



The Newsletter of the
**Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan
Studio**
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Wu-Dang

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Complimentary for studio members.
\$5.00 subscription for others.
Please send requests to address at left.

New Schedule

By Ray Hayward

Our new schedule begins June 15th. Monday's 8:30-9:30 **12 Animals** class is open to new members. Tuesday night's 8:30-9:45 **Praying Mantis** class will change to **Level I**, and be ongoing. Anyone may join this class at any time. Wednesday night classes will be as follows: 6:00-7:00 **T'ai-Chi Practice** (at Studio), 7:00-8:00 **Hsing-Yi** (anyone may join this class at any time), 8:00-9:00 **Swimming Dragon Pa-Kua**. All other classes in the schedule will remain the same. Refer to the back page for a complete Studio schedule. Ask Ray or Paul if you have questions. ☺

Going to Northfield

By Ray Hayward

The last year of his life,
102 of them and then some,
Saw winter, spring and summer,
But not fall.
So I will witness this autumn,
Let him borrow my earthly senses,
And enjoy it all the more for the both of us.
Have the geese flown so high,
Were the leaves ever this colorful,
Did fall smell this good,
This past century?
Is this the first time
The world is on the brink of war,
Leadership is riddled with corruption,
Or the old ways die a slow death?
I think not.
And it is not the first autumn
That a student sat thinking
How much they missed their teacher.

5th Annual Summer Retreat

By Kim Hayward

Please consider coming to our annual retreat. This year's theme is "Swords, Tassels, Applications, Sensitivity, and Reminiscences of Master T.T. Liang." All studio members, regardless of level are welcome. What we plan to cover will include: how to add the tassel to T'ai-Chi Sword, Double Sword with Tassel Drills, Solo Form Applications, Vertical Pushing-Hands, Pa-Kua 2-Person Sensitivity, and videos from the complete spectrum of Master Liang's career—a veritable pu-pu platter of TCTCC offerings.

The program will be Friday, August 8 at 7:00 p.m. through Sunday, August 10 at 5:00 p.m. at the Shattuck School in Faribault, which is about one hour south of the Cities near I-35. We will begin with dinner and social time at 7 p.m. on Friday (registration/room check-in begins at 5 p.m).

The weekend will be led by Ray and Paul and consist of T'ai-Chi, of course, plus lectures, practice sessions, as well as social time, time to relax in the shade of a tree or frolic in the sunshine, and the return of 'a free massage for everyone' (ask someone who attended last year). Shattuck provides the rooms, all linens and board, which will consist of three meals per day—cafeteria style. There will be vegetarian options, plus a salad bar.

The fee is \$150, which includes; instruction, room, meals, and a weekend away from it all. There are a limited number of places for this event. Please sign up at the Studio. If you will be attending, we need a \$50 deposit by July 1st and the remaining \$100 by August 1st. Mail or drop your deposit, payable to TCTCC, at the Studio.

Please call Kim or Ray if you have questions.

(651) 767-0267. ☺

Three Compasses Reveal Eighteen Ways

By Val DiEuliis

May 19, 2003

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If you read the end of Chapter 14, Stories of the Masters, in Master T. T. Liang's book, *T'ai Chi Ch'uan For Health and Self-Defense*, you will find the phrase, "Touching the opponent's clothing, he can be pushed down in (any of) eighteen ways." When I first read this, I jumped to the conclusion that "eighteen ways" referred to techniques such as ward off, roll back, press, push, elbow, and so forth. Then, one evening in pushing hands class, our teacher, Ray Hayward, while introducing the concept of pushing *lines*, mentioned there were eighteen, according to the Classics. As we continued our study of pushing lines, Ray introduced the idea of three imaginary eight-point compasses as a teaching aide. I analyzed these compasses and found they describe eighteen distinct directions. Was this a coincidence? Could the phrase "eighteen ways" simply be a reference to directions? I mentioned my results to Ray, and he confirmed that this is the true meaning. I had been incorrectly interpreting the word "way" as "a manner or method of doing," when I should have been reading it as "direction."

