



Wudang

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

10/20



From Sifu Paul

Greetings, everyone,

The autumn weather has, for the most part, been a delight; with whirlwinds of cascading leaves showering a leisurely walk or an outdoor round of T'ai Chi, soon cooler temperatures will move us indoors.

In this issue, our fundraiser begins, an update on the studio upgrades and class schedule, a brief history of T'ai Chi's Five Family Styles, and more.



Our Fundraiser Officially Begins!

October is the month we officially begin our annual fundraiser, which will run through Dec. 31. Thank you to those who have already donated.

Since 2017, the studio has been offered a \$5,000 gift by a generous studio member to be used as an incentive for a matching-grant fundraiser that has been held in the fall. This year, we are so very grateful and pleased to announce that we have been offered the same opportunity and gift: If we raise \$5,000, we'll get a \$5,000 bonus.

We have made our match three years in a row—and even exceeded it. We hope to do the same this year. Of course, this year is a different kind of year.

If you feel inspired to donate—in any amount—please know that your tax-deductible contribution will be immediately doubled; \$10 becomes \$20, \$100 becomes \$200, and so on. We celebrate having served our members and community for the past 27 years in our current location and look forward to many more.

New Class Schedule/ Studio Opening

We have had such a wonderful run of spring, summer, and autumn weather for our T'ai Chi practice at Hampden Park that it's bittersweet to realize it's coming to an end. Our Zoom classes have been a success and were open only to members as we adapted to a new technology and worked through some technical issues, but now we are up and running. Soon, our Zoom classes will be open to all.

The studio is being configured for a safe return to reduced-capacity live classes. This has taken a little longer than expected and is almost complete; with new ceiling fans, HEPA air cleaners that remove airborne viruses, a safe-distanced floor layout, and an online registration system, we will begin opening classes at the studio soon. In the interim, Sifu Paul will offer Zoom classes on Park days when the weather is bad until the new expanded schedule is up and running. A special emailing and notice on the website and Facebook will present the new schedule and guidelines for registration.

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Our fall fundraiser has begun! Double your donation thanks to the matching grant.

The Five Family Styles of T'ai Chi Ch'uan

Part 1

T'ai Chi is the product of many streams of Chinese thought and practices that are derived from its long and rich history. Over time, these streams converged to birth the art known as T'ai Chi Ch'uan. From its origins, this system of principles and practices evolved into five family styles of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, each with its own unique flavor, yet anchored in a canon of common essential elements that bind them together as Nei Chia Ch'uan, or internal martial arts. The following is a brief introduction to the Five Family Styles and the key innovators in each clan that helped the art evolve and grow into the worldwide practice that it is today.

The Antecedents

Huangdi

One of the great antecedents of Chinese martial arts is Huangdi, who is known as the Yellow Emperor. He is said to be the ancestor of all Chinese and the initiator of Chinese culture. Huangdi



reigned for one hundred years from 2697–2597 BCE. He is credited with formulating many of the early precepts of Taoism; the foundations of Chinese medicine as laid out in his “Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon”; the first characters of Chinese writing called Bone Script; and new methods of hunting and farming. He designed carts, boats, musical instruments, and clothing. And he developed early Chinese astronomy; a calendar; the first code of laws; and military arts, strategy, and weapons, among other accomplishments.

Huangdi was seen as a master of longevity techniques and also a practitioner of Taoyin, a form of exercise in which movements of the body combine with breathing to guide the circulation of blood to cleanse and repair the



body. The Yellow Emperor’s influence on martial arts and all aspects of Chinese thought and culture is profound and far reaching.

Lao Tzu

A Taoist sage of the sixth century BCE, Lao Tzu authored the philosophical text known as the Tao Te Ching (Classic of the Way and Its Virtue). The Tao Te Ching illuminated in writing the fundamental tenets of Taoism that were adopted into T'ai Chi Ch'uan such as the theory of yin, a sinking and contracting force; yang, a rising and expanding force; and yuan, a neutral force:

Tao gives life to the one
The one gives life to the two
Two gives life to the three
The three give life to ten thousand things

All beings support yin and embrace yang
and the interplay of these two forces fills
the universe;

Yet only at the still point,
between the breathing in and the breathing
out,

Contact Us

For timely updates, follow Twin Cities T'ai Chi Ch'uan on **Facebook**.

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Lao Tzu, author of the
Tao Te Ching

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Huangdi, the Yellow
Emperor, early Taoist

can one capture these two in perfect harmony.

—Tao Te Ching

T'ai Chi (Supreme Polarity) springs from Wu Chi (the Limitless). It is the source of motion and tranquility and the mother of Yin and Yang.

In motion they separate; in tranquility they fuse into one.

—T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics

Or the concept of softness overcoming hardness:

Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water.

Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better;

It has no equal.

The weak can overcome the strong;

The supple can overcome the stiff.

Under heaven everyone knows this,

Yet no one puts it into practice.

—Tao Te Ching

From the most flexible and yielding you will arrive at the most inflexible and unyielding. If you can breathe correctly, your body will become active and alert.

—T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics

Other shared precepts abound; Lao Tzu's ideas penetrate into the marrow of T'ai Chi Ch'uan's philosophical center.

Sun Tzu

Sun Tzu was a Chinese general and military strategist; he is said to have lived from 544–496 BCE. He is the author of *The Art of War*, an influential work of military strategy that has shaped Chinese philosophy and military thinking; more recently, it has also been influential in the West both in the military and in business.

In China, Sun Tzu is revered as a legendary philosopher, scholar, and military figure. His ideas on martial tactics and strategy have also influenced those of T'ai Chi Ch'uan:

Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical.

—*The Art of War*

If your opponent does not move, you do not move. At his slightest stir, you have already anticipated it and moved beforehand.

—T'ai Chi Classics

Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.

—*The Art of War*

The energy appears relaxed and slackened but is in reality powerful and firmly rooted.

—T'ai Chi Classics

Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

—*The Art of War*

In resting, be as still as a mountain peak; in moving, act like the current of a great river.

—T'ai Chi Classics

Tamo and the Shaolin Temple

Tamo (Bodhidharma) was a Buddhist monk who lived during the fifth century. He traveled



< Tamo, a Buddhist monk who introduced practices that would become Shaolin martial arts

from India to China and is credited with transmitting Chan Buddhism there. He came to the Shaolin Temple in Henan Province to assist the monks in translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese.

Tamo observed that the monks were not in good physical condition. They lacked the mental and physical stamina to perform their fundamental Buddhist practices. He began teaching the monks exercises designed to build strength and flexibility, develop mental clarity, and circulate Qi. The exercises were the 18 Luohan Hands or 18 Techniques of the Enlightened Ones, a reference to disciples of the Buddha.

This sequence was the germ that developed into Shaolin martial arts, a formidable fighting system of empty-hand and weapons training with which warrior monks defended the temple against bandits and on occasion engaged in battles in military conflicts. This integration of Chan Buddhism and a codified and distinctly Chinese martial art became the parent style of most Chinese martial arts over the 1,500 years of the temple's history. Most of the origin stories of T'ai Chi Ch'uan involve a practitioner of Shaolin-based martial arts modifying their practice to Nei Chia Ch'uan/Internal fighting methods.

In the Beginning

Cheng San-feng

The origins of T'ai Chi Ch'uan begin with the legend of Chang San-feng. Chang was a wandering Taoist who cultivated in the Wudang Mountains during the Song Dynasty (12th century). However, there is not consensus among scholars about when he actually lived and, for some, whether he existed at all. Cheng, a proficient Shaolin-style martial artist, had a moment of inspiration by witnessing a battle between a snake and a bird in which circularity and evasive movements triumphed over brute-force attacks. Chang San-feng then created a Nei Jia Ch'uan sequence of movements based on the universal principle of T'ai Chi—yang within yin and yin within yang—that formed the foundation of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.



There are no definitive lineages from Cheng San-feng, but the famed Taoist and T'ai Chi master Wang Chung Yueh is said to have been among Cheng's direct descendants. Wang is reputed to have authored the T'ai Chi Treatise, part of the canon of writings known as the T'ai Chi Classics, as well as having taught Chen Wangting, founder of Chen Family T'ai Chi Ch'uan, although the Chen family does not recognize this connection.

Chang San-feng has become an iconic figure in Chinese martial arts history and, for many, the recognized founder of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

The Chen Family T'ai Chi Ch'uan

Chen Bu

Chen Bu is the historical patriarch of the Chen family; he was a formidable martial artist in the Shaolin tradition. Chen Bu lived in a time of war as the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) fell to the emerging Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The country was in a state of chaos, and the people lived in poverty and fear. The new emperor ordered a forced migration to sparsely populated areas ravaged by the war; Chen Bu and his family were forced to relocate. He settled in an area often raided by bandits. He organized the well-trained members of his family and others from their small village to raid the bandits' den and successfully defeated them, bringing peace to the region.

This solidified Chen Bu's reputation as a skillful martial artist, and he established a

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Legend says Taoist Cheng San-feng developed the movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan based on a fight between a snake and a bird.

martial arts school that attracted people to the village and increased his clan over time until most of the people there were named Chen. Chen Bu's great contribution was to establish a school and location in Wenshan County, Henan Province, and a lineage for Chen T'ai Chi to emerge; but that wouldn't happen for nine generations.



Chen Wangting, 9th Generation

Chen Wangting was a garrison commander and government official toward the end of the Ming dynasty (1644); he was also the founder of Chen Family T'ai Chi and, many historians say, the creator of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. But few things are created in isolation, and Chen Family T'ai Chi is no exception. Chen was influenced by General Chi Chikuang's military text on strategy and martial arts, the New Book of Effective Techniques: Canon of Boxing; he based part of his T'ai Chi routines on 32 techniques in the manual. Chen also borrowed from Taoyin (leading and guiding energy) and Tu-na (expel and collect energy) for breath and energy work. Yin-yang theory was also prominent as a way to conceal hardness within softness and

Graduation News

We are pleased to announce that Libby Frost, Elinor Hsu, Rosemary Kapsch, Mark Spolidoro, and Craig Upright have completed learning the T'ai Chi Fan Form with Tutor Kim Husband. Congratulations!

harmonize opposing elements until they reach a state of balance; other Taoist theories of consciousness directing movement were also integrated.

From these elements, he created five shorter T'ai Chi forms and two longer ones: the Long Fist, consisting of 108 postures, and the Cannon Fist, consisting of 71. A component that was unique to these seven sets was Silk Reeling, an energetic practice that added a spiral force to the movements that mimicked the movement of a silkworm weaving its cocoon. To these empty-hand forms, he added weapons (sword, broadsword, staff, spear) and Pushing-Hands practices.

Chen Wangting's system underwent subtle changes over the next five generations as firearms were introduced on the battlefield and hand-to-hand martial arts were diminished for military use; longevity and health concerns started to become more prominent. However, the protection of family, clan, and community remained vital, and the system put forth by Chen Wangting remained a closely guarded secret taught only to Chen family members.

Chen Chang Hsing, 14th Generation

Chen Chang Hsing is an important figure in the Chen Family lineage for two significant contributions. First, he synthesized the seven routines of Chen Wangting into two forms. Notably, he removed many of the more physically demanding gymnastic movements from the forms. Of the five shorter forms, he



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Chen Wanting, founder of
Chen Family Tai Chi

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Chen Chang Hsing was
the first to teach Chen-
style T'ai Chi outside
the Chen family.

combined the first three and then combined the fourth and fifth sets with the Cannon Fist form. They are known as the First Routine and the Second Routine. Most of the T'ai Chi forms of subsequent family styles are derived from the First Routine.

Chen Chang Hsing's second contribution is that he was the first to teach the Chen-style T'ai Chi to someone outside of the Chen family. That outsider was named Yang Luchan. Yang Luchan would become one of the most significant figures in T'ai Chi Ch'uan history. His story will continue in Part 2 of this article in the next issue of *Wudang*.

The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and it's fighting by fools.

—Thucydides (c. 460–c. 400 BCE)

With Gratitude

Thank you to everyone who has paid fourth-quarter dues. We are grateful for your support and presence at the studio.

Insights of a Buddhist Monk

Studio member Dennis Kelly offered this quote from one of his teachers, Sayadaw U Tejaniya, a Buddhist monk from Myanmar, on experiencing T'ai Chi.

When I went to Hong Kong, a lot of the yogis do T'ai Chi in the morning, and I would practice with them. I loved it! Every moment there are so many things to be aware of at the same time. You can't focus. That's perfect for Vipassana (insight meditation). You move the hands and the legs and you know them both at the same time—that's awareness doing its work. You're aware, and you can't focus too much, so you relax.

— Sayadaw U Tejaniya

If every movement can be directed by the mind-intent within and manifested without, then the internal spiritual aspect and external physical aspect will be united. Upper and lower parts of the body will move in unison. Thus, the body will instantly follow the dictates of the mind and the chi, and intrinsic energy will immediately reach the intended point.

—T.T. Liang

