is about the angle of our upper body starting from the hip. How much we lean our body and in which direction both depend on our footwork. Deeper footwork means a steeper body angle. The direction in which we lean generally follows our front toe direction.

The second part 尾闾中正 (wěilú zhōngzhèng) is important, because our tailbone position is crucial for our ability to deliver energy. The purpose of centering the tailbone is expressed through the phrase “使用劲力上下传出” (biànyòng jìnli de chuánchū), meaning to enable the transmission of energy between upper and lower body. When centering the tailbone one has to work out a balance between 曲 (qū: curved) and 直 (zhí: straight) so as to slightly tuck in the tailbone without curving it too much.

With 步 (bù) and 身 (shēn) a large part of the foundation of tai chi practice in general has been laid. In the next chapters I will continue with the theory of 知体 (zhītī: knowing the body). But I would like to use this chance to take what we learned about the body and connect it to a part of theory that shows some of the benefit gained from body cultivation – breathing.

BREATHING

First comes 调身 (tiáoshēn: adjusting the body). Then comes 调息 (tiáoxī: adjusting the breathing). The result is 呼吸顺畅 (hūxī shùnràng: natural breathing) and 气沉丹田 (qì chén dāntián: sinking the qi to the dantian).

调身 (tiáoshēn) is all about cultivating the body with the theory of 知体 (zhītī). 调息 (tiáoxī) uses some of that knowledge and requires you to understand what affects your breathing.

The 5 points affecting our breathing are:

1. 意识 (yìshí): awareness.
This is about balance in emotions 喜 (xǐ: happiness), 怒 (nù: anger), 忧 (yōu: worry), 思 (sī: pondering), 悲 (bēi: sadness), 恐 (kǒng: fear) and 惊 (jīng: surprise).
2. 身形 (shēnxíng): body shape.
The correct body shape enables correct breathing. If you stick out your chest or raise your shoulders your breathing is affected.
3. 重心的落位 (zhòngxīn de luòwèi): location of body weight.
This is about 脚踩涌泉 (jiǎo cǎi yǒngquán: feet tread on bubbling well).
4. 立身 (lishēn): body angle.
Leaning back or in the wrong direction makes smooth breathing impossible.
5. 劲 (jìn): energy.
劲 (jìn) here is approached in terms of 顺 (shùn: yielding) and 逆 (nì: resisting). The amount of 劲 (jìn) used needs to enable you to yield rather than to resist.

This concludes the second chapter. For me, seeing Chinese terms of tai chi theory repeated in different sections of theory allowed me to better understand how one topic relates to another.





IN MEMORY OF RUU CHANG

APRIL 9, 1923 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

Recently we lost our good friend Ruu Chang. He attended the early workshops Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo taught with his wife Ginger, and served at times as our translator. He grew up in the same area of China as our grandmaster and therefore understood the nuances of his dialect. Ruu was a thoughtful and concise translator. Students would come to me and say, "How old is that guy? He moves so well!"

Ruu was very kind and considerate and had honed the skills of a superb teacher. In his previous career he taught mathematics at three different universities and finished his working career as a computer analyst.

Informally, Ruu was my senior consultant. He had been studying with Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo since 1993. When I started running seminars, I wasn't secure in my understanding of Chinese culture. I wanted to make sure the arrangements I made would be received as respectful and appropriate. Ruu was so humble. He would gently make suggestions that were, of course, spot on. He insisted that we take the Masters to Shanghai Joe's for

their shrimp and pork dumplings. Eight servings of dumplings were a great hit!

We stayed in touch over the years and I joined them when they visited New York. I have a hard time remembering any particular conversation we had. I mostly remember how comfortable I was in his presence, and what a kind and gentle man he was. He was very wise yet spent most of our conversation asking questions and inquiring about my life. And then he would make a suggestion that was always a gold nugget! He was masterful in applying the tai chi principles to social interactions!

Bill Walsh

Here are some statements from his students and friends who knew him over a long time:

I first met Ruu Chang in the late 90's. My husband and I were looking for an exercise we could both do together. We joined the Chang Tai Chi Club and found that Ruu Laoshi was a kind, gentle teacher who respected all who took his classes. Ruu taught the Yang Style of tai chi and quickly introduced us to the form. Ruu would always say "real good, but lower, lower". The thing I remember the most



about Ruu is that he was always looking for someone to do push hands with him. He always enjoyed coming to my Yang Style tai chi class at Washburn University. He liked being with the students and was so happy to introduce push hands to them. The students were amazed they could follow any moves he would do.

Vickie Jacobs

Ruu Chang was an admirable teacher and role model who lived life and taught with a quiet joy and grace. He welcomed each student, and brought out our best with patience, warmth and humor. His work ethic and mental clarity to the end are an inspiration. I was fortunate to be his student for more than 20 years when health issues and surgeries allowed me to participate. Ruu and his lessons help me live a better life.

Michelle Williams

Ruu Chang was a Master at his tai chi craft. I was always awed by the fluidity of his movements that belied his plus-90 year old body. His gentle corrections of my own clumsy and misguided motions were done with respectful instruction and grace. I will remember him with reverence and great fondness.

Deesie Jackson

“He was too humble to ever call himself

A master

But he was.

To me and to so many

He was grace in motion.

To watch him move thru then form

Was pure joy.

He embodies this form

Every day.

Every moment.

He loves this life

With all he has in him.

Wanting to give

Wanting to share,

Wanting to teach.

We will remember him,

His form,

His words,

His ways,

To touch the lives of so many,

What a man,

What a Mensch.

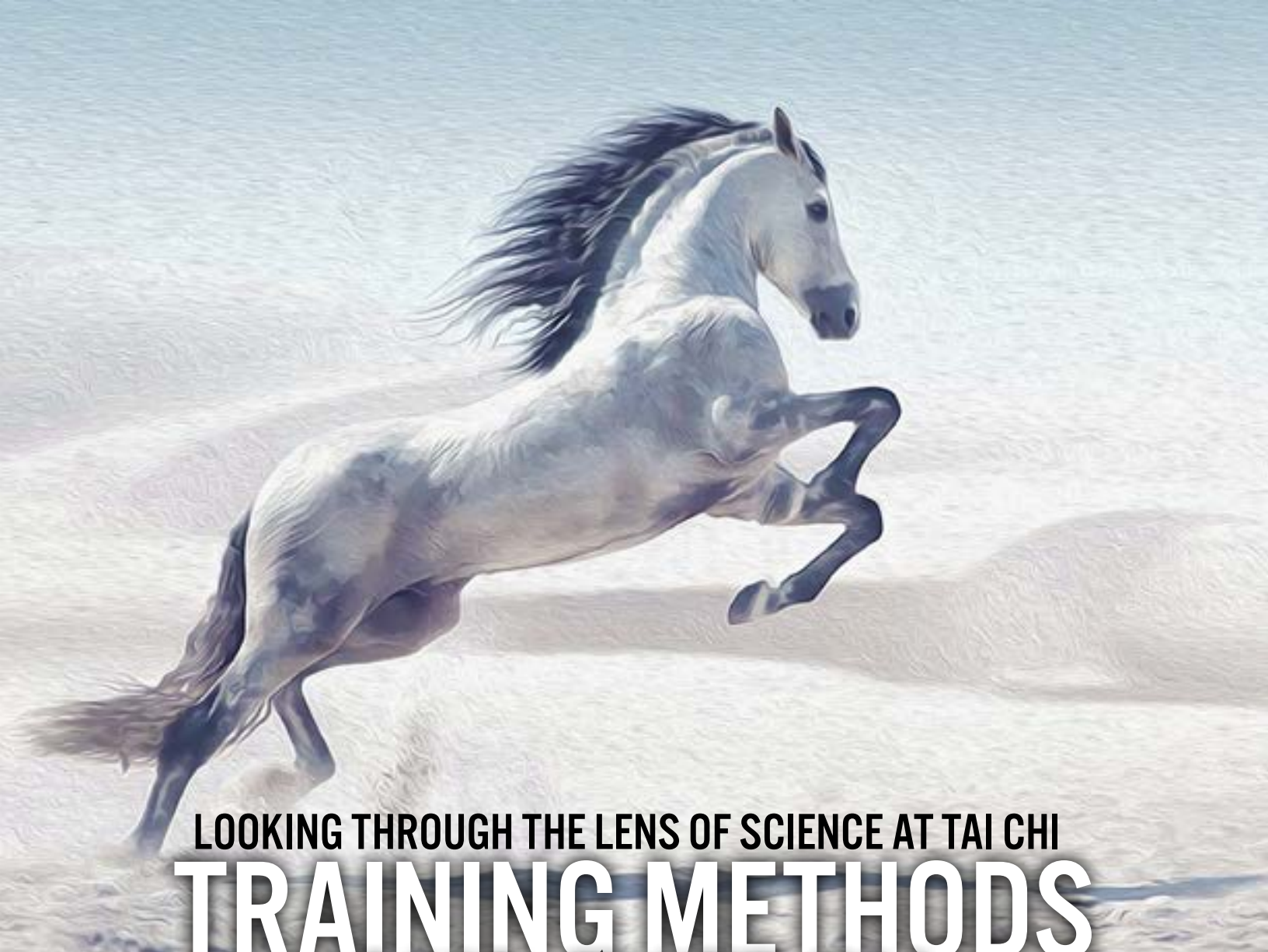
Stephanie Schuttera

Memories — I met Ruu in 1974 when he took over for my first teacher who had moved back to Hawaii. I thought I had learned the long form, but I had to start over and learn again. He said, “your postures must be lower and you have to hold the single whip until the sweat shoots off your fingers.” He said, “this is not a dance, tai chi is a martial art.” When I asked him about practice schedule, he said that every time you practice is like making a deposit in the bank. After many years you may build some equity. When you get old or sick, you can make a withdrawal. Ruu began learning tai chi at age 11. In the last few months he started to withdraw 86 years of equity. Two days before he went to the hospital for the last time, he could no longer walk alone. When I came to give him his favorite tea he was sitting in the rocker and waving hands like clouds. He NEVER stopped practicing. He was calm, kind, gentle and always humble. We were yin and yang: one person. He was my husband and the best teacher I have ever had.

Thanks to everyone for your kindness toward Ruu, especially Master Yang Jun and Han at the August 2019 seminar. I will see you at a seminar soon... I hope.

Ginger Chang.





LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS OF SCIENCE AT TAI CHI TRAINING METHODS AND ENERGY

KEY CONCEPTS: Nature's energy storing strategies:

Pendulum movement: trades energy back and forth between two forms, energy of motion (kinetic energy) and energy of height (gravitational energy). The normal gait that humans use to walk is an example of this strategy.

Elastic energy storing: Connective tissue (tendons have been the most easily studied) give back about 93% of energy. In terms of energy stored per unit of weight, tendons surpass steel at least 10X. The concept of tai chi "relaxation" is an example of this strategy.

Feet are energy storage systems when they are allowed to "flatten" upon impact with the ground.

Animals like deer, horse, camels have extremely long tendons attached to short muscles. So, in any gait more of the change in muscle + tendon length when a leg is in contact with the ground comes from tendon elasticity than from muscle contraction. Hence: energy conservation. This explains the reason why horses are terrific jumpers with their long skinny legs.



The content of this article follows from my previous journal article: **Understanding the Importance of the "Bubbling Well"** which explained the structure and biomechanics of the human foot so that students of tai chi could appreciate why the tai chi classics state that "the energy is in the root and the root is in the feet."

— Journal 43, page 26

BY: **HOLLY SWEENEY-HILLMAN**
 Yang Family Tai Chi Senior Instructor

To understand the methods of practice we apply in tai chi, it is important for us to understand “energy” from the perspective of physics. First let’s take a look at GROUND REACTION FORCE.

We have all dropped a ball toward the ground and watched it bounce up into the air. This is a demonstration of GROUND REACTION FORCE or GRF. We can observe GRF because we live in earth’s gravitational field. The earth’s gravitational field pulls an object toward the earth and GRF pushes back. This is in accordance with Isaac Newton’s 3rd law of conservation of energy which says that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. We are all familiar with GRF from everyday life on earth. We know that it is easier to walk on a smooth hard surface than on a sandy beach because the shifting sand does not return the GRF of our bodies very efficiently. We also know that if we throw a ball down on a hard surface it will bounce up higher than if we throw a ball down on a soft surface like a bed. We know if we want to jump high into the air, we have to push down hard against the ground. Letting our bodies accelerate down to increase the GRF that will push us up into the air.

It is important to understand that GRAVITY exerts a constant conditioning effect upon our bodies. Without the force of gravity, our bodies decondition as we have learned from the effects of space travel upon the bodies of astronauts. In the absence of gravity and GRF, our bodies lose the ability to store energy.

Biomechanical studies have found that our feet can be conditioned to return as much as 95% of the GRF. We can use traditional tai chi exercises, such as rooting exercises, to condition our

feet to utilize GRF with maximum efficiency. It is important to consider footwear when we talk about conditioning our feet. Our tai chi ancestors are shown wearing slipper-like shoes, not unlike the thin leather shoes gymnasts, dancers and boxers wear today. (Figure 2) This type of footwear allows feet to become conditioned to their maximum capacity by allowing all parts of the foot to move in the way nature designed them to move.



(Figure 2)

Much of modern athletic footwear has been influenced more by fashion than function. (Figure 3) The main purpose of footwear is to protect our feet from environmental hazards and to provide friction when we walk on slippery surfaces. There is no shoe that can outperform the energy storage and return of a conditioned human foot. In a recent shoe catalog that was promoting walking shoes, it stated that a polyurethane sole returned 35% of the energy of each stride. That’s 60% less than a conditioned human foot! Tai chi athletes who are interested in improving their rooting and ability to work with energy should examine their footwear to make sure it is not interfering with their conditioning strategies. Shoes with thick soles like many shoes marketed as “walking shoes” are absorbing GRF, not returning it. This is OK for people who are not trying to condition their feet although there is a growing argument that supports the idea that knee and hip problems are caused by footwear that does not allow for strong conditioning of the human foot. Footwear with a heel can prevent the function of the lateral stabilizing mechanism of the little toe side of the foot and lift our weight out of the bubbling well area. When choosing footwear to practice tai chi: less is more! The more minimal the footwear the better to allow a strong conditioning of your feet to store and send energy.



(Figure 3)

The second type of energy we need to understand for tai chi training is KINETIC ENERGY. Kinetic energy is the energy of a body in motion represented by the formula:

$$KE = \frac{1}{2} MV^2$$

M=mass

V=velocity (i.e. speed in a particular direction)

Notice that velocity is squared in the formula to calculate kinetic energy. That means an increase in speed will dramatically increase the amount of kinetic energy. Anyone who practices the martial applications of tai chi knows that speed is essential for an application to work. Without enough speed, there is simply not enough kinetic energy for an application to work. This is an important concept to understand relative to conditioning our bodies for tai chi. Fast movement has a different conditioning effect than slow movement. We need to practice for speed as well as slowness to be well rounded in our tai chi practice. To understand traditional training methods, we also need to understand MOMENTUM AND ANGULAR MOMENTUM. Momentum is the tendency of an object to stay in motion and loosely stated, angular momentum (where a body rotates around a center) helps to conserve momentum. Practicing the tai chi principle of “moving continually without interruption” is practiced via “single movement practice” which features practicing repeated circular motions which conserve kinetic energy.

The last concept of energy we will look at is POTENTIAL ENERGY. Potential energy is stored energy. Energy can be stored in two ways:

- 1) By the location of an object
- 2) Within the structure of an object

The first way of storing potential energy refers to the location of an object within a gravitational field. If a tennis ball is sitting on the roof of a twelve-story building it has more potential energy than a tennis ball sitting on your dining room table.

The second way of storing potential energy is within structure. We are all familiar with stretching a rubber band and then letting go of one end of the band and feeling the sting of the band hitting our hand. The rubber stretching was storing potential energy that was then released when we let go of the band. The tai chi principle of practicing “relaxation” conditions our body to store energy in the connective tissue in the fascia of our structures. Elongating these elastic storage structures allows us to store potential energy in our bodies which we can use to STABILIZE or MOBILIZE our bodies.

Potential energy can be used to resist or restrain movement, providing absorption of energy and stabilization of our structure or it can be released to create movement. Think about the practice of supporting and pushing 蹬撐 dēng chēng in the bow stance. The front leg is rooting to store potential energy to create stability and the back leg is rooting to store potential energy for release to create movement.

KEY TERMS:

(1) Ground reaction force

The force exerted by the ground on a body in contact with it. The force exerted by the ground is referred to as a “reaction” to the “action” of gravity pulling a body toward the ground.

Basically, gravity pulls us toward the ground and the ground pushes back according to Newton’s third law (for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction).

(2) Potential energy

Energy that is stored.

- 1) stored in the location of an object
- 2) stored within the structure of an object

In our bodies, energy is stored in elastic tissues via tension. Storage occurs by stretching elastic tissues.

Potential energy becomes kinetic energy when tension is released.

(3) Kinetic Energy

The energy of a body in motion.

$$KE = \frac{1}{2} M V^2$$

M = MASS

V = Velocity (speed in a particular direction).

Because V is squared, an increase in speed dramatically increases the amount of kinetic energy in a moving body.

(4) Momentum

The tendency for a moving body to stay moving unless a force is applied to it.

(5) Angular Momentum

An additional aspect of momentum that arises when things rotate. Ordinary momentum depends on a combination of mass and velocity, angular momentum depends on moment of inertia and speed of rotation. The moment of inertia combines the mass and the distance of the mass from a center of rotation. This is why a spinning skater pulls her arms closer to her body to spin faster. With her arms closer to her body, the moment of inertia is reduced because more of her mass is closer to her body’s center of rotation, so her speed of rotation increases to conserve angular momentum. (2)

(6) Fascia (Fasciae)

All kinds of high-tensile, collagenous tissues that have a function in the musculo-skeletal framework.

Fascia is a holistic network that has stubborn adherence to a blueprint of structure as well as a tremendous capacity for adaptation.

Mechanical characteristics of fascia are calibrated to earth’s gravitational field.

Fascia is conditioned by “loading” in tension. Gravity and ground reaction force present an ever-present and on-going conditioning effect on fascia.



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.





- CHAPTER 15 -

Sparring Before the Feast, Stealing Boxing Outside the Wall

Stealing Boxing (偷拳, TōuQuán) 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.

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Fu Jiannan prepared to demonstrate the movements of the innate wujiqian style as Master Chen had requested. The disciples stood up hurriedly and began to go out to light the lamps. Master Chen waved his hand and said, “No need for lamps. It’s better to practice boxing under the moonlight.”

Before Fu Jiannan left the bamboo mat, he came over to the square. At this time, the bright moon was clearly shining like the day, and the group of disciples were silent as they watched their big brother begin to perform this famous style of a lineage similar to their own.

Fu Jiannan stood facing Master Chen with both hands down and said, “Our tai chi chuan uses wuji to create tai chi, so we stand upright and facing forward with eyes looking straight forward. We do not imagine that we are stepping on the “ding 丁” character or the “eight” character (八 bā) character under our feet. Extend the toes slightly outward with the heels slightly inward. Sink the breath and breathe into the dantian. The tip of the tongue should be slightly touching the roof of the mouth. Move the hands down with the palms inward and the fingertips pointing


down. Show the innate origin from wuji to taiji – from invisible to tangible – this is our technique.

The innate wuji fist is a style with a square-shaped stance. All the movements use force with the palms held at both sides and the ten fingers are tightly closed. This beginning is different from our tai chi chuan, but if you don’t carefully observe it, the two are sometimes easy to confuse.” After saying this, he turned and looked at Master Chen and waited for the master’s response.

Master Chen smiled and nodded, and then said to Fu Jiannan, “How can other schools confuse the methods and principles of tai chi? Can you show me this style again so that we can find out where it came from?”

Fu Jiannan replied: “I will practice two moves for Shifu to see, although I can’t remember it very well.” He then put the moves of innate wujiqian into a posture according to what he remembered. Sure enough, he couldn’t remember very clearly. He practiced a few movements, forgot a couple of parts, and then stopped to think before beginning again. For the parts that he really couldn’t remember, he skipped over them and then described them as best he could.

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This lineage of wujiqian is also based on the principle of tai chi and yin/yang, but the boxing principle is attributed to feminine energy. There are sixty-four types of exercises, which relate to the final form of the bagua (the eight trigrams). Although it is based on innate and natural principles, there are many elements, such as: reciprocation, positive and non-reversing, soft and non-rigid, and vigorous but not vigorous. There is the innate but not acquired; the principle of repetition, the way of endless life, and knowing one but not the second, so there are no unpredictable changes in tai chi energy.

Fu Jiannan performed this innate wujiqian into the eleventh movement known as “golden dragon probing claws”. The third disciple Geng Yongfeng, watching from the side, said quietly as if to himself, “this movement seems to be the same as the 31st movement of tai chi chuan, “chopping face palm”.

Master Chen also noticed the similarity, and said to the disciples: “Look, this move is the same as our “chopping face palm”, don’t you agree?”

The seventh disciple replied: “Master, it seems to be similar.”

Master Chen began to describe the movements in detail, saying, “The two moves do seem to look the same, but the method is different. Tai chi chuan and wujiqian use two different methods. This is because tai chi chuan uses the departing palace and the tendency gate, and although it belongs to the power of kangyang (extreme positive), it uses the power of the “hanging plate”. The “golden dragon probing claws” take the image of the kanglong (high dragon), which symbolizes flying. Although the gestures of “chopping face palm” and “golden dragon probing claws” are the same, the use of spirit is

actually different. The meaning of change and restraint is the subtlety of tai chi chuan. As for this innate wujiqian, it is a technique of the bagua palm. It changes from “golden dragon claws” to “iron lock hengzhou” (horizontal boat). The technique is to transform the enemy’s palm power and demolish the enemy’s offensive. Such martial arts cannot be flexible and unpredictable.”

After Master Chen finished speaking, he pushed his empty wine cup away from him and stood up. He laughed and walked to the field, saying, “It’s no good to talk about it. You see, I will show it to you.” Master Chen asked Fu Jiannan to repeat the movements. Master Chen performed the gesture and also explained it. While still using the original style, Master Chen easily broke through Fu Jiannan’s innate wujiqian form with his hands. The group of disciples couldn’t help but applaud.

Master Chen had been drinking a little and was in a relaxed mood. He said to Fu Jiannan: “I will spar with you for a few moves in order to show your junior brothers how our tai chi techniques compare with those of other schools.”

Fu Jiannan was pleased, but he said shyly: “Shifu, I am so out of practice, even if I used my own boxing training to spar with you, I am sure that I would not be able to compare to you. I have only learned this innate wuji boxing by watching others and making secret notes from memory. I’m afraid I won’t be able to handle it...”

The students did not want to pass up a rare chance to see the master perform. The fifth disciple Tan Yongnian hurriedly said, “Big Brother, what are you afraid of, you really think Laoshi will beat you up?” The rest of the disciples also began to chime in. Everyone wanted Master Chen to continue.

“The two moves do seem to look the same, but the method is different. Tai chi chuan and wujiqian use two different methods.”





Fu Jiannan was also afraid of interrupting the master's care-free mood, but he had to try to back out of the exchange in order to remain humble. Next, Master Chen ordered him to remove his long robes so that they could move freely, so he ended his protests and handed the robes over to Fang Zishou.

Fu Jiannan smiled and said, "Junior brothers, look at me about to be beaten! I haven't been beaten by the teacher for almost ten years."

The eighth junior brother Zhu Ruifu came over next to Master Chen and said: "Shifu, do you want to remove your topcoat?"

Master Chen waved his hand and said: "No need."

The two of them, master and disciple, set up their poses. Fu Jiannan smiled and said: "Laoshi, please hold back your strikes. Don't throw them all because I can't possibly catch them."

Master Chen laughed and said, "It takes bravery to be the leader of an armed escort. Why are you so timid?"

The group of disciples smiled and said, "Big brother is naturally timid in front of Shifu, but not in front of outsiders."

With that, Fu Jiannan flashed the "innate wujiquan" forms created by the Iron Palm Lu Wu, and asked his Shifu to make the first move. Master Chen said, "Jiannan, when have you seen our tai chi chuan fighting style used to strike the first move?"

Fu Jiannan said, "This disciple knows." Then he stretches his palms outwards, and his first move, "immortal looks at the palm" went straight to Master Chen's "huagai" (by the chest) acupoint.

Master Chen said, "To prove that it is not a contest of who's better. Let me say that one can only show one's face without fear of losing in academic matters."

In response, Fu Jiannan adjusted his whole body method, and continued to use the iron palm Lu Wu's wujiquan techniques one by one. Master Chen did not seem to be hurried as he used tai chi chuan to easily dismiss each of the attacks.

Fu Jiannan's talents were not lacking, and the two martial art styles looked similar in appearance. Even so, Master Chen easily penetrated the wuji fist movements one after another. The group of disciples watched quietly. Master Chen's martial arts skills had reached perfection. He seemed to simply reach out his hand, and the movements became extraordinary.


Fu Jiannan used innate wujiquan up to the nineteenth hand movement, "dropping dragon and hidden tiger", "qianjin (heavy palm or thousand pound palm)", "restraint anyway", and "continuous four forms". Master Chen used the nineteenth movement of tai chi, "cloud hands" to disassemble Fu Jiannan's "thousand-jin palm".

This was a trial of Shifu and apprentice, and both of them were exacting in making their moves. Fu Jiannan continued to perform the techniques one by one and Master Chen parried them all effortlessly. After a short time had passed, Fu Jiannan had finished performing all of the innate wujiquan movements that he knew, and the master and disciple had returned to their seats with a smile.

The third disciple Geng Yongfeng presented his master with a cup of hot wine. Master Chen drank it and said happily: "It's skillful for you to have such a good memory." The master spoke to the group of assembled disciples, "This style is not an unproven boxing technique. I heard about this school before I left my own teacher's school. This boxing technique, like our own, also contains yin and yang philosophy. If it is practiced well, it can easily win. It's just that they have different opinions on energy. They seem to always think that the supreme softness and pure yin



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can control everything. If their school would be willing to consider our methods of combining hard and softness, I believe that they could be even better. When I have time in the future, I will go to visit the original master Lu Wu so that we can compare notes.”

Master Chen Qingping was in high spirits at this time, and everyone felt relaxed and happy. The eldest disciple, Fu Jiannan took the opportunity to ask for some help: “Just now, Master used the ‘cloud hands’ technique to dismantle the disciple’s “continuous four forms” without seeming to use any effort. This move is very effective, but how can we do it properly?. Master, can you please explain?”

The third disciple Geng Yongfeng also said, “There are also the three moves of ‘bending the bow and shooting the tiger’, ‘high pat on horse’, and ‘wild horse spreads its mane’. Master used each of them with such ease and dexterity. When we do it there’s something wrong! Master, can you perform it again and teach us?”

Master Chen laughed and said, “What is the problem? Are you saying that I haven’t been teaching you already?”




Fang Zishou quickly responded, “It’s not like that. Master, when you usually teach us, it is often too fast for us to grasp it. If we don’t pay attention, we won’t be able to catch up. We look at your sophisticated methods and try to copy your postures. When we watch for the postures, then we can’t catch the skills, and our eyes are never fast enough. Master, if you went much slower, it would be easier for us to remember.”

The eldest disciple Fu Jiannan couldn’t help smiling when he heard the words of his fourth junior brother. They reminded him of his own past. Master Chen’s gongfu was

proficient. Even though he had performed slowly while teaching, his disciples still couldn’t catch up. He always remarked that his disciples had poor memories and a weak understanding. Fu Jiannan secretly wondered if his master had neglected the teaching psychology of the scholars. He thought of when he was studying the art in the past. He had learned it at last, and now he felt that if the young disciples only did the same as he had done that they would be fine. He has forgotten that people have different talents. How many people could learn just as he had? Fu Jiannan knew that Master Chen was an incredibly skilled boxer, but he wondered, was he a good teacher?

The disciples all rushed up to ask their master to show the techniques as slowly as possible. They wanted to see another performance like the one between Master Chen and Fu Jiannan, but slower.



Master Chen’s eyebrows furrowed as he saw this scene and frowned, then he seemed to think of something and smiled. He turned to Fu Jiannan and said, “Listen, they say that the problem is not that they are stupid, but that I can’t teach them. Jiannan, please come and show them yourself.”

Fu Jiannan pretended to be an elementary school student and said, “No, no, I have come here from far away to see Shifu, how could I pretend to teach? You are the teacher, not me. Could you please correct my form? All these years I have practiced alone and without any help every day, it is inevitable that there will be mistakes. Please help us understand, Master.”

Fu Jiannan walked over to Master Chen Qingping and formally greeted him with respect. The third disciple Geng Yongfeng did the same.



Master Chen suddenly laughed and said, “You two are devious. Do you want to force me, the old man, to practice a set for you? Are you here to celebrate my birthday, or to put me to work?” The master and apprentices laughed loudly all together.

Master Chen felt very happy. He stood up from the table, and without taking off his long gown and formal shoes, he walked to the center of the practice field. He looked at the group of disciples, saying, “Alright, you want to see me practice slower? Fine, the slower it is, the better.” The group of disciples were happy, and they all followed Master Chen onto the field.

Master Chen faced towards the clear moon, and dropped his hands in a relaxed posture. His feet were not aligned as they usually were with the “ding” or “eight” shape, but were in a neutral position. He closed his mouth slightly with his teeth lightly touching and the tip of his tongue slightly touched the roof of his mouth. He looked slightly downwards and felt his mouth connect to the heart, and his breathing with his dantian. Master Chen’s mind became clear. His arms relaxed naturally down and his fingertips pointing downwards. The ten fingers slightly opened from each other; and the starting pose “wuji yiqi” was set up. In this way, the jīng, qì, and shén (essence or mind, energy or body, and spirit) are all adjusted and combined together. At this moment, Master Chen moved, his right foot slightly stretched forward, and his left palm raised with the fingertips inclined upward and the right palm was slightly bent. The master’s fingertips passed over the left arm quchi point near the elbow, which is used in “grasp the bird’s tail”. Master Chen’s body moved slightly, and had soon taken the form of “slanting or diagonal single whip”. Next, he performed “raise hands and step forward”. These three movements, plus the starting style of “wuji pose” at the beginning

are the “four starting movements” of Chen Tai Chi Chuan. Those who are new to the style are all well practiced and very familiar with it.


When Master Chen switched to the fifth movement “white crane spreading its wings”, he divided his arms diagonally and slashed with his palms. The master’s palms shook and the crisp sound of his sleeves snapping suddenly filled the courtyard, revealing the depth of his gong fu and the magnitude of his strength. A dozen eyes of the disciples had moved with Master Chen’s skill. At the eleventh movement, “like a seal, as if closed”, he swiftly stepped into “hugging the tiger and returning to the mountain” position without any effort, but in doing this, Master Chen had flown out five or six feet like an arrow. The moves flowed one by one into “elbow bottom hammer”, “inverted monkey”, “diagonal flying”, “submarine needle”, “fan through back”, “skimming hammer”, and so on. As Master Chen continued with deep focus and stillness in his mind, the movements flowed faster and faster. The disciples tried to follow, but soon became lost. Fang Zishou was the first to shout, saying, “Master, please slow down! Master, please slow down!”

Hearing the cries of the disciples, Master Chen just smiled and said, “Some of these moves can be slow, some cannot be slow.” The disciples had not been able to see the master show them the whole set of boxing exercises very many times. At this point, they all watched attentively as Master Chen continued.



“ 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. ”


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In response to the cries of his disciples, Master Chen tried to slow down his movements as much as possible. He performed ward off, roll back, press, push, pull, split, elbow, shoulder, and forward, back, gaze left, look right, and center. The master's flowing energy brought the thirteen-characters to life in subtle yet stable movements. The wind of the fist moves away, it may move slowly, but it's still the palm that smashed into the void and brought out a sharp wind. This is the so-called "palm strength".

Fu Jiannan whispered to the third younger brother Geng Yongfeng, "Third younger brother, pay attention to where the teacher's foot rests. Master's footwork is so standard. You will see that you can measure with a ruler where the teacher rests his feet and won't find even a half an inch difference."

The disciples watched carefully since Master Chen very rarely performed the complete set of forms while teaching them. His flowing motions went through "wild horse parting its mane" and "fair lady works shuttles", then "raise hand step forward", "pretentious dragon", "building pose", and "fierce lion". Suddenly the master dropped into "lower pose", while remaining totally stable, and then his body rushed upwards into "golden rooster stance".



As the disciples watched in silence, Master Chen jumped into the air about five feet high, landed lightly, and continued to practice until reaching the 32-style "cross pendulum lotus". His movements generally slowed, but his legs remained very calm and powerful. Next were the variants of "step forward punch down", "step back ride the tiger", followed by another low stance movement called "turning the foot and swinging the lotus". Within a series of rapid changes and turns, Master Chen performed "bend the bow to shoot the tiger", and then immediately returned to the closing

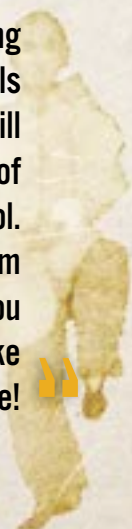
movement. The master then spoke with a calm voice, "I'm done now, is that enough?" The master's face looked radiant, and showed no sign of his actual age.

The group of disciples were cheering joyfully, and they began to thank their older tai chi brother for encouraging the teacher's happy mood.

Master Chen was smiling and had walked halfway around the field, feeling the blood circulating through his whole body after practicing. He looked up at the sky, and saw that the bright moon had risen and was shining even brighter. The blades on the weapons rack had all been polished by the silent young man, and their metallic surface shone with the glow of the moon, revealing wisps of cyan light.

Master Chen returned to the group of disciples and spoke to his third disciple Geng Yongfeng, "You're studying our boxing skills seriously, but we still have the weapons of our own school. Don't ignore them or what I teach you will not make sense! Compared to the many variations of spears and swords in the martial arts world today, the tai chi 13 form sword and tai chi spear are more than enough to contend. You should study these carefully and not underestimate them. Don't just look at one side of the practice. Yongfeng, Yongnian, do you two already understand the 13 sword forms?"

Geng Yongfeng and Tan Yongnian replied with the same voice, "We didn't dare to forget, but we still need to learn more!"



“ You’re studying our boxing skills seriously, but we still have the weapons of our own school. Don’t ignore them or what I teach you will not make sense! ”



Master Chen smiled and said, “Really?” Turning to Fu Jiannan, he says, “Your swordsmanship has grasped the key, but in the past few years, you have been using tai chi spear. Have you seen the difference between the other styles?”

Fu Jiannan replied respectfully, “Although I have been running around working for food and clothing in the past few years instead of studying here with my master, my kung fu has never been neglected. I feel that our spear is similar to the spear of other traditions, but unlike other styles, our spear techniques seem more clever and lively. The challenging part of the spear technique is accuracy. I have been living in the outside world, so I don’t use a spear easily. I don’t know how my skill is, but when I perform “black dragon goes through the tower”, I always feel that it is not very effective. Have I gotten some part of it wrong? Please help with your advice, Master.”

After Master Chen heard this, he spoke to Geng Yongfeng and the other disciples: “Today I will simply try to teach the essence of the tai chi spear. The movements that are the most difficult to practice are, “oolong goes through the tower”, “ambush on all sides,” and “three shots at hand.” I will try to explain the key points of these movements.

“I hope that you will all pay attention so that you remember what you see and hear. Don’t let me teach for nothing as you watch the excitement in vain.”

When all the disciples heard this they felt lucky that their senior brother had caused this lesson to happen. They all said in unison.” The Shifu teaches us so well, but we sometimes don’t remember. We will try not to disappoint!” Fang Zishou immediately went to the weapons rack and brought Master Chen his favorite spear.

Master Chen walked to the court while

holding the spear, and then stopped, standing with a T-step. The disciples stood all around the master, each one holding a spear and ready to follow.

Master Chen flicked the spear and it swayed with energy. The head of the spear trembled and arced in a wide red circle. Just this initial show of skill would take 10 years of study to perform.

Master Chen stood up, looked from side to side, and then opened the first move. Four more moves followed in rapid succession. All of the disciples watched carefully, engrossed. They watched as Master Chen thrust the spear while performing the first three moves, “turn the clouds to see the sun”, “return the gold furnace”, and “the lion shakes the head”. After this, he continued with “return the gold furnace”. The next move used the forces of holding, locking, and sitting in a low posture. Master Chen then smoothly transitioned by rising up and shaking the spear with the ascending energy. The red of the spear flashed forward violently and was suddenly drawn back. .

The spear then pointed straight up as Master Chen performed “golden rooster independent”, with one arm protruding out, looking as stable as a statue.

The disciples were dumbfounded by Master Chen’s powerful and graceful movements, and they applauded in an uproar. However, everyone turned in surprise in the midst of the cheers as an unfamiliar voice shouted, “Great spear form!”

Master Chen said “Oh?” and scanned the shadowed wall of the practice field for the source of the voice. The big disciple, Fu Jiannan scowled as his eyes flashed with moonlight. His voice boomed out like spring thunder, “Who’s that?”





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

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