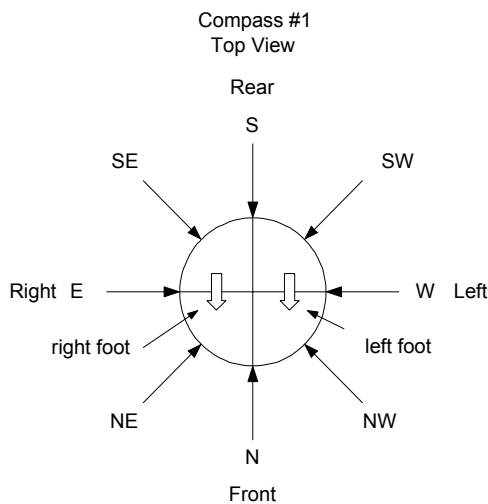
I will describe the compasses and demonstrate how they point to the eighteen directions, but first, we must agree on some terms. For the remainder of this article, you and I will be pushing hands partners. You will push with one hand; I will defend. Before you push me, you place your hand on some point of my body. This corresponds to the phrase "Touching the opponent's clothing." By touching me, you have chosen the place to push. When you push me, you exert a force on that place, and in the language of physics, force comprises both a magnitude and a direction. The magnitude corresponds to how hard you push, and the *direction*, the *line* along which your hand would move were my body not in the way.

A little practice reveals some lines are better than others. You can knock me off-balance with very little force when you push some lines, but you will find it very difficult to knock me over when you push others. For example, if I stand in a left bow stance, you will knock me out of my stance very easily if you push the middle of my chest on the diagonal. If you try to push my left shoulder on the diagonal, however, you will find it difficult to move me even if you push very hard because my body's structure will be aligned directly from your hand through my rear foot and into the floor.

1 I thank Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary for the definitions.

To complicate things further, the effect of pushing a line changes when I assume different positions and stances, such as bent over at the waist, weight on the front foot, weight on the back foot, bow stance, horse stance, cat stance, etc. In our study of pushing hands, we must catalog every possible line and situation in our muscle memory until we automatically recognize a weak line and immediately push it. The Classics call this, "recognizing the opponent's defective position."

If we wish to study pushing lines together, we must refer to the lines in a consistent manner. The idea of three compasses fits the bill. Let's begin with Compass #1, which is parallel to the floor. I face North in the Wu Chi stance at its center. The diagram below illustrates your view if you face me—toward South—and look down at the compass.



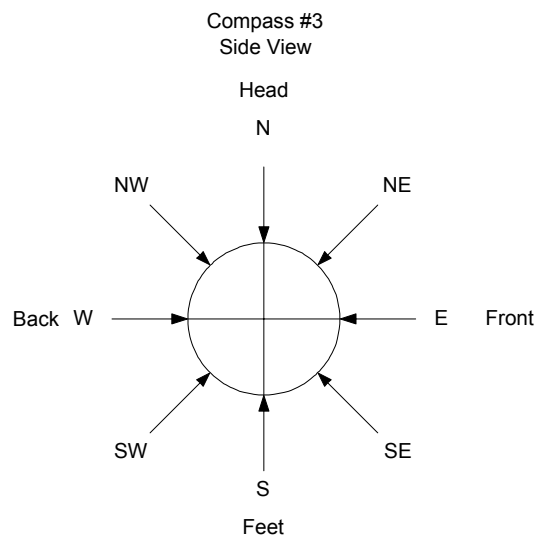
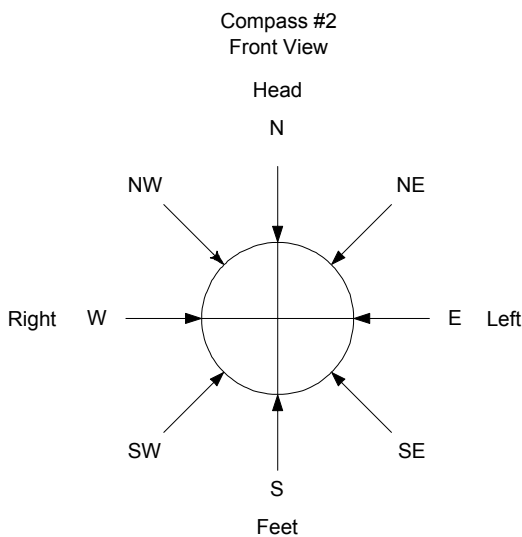
Compass #1 has eight points: N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, and NW; each illustrated with an arrow that indicates the direction of the force applied by a push. Thus, each point of the compass is a line. If you have ever used a navigational compass, you know that its arrows point outward because they tell you how to move away from its center. The arrows on the pushing hands compass, however, point inward because they tell you the direction of a force into its center. If you push the North line, you are pushing *from the North* point of the compass through the center and out of the South point. Thus, we will refer to a push direction as the compass point where the force originates. This method is similar to the definition of wind direction: a north wind is a wind that flows from the north.

When you push the lines shown by Compass #1, you direct the force of your pushes in a horizontal plane. For example, if your hand is on my right shoulder and you push the North line according to Compass #1, you push my shoulder from front to back. You can think of this as a line that passes into the front of my shoulder and passes out of the back of my right shoulder blade. If you place your hand on the outside of my right shoulder and push the line that passes through my left shoulder, you are pushing the East line according to Compass #1. These two examples illustrate lines in the horizontal plane that passes through my shoulders and is parallel to the floor.

Let's look at two more examples. If your hand is on my right hip and you push the North line according to Compass #1, you push my hip from front to back. You can think of this as a line that passes into the front of my hip and passes out the back. If you place your hand on the outside of my right hip and push the line that passes through my left hip, you are pushing the East line according to Compass #1. These two examples illustrate lines in the horizontal plane that passes through my hips and is parallel to the floor.

These four examples illustrate that Compass #1 shows which direction to push, but not which horizontal plane to use. You choose the horizontal plane when you place your hand on me. Therefore, you can view the center of the compass as the point where your hand touches me. When you push my right shoulder, my shoulder is the center of the compass and when you push my hip, my hip is the center.

Now, we can study the other two compasses, which are shown below.



Now that we have examined the Three Compasses, it is reasonable to ask, "How many lines are there?" Since

Let's return to the idea that we are standing and facing each other. I face North, you South. Imagine I am standing in the middle of Compass #2, which is oriented vertically and surrounds me like a halo. North according to Compass #2 corresponds to the top of my head; South between my feet; East, my left side; and West, my right side. If you push the North line of Compass #2, you push straight down. If you push my right hip on the line that passes through my left hip, you are pushing the West line according to Compass #2.

The latter example, your push of the West line according to Compass #2, exposes an interesting aspect of the Three-Compass model. If you recall from our discussion of Compass #1, a push on my right hip on the line through my left hip is the East line according to Compass #1. This is the same line we have just called the West line according to Compass #2. Therefore, Compass #1 and Compass #2 do not necessarily define unique lines. Although each one describes eight directions, when combined, they describe fewer than sixteen lines. I'll return to this issue after we study the third compass.

Like Compass #2, Compass #3 is oriented vertically. My head is North and my feet are South, but West is now my back and East, my front (chest). When you look at Compass #3, you see me from the side. If you push me from the North according to Compass #3, you push straight down. This is identical to the North push according to Compass #2. If you push from the West according to Compass #3, you are pushing me in a horizontal plane from my back to front. This is identical to the push from the South referenced by Compass #1. These examples further demonstrate that the three compasses are not independent of each other.

each compass references eight directions, three compasses reference 24 directions. We have already

learned some lines are described by more than one compass, which leads us to conclude there are fewer than 24 lines. I have prepared a table, shown below, that lists every possible line for the three compasses. Each line is referenced by a compass number (viz., 1, 2, or 3), and a direction (e.g., North, South). For each line, I have written a consistent description of its direction so you can compare the descriptions and find duplicates.

Line		Description
Compass	Direction	
1	N	front to back
1	NE	front right side toward the back at a 45° angle
1	E	right side to left side
1	SE	rear right side toward the front at a 45° angle
1	S	back to front
1	SW	rear left side toward the front at a 45°
1	W	left side to right side
1	NW	front left side toward the back at a 45°
2	N	straight down (top to bottom)
2	NE	left side down at a 45° angle
2	E	left side to right side
2	SE	left side up at a 45° angle
2	S	straight up
2	SW	right side up at a 45° angle
2	W	right side to left side
2	NW	right side down at a 45° angle
3	N	straight down
3	NE	front down at a 45° angle
3	E	front to back
3	SE	front up at a 45° angle
3	S	straight up
3	SW	back up at a 45° angle
3	W	back to front
3	NW	back down at a 45° angle

If you analyze this table in an organized manner, you will find all the lines are distinct except the following:

- Compass #1; North = Compass #3; East (front to back)



3 Limericks Elucidating Common Errors of T'ai-Chi Practice

By Dan Nave

There once was a potential master
 Who wanted to learn T'ai-Chi faster.
 He became so limp,
 People called him a wimp,
 And it ended up in a disaster.

- Compass #1; East = Compass #2; West (right side to left side)
- Compass #1; South = Compass #3; West (back to front)
- Compass #1; West = Compass #2; East (left side to right side)
- Compass #2; North = Compass #3; North (straight down)
- Compass #2; South = Compass #3; South (straight up)

There are six pairs of identical directions. Therefore, there are six fewer lines than directions referenced by the Three Compasses because each pair describes only one line. We can conclude that the Three Eight-Point Compasses describe 18 lines (24 directions minus 6 redundant references).

Ray Hayward's idea of the Three Eight-Point Compasses has led us to the meaning of the classic quotation "Touching the opponent's clothing, he can be pushed down in (any of) eighteen ways." As you practice the eighteen ways, however, you soon realize you can push in more than eight directions in one plane. You need not limit yourself to N, NE, E, etc. In fact, there are an infinite number of directions. So, why do the Classics refer to eighteen ways? I can only speculate. It seems reasonable that the masters would choose an eight-point compass as a guide. The philosophical ideas of Eight Directions, Eight Energies, and Eight Trigrams would naturally influence their approach to pushing hands, and as we have seen, they could have followed the eight-direction guide directly to the idea of eighteen lines.

What if, instead of eight-point compasses, we used another method to guide our study of pushing? We probably would arrive at something other than eighteen lines. In fact, Master Cheng Man Ch'ing's model stated there are twenty-six. I wonder where they are... ☹

A swayback committed a sin,
 Sticking butt out instead of tucked-in.
 If you don't T'ai-Gong,
 Then you're doing it wrong,
 Ain't T'ai-Chi, it must be Shao-Lin.

Those players who cannot relax,
 Shun yielding and opt for attacks.
 When push comes to shove,
 See opponent above,
 Ending up on the floor on the backs.

Fear, Worry, Anger and ...: Readings from 2002

From Ray Hayward

“Fear is an evil worse than the evil itself.”

From *In My Own Words*, by Padre Pio, p. 83.



Litany Against Fear

I must not fear.
Fear is the mind killer.
Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration.
I will face my fear.
I will permit it to pass over me and through me.
And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see
its path.
Where the fear has gone there will be nothing.
Only I will remain.

From *Dune*, by Frank Herbert.



“I think that the work of the Church in this developed and rich Western Hemisphere is more difficult than in Calcutta, South Yemen, or other areas where the needs of the people are reduced to the clothes needed to ward off the cold, or a dish of rice to curb their hunger—anything that will show them that someone loves them. In the West the problems the people have go much deeper; the problems are in the depths of their hearts.”

-Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *Mother Teresa: In My Own Words*, p.24.



A great Sufi master imparted this good advice to mankind, “If you awaken in the morning and find that you are lacking nothing in the way of material sustenance, and that you and your family are in good health, then don’t burden yourself with worry.”

The master advises us not to make problems for ourselves. If there are immediate and pressing problems, that is another story, but so many “problems” in people’s minds are not problems at all except in their minds. They are only “projected problems” which may or may not ever materialize. This is the affliction of twentieth century man: anxiety, or suffering inflicted upon oneself over the possibility of future suffering. As a result of this neurotic anxiety people may suffer intensely over a long period of time, although none of what they fear ever materializes. This is the epitome of foolishness.

We are shouldering weekly, monthly and yearly burdens each day. Why carry such baggage when you may walk unburdened and find all that you need awaiting

your arrival at each station of your journey? You only exist here and now. Tomorrow’s “you” is only a fantasy, as you can’t even know if you’ll live that long. By inventing so many problems for yourself you are only making yourself ill.

When I am in western countries I daily encounter people carrying the weight of anticipated problems. It is so difficult in the modern world to escape from having this perspective, and to concentrate on the moment in order to put it right. With tens of thousands of problems in front of you all at once how should a solution seem possible?

I often see people running and rushing about. Sometimes I ask them, “What’s the rush?” Then they nervously look at their watches and say, “We have tarried too long already. We have so many things to do today!” I reply, “It is laudable to be industrious and to look after your affairs well, but who would look after your affairs were you to drop dead here and now?”

I am not encouraging people to spend their whole days in meditation, but only trying to remind people who are not only running after their sustenance, but leaping, head-over-heels after ambitious all-encompassing undertakings, that it is impossible to “master the world,” and destructive to devote so much energy to their attempt, and with so much abandon. Far from attending to your affairs more efficiently by running, you are only likely to have a heart attack and die young!

Don’t live in a world of great big-time schemes, for such schemes will not save you from trouble, but entangle you in it even further. Simplify your problems so that the solutions may be simple, and don’t regard your problems with a magnifying glass, so that they are out of perspective—that habit will destroy you physically and spiritually.

From *Ocean of Unity*, by Shaykh Nazim al-Qubrusi, pp. 58-61



The second planet was inhabited by a very vain man.

“Ah! A visit from an admirer!” he exclaimed when he caught sight of the little prince, still at some distance. To vain men, other people are admirers.

“Hello,” said the little prince. “That’s a funny hat you’re wearing.”

“It’s for answering acclamations,” the very vain man replied. “Unfortunately, no one ever comes this way.”

“Is that so?” said the little prince, who did not understand what the vain man was talking about.

“Clap your hands,” directed the man.

The little prince clapped his hands, and the very vain man tipped his hat in modest acknowledgement.

This is more entertaining than the visit to the king, the little prince said to himself. And he continued clapping. The very vain man continued tipping his hat in acknowledgement.

After five minutes of this exercise, the little prince tired of the game's monotony. "And what would make the hat fall off?" he asked.

But the vain man did not hear him. Vain men never hear anything but praise.

"Do you really admire me a great deal?" he asked the little prince.

"What does that mean—*admire*?"

"To *admire* means to acknowledge that I am the handsomest, the best-dressed, the richest, and the most intelligent man on the planet."

"But you're the only man on your planet!"

"Do me this favor. Admire me all the same."

"I admire you," said the little prince, with a little shrug of his shoulders, "but what is there about my admiration that interests you so much?" And the little prince went on his way.

"Grown-ups are certainly very strange," he said to himself as he continued on his journey.

From *The Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, pp. 33-34.



"The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through this sequence: from bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to selfishness; from selfishness to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back into bondage."

~ Fraser Tyler



The train clanked and rattled through the suburbs of Tokyo on a drowsy spring afternoon. Our car was comparatively empty—a few housewives with their kids in tow, some old folks going shopping. I gazed absently at the drab houses and dusty hedgerows.

At one station the doors opened, and suddenly the afternoon quiet was shattered by a man bellowing violent, incomprehensible curses. The man staggered into our car. He wore laborer's clothing, and he was big, drunk, and dirty. Screaming, he swung at a woman holding a baby. The blow sent her spinning into the laps of an elderly couple. It was a miracle that the baby was unharmed.

Terrified, the couple jumped up and scrambled toward the other end of the car. The laborer aimed a kick at the retreating back of the old woman but missed as she scuttled to safety. This so enraged the drunk that he grabbed the metal pole in the center of the car and tried to wrench it out of its stanchion. I could see that one of his hands was cut and bleeding. The train lurched ahead, the passengers frozen with fear. I stood up.

I was young then, some 20 years ago, and in pretty good shape. I'd been putting in a solid eight hours of Aikido training nearly every day for the past three years. I liked to throw and grapple. I thought I was tough. Trouble was, my martial skill was untested in actual combat. As students of Aikido, we were not allowed to fight.

"Aikido," my teacher had said again and again, "is the art of reconciliation. Whoever has the mind to fight has broken his connection with the universe. If you try to dominate people, you are already defeated. We study how to resolve conflict, not how to start it."

I listened to his words. I tried hard. I even went so far as to cross the street to avoid the *chimplira*, the pinball punks who lounged around the train stations. My forbearance exalted me. I felt both tough and holy. In my heart, however, I wanted an absolutely legitimate opportunity whereby I might save the innocent by destroying the guilty.

This is it! I said to myself, getting to my feet. *People are in danger and if I don't do something fast, they will probably get hurt.*

Seeing me stand up, the drunk recognized a chance to focus his rage. "Aha!" he roared. "A foreigner! You need a lesson in Japanese manners!"

I held on lightly to the commuter strap overhead and gave him a slow look of disgust and dismissal. I planned to take this turkey apart, but he had to make the first move. I wanted him mad, so I pursed my lips and blew him an insolent kiss.

"All right!" he hollered. "You're gonna get a lesson." He gathered himself for a rush at me.

A split second before he could move, someone shouted "Hey!" It was earsplitting. I remember the strangely joyous, lilting quality of it—as though you and a friend had been searching diligently for something, and he suddenly stumbled upon it. "Hey!"

I wheeled to my left; the drunk spun to his right. We both stared down at a little old Japanese. He must have been well into his seventies, this tiny gentleman, sitting there immaculate in his kimono. He took no notice of me, but beamed delightedly at the laborer, as though he had a most important, most welcome secret to share.

"C'mere," the old man said in an easy vernacular, beckoning to the drunk. "C'mere and talk with me." He waved his hand lightly.

The big man followed, as if on a string. He planted his feet belligerently in front of the old gentleman, and roared above the clacking wheels, "Why the hell should I talk to you?" The drunk now had his back to me. If his elbow moved as much as a millimeter, I'd drop him in his socks.

The old man continued to beam at the laborer. "What'cha been drinkin'?" he asked, his eyes sparkling with interest. "I been drinkin' sake," the laborer bellowed

back, and it's none of your business!" Flecks of spittle splattered the old man.

"Oh, that's wonderful," the old man said, "absolutely wonderful! You see, I love sake too. Every night, me and my wife (she's 76, you know), we warm up a little bottle of sake and take it out into the garden, and we sit on an old wooden bench. We watch the sun go down, and we look to see how our persimmon tree is doing. My great-grandfather planted that tree, and we worry about whether it will recover from those ice storms we had last winter. Our tree has done better than I expected, though, especially when you consider the poor quality of the soil. It is gratifying to watch when we take our sake and go out to enjoy the evening—even when it rains!" He looked up at the laborer, eyes twinkling.

As he struggled to follow the old man's conversation, the drunk's face began to soften. His fists slowly unclenched. "Yeah," he said. "I love persimmons too..." His voice trailed off.

"Yes," said the old man, smiling, "and I'm sure you have a wonderful wife."

"No," replied the laborer. "My wife died." Very gently, swaying with the motion of the train, the big man began to sob. "I don't got no *wife*, I don't got no *home*, I don't got no *job*. I'm so *ashamed* of myself." Tears rolled down his cheeks; a spasm of despair rippled through his body.

Now it was my turn. Standing there in my well-scrubbed youthful innocence, my make-this-world-safe-for-democracy righteousness, I suddenly felt dirtier than he was.

Then the train arrived at my stop. As the doors opened, I heard the old man cluck sympathetically. "My, my," he said, "that is a difficult predicament, indeed. Sit down here and tell me about it."

I turned my head for one last look. The laborer was sprawled on the seat, his head in the old man's lap. The old man was softly stroking the filthy, matted hair.

As the train pulled away, I sat down on a bench. What I had wanted to do with muscle had been accomplished with kind words. I had just seen Aikido tried in combat, and the essence of it was love. I would have to practice the art with an entirely different spirit. It would be a long time before I could speak about the resolution of conflict.

By Terry Dobson, From Soul Food, by Kornfield and Feldman, pp. 148-151.



"One of the highlights of my entire training was a trip to visit Hollow Valley. I had nearly completed the initial stages of my education and was a fairly competent young martial artist. We went in company of one of the Wu Tang Elders and during our journey he told the story of Hollow Valley's earlier life. Brought up in a martial arts family, Hsu (his earlier family name) had received the

very best tutelage in both external and internal schools. At twenty years of age he was already a promising martial artist and by age thirty was well known throughout the Northeast. A specialist with staff and spear, he was also adept at timed strikes and had never lost a match. Frequently he would be called upon to demonstrate his skills at the houses of the noble and wealthy. His Form demonstrations impressed everyