



# Wudang

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

9/20



## From Sifu Paul

Greetings, everyone,

Welcome to September and its auspicious full moon, the month that marks the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. It's been a beautiful summer for practicing T'ai Chi outside, as our well-attended classes at Hampden Park have shown. We look forward to continuing them as long as the weather and the light hold out.

In March, the COVID pandemic temporarily closed the doors of our studio space. But the studio is more than a space; it is a body of knowledge and practices, a school with a 35-year history tied to a lineage that goes back generations. Most importantly, it is a community of people with diverse backgrounds and a common interest in T'ai Chi and other internally focused movement arts.

We adapted to the change and introduced a four-phase plan to keep T'ai Chi available to our members that included practice videos available on our website; outdoor practices in the park; virtual classes on Zoom; and, beginning in October, a return to the studio for indoor T'ai Chi Solo Form classes. More ideas are in the works to expand access to T'ai Chi during this time. Your ideas and requests are always welcome to help shape our offerings.

In this issue: news of the fall fundraiser, T'ai Chi as meditation, poetry, and more. Enjoy the last weeks of summer!

## Our Fundraiser in 2020

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 \$5k bonus. We have made our match three years in a row—and even exceeded it. Of course, this year is a different kind of year.

The pandemic has disrupted life as we know it; many businesses were forced to close (including our studio temporarily), creating financial instability for businesses and their employees.

Twin Cities T'ai Chi has a long history in the Twin Cities and has a firm commitment to our mission. We intend to be here serving our community and expanding it long after the pandemic has subsided. We need a little help getting there. Our monthly expenses haven't changed, but our quarterly revenue has. If you feel inspired to donate—in any amount—

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In-studio classes to resume in October

please know that your tax-deductible contribution will be immediately doubled:

- \$10 = \$20
- \$20 = \$40
- \$40 = \$80
- \$80 = 120
- \$120 = \$240
- \$240 = \$480
- \$480 = \$960
- \$960 = \$1920
- \$1920 = \$3,840
- \$3,840 = \$7,680

The fundraiser will officially begin October 1 and run through December 31, but feel free to donate anytime. You may donate on the website or send a check to the studio. Thank you for your consideration and your participation in our studio.



## T'ai Chi Helps Reinvigorate Stem Cells, Researchers Find

Taiwanese researchers have identified one possible reason that practitioners of the martial art T'ai Chi Ch'uan tout its health benefits: shadowboxing apparently reinvigorates stem cells.

In a study published in the international medical journal Cell Transplantation, a research team found that T'ai Chi Ch'uan can increase the number of stem cells in practitioners.

Lin Hsin-jung, a neural surgeon and head of China Medical University Beigang Hospital in southern Taiwan, said Saturday that his team's

## Class Schedule

There will be no class on Zoom Monday, Sept. 7, on Labor Day

Mondays: 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

Tuesdays: 12:30 p.m. on Zoom

Wednesdays: 6:00 p.m. at Hampden Park

Thursdays: 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

Saturdays: 12:30 p.m. at Hampden Park

research has been selected as the cover story for the latest issue of the journal.

He noted that the public has long considered T'ai Chi to be good for the body, and practitioners say it helps them live a longer, healthier life.

Lin and a team of researchers put the theory to the test with three years of research.

In the study, 60 subjects were divided into three groups, two of which undertook T'ai Chi and speed walking, respectively, and a control group that did no exercise at all. The researchers concluded that the T'ai Chi practitioners saw their individual stem cell counts increase by increments of 3 to 5 times.

Regular T'ai Chi exercises helped the subjects with heart function, reinvigorated neural cells in the brain, balanced and helped with mental trauma and nerve exhaustion, Lin said.

The research is titled "T'ai Chi Intervention Increases Progenitor CD34+Cells in Young Adults" by Yeh Tzu-kang and Lilian Wu.

## Contact Us

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

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Science finds that  
T'ai Chi boosts stem  
cells.

## T'ai Chi as Moving Meditation

The practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan is now being recognized by the scientific and medical communities for its health-giving properties and benefits to the body-mind. The term "moving meditation" is often applied to the practice of T'ai Chi. But can we really meditate while moving slowly through space? T.T. Liang said that "T'ai Chi is first for Health, second for Self-Defense, third for Mental Accomplishment, and last, to become an Immortal."

There is much being written about the first category of health; from balance to blood pressure to stress relief, T'ai Chi is rapidly becoming the exercise doctors prescribe most. In this stage, the movements must be relaxed, smooth, and unified, so the Qi begins to circulate in the body and brings oxygen-rich blood to the cells.

To understand T'ai Chi as a martial art is more difficult and requires connecting to a teacher with that level of understanding and skill. Exercises with a partner are necessary to fully develop in this area, which in turn changes the understanding and feeling of the form. To know something of the martial meaning and application of the movements deepens the practice greatly.

*"For 30 minutes I really was in another world. It was an ideal world, peaceful and quiet. After the total relaxation of body and mind for these 30 minutes in the ideal world, I return to this one."*

~ T.T. Liang

Mental Development, for Master Liang, was a process of mastering the mind to concentrate, comprehend, and apply the principles to the movements of the practice, but also to understand the historical writings known as the T'ai Chi Classics; the philosophical roots of T'ai Chi such as the Dao Te Ching; and even T'ai Chi's relationship to the symbol



system of the I Ching. Primarily, though, in this stage, the movements have been mastered and are connected by the undistracted concentration of the mind.

The obscure and somewhat misleading reference to "becoming an Immortal" connects the practice to its roots in Daoism, but for Liang, it was less about becoming realized as an enlightened sage than about having the concentrated mind of the previous stage give way to an expanded awareness of mind in which the body moves automatically and the mind is in a state of undisturbed peace and tranquility for the duration of the form.

The amount of electrical activity in the brain produces various states of consciousness. The highest frequency range, measured in Hz or cycles per second, is beta or waking consciousness (13–26 Hz or higher). This is the state we are in for most of our day-to-day interactions and activities. The second range is called alpha, which is a state of relaxed awareness

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Prof. Cheng and  
T.T. Liang demonstrate  
Parry and Punch

(8–13 Hz). The third state of brain wave activity is called theta, which is characterized as a dream state (4–8 Hz). The slowest is delta, which is the state we enter during deep sleep (0.5–4 Hz).

Alpha is the frequency most commonly produced during meditation and is the state of mind Master Liang describes here in the fourth stage:

“After sufficient practice, you will master the 150 postures so thoroughly that you will forget the rhythm, the movement, even yourself—although you are proceeding as usual. At this stage, you are in a trance; your five attributes (form, perception, consciousness, action, and knowledge) are all empty—this is meditation in action and action in meditation. When you finish and come to the end of the postures, suddenly you are back. Where have I been? What have I been doing? I don’t know and I don’t remember. This is complete relaxation of body and mind lasting 30 minutes. For 30 minutes I really was in another world. It was an ideal world, peaceful and quiet. After the total relaxation of body and mind for these 30 minutes in the ideal world, I return to this one.”

Every practice session of T’ai Chi gives benefits to the practitioner in whatever stage of development they are in. The most important thing is to always get up and begin the form.



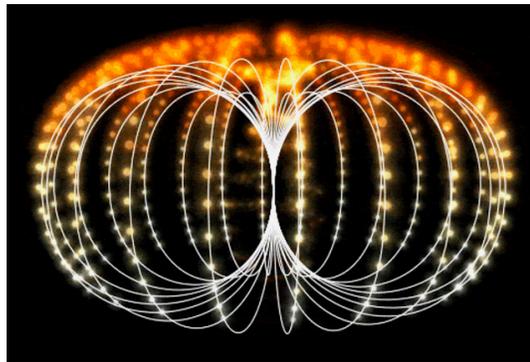
## Staying Supple

When life begins  
we are tender and weak  
When life ends  
we are stiff and rigid  
All things, including the grass and trees,  
are soft and pliable in life  
dry and brittle in death

So the soft and supple  
are the companions of life  
While the stiff and unyielding  
are the companions of death

An army that cannot yield  
will be defeated  
A tree that cannot bend  
will crack in the wind  
Thus, by Nature’s own decree  
the hard and strong are defeated  
while the soft and gentle are triumphant

~ Lao tsu



## Effortless Concentration

By Puran Bair

Using your will power to control your mind is pointless, like trying to control children by making rules.

Your mind will fight your will, but it will surrender to your heart. This is a great secret of concentration: use your emotion. It’s easy to think of what you love.

“No one has to remind the lover to remember the beloved, for the lover sees the beloved’s face everywhere.”

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View from Bei Do  
Ping Mountain, China

Following this advice, concentration is no longer a chore but a joy. Whatever one loves, one can easily hold in one's mind. Anyone can do it.

A further step is to concentrate on anything by finding the love that one has for it. Your heart can easily direct your mind because although mind rebels against will, mind surrenders willingly to love.

It is the stream of desire flowing in the heart that gives us our sense of direction. When we are unaware of this stream of emotion, we waste our time in pursuit of things whose attainment doesn't bring us happiness, and neglect those things that would fulfill us.

The heart-centered state can be disruptive to a life organized to avoid emotion and fill time with unimportant activities. Your heart will remind you of what you have always wanted, and then the question is, "What are you doing about it?"

## Yuangshuo

Sitting alone in peace  
Before these cliffs  
The full moon is  
Heaven's beacon  
The ten-thousand things  
Are all reflections  
The moon originally  
Has no light  
Wide open  
The spirit of itself is pure  
Hold fast to the void  
Realize its subtle mystery  
Look at the moon like this  
The moon that is the heart's  
pivot.

~ Han Shan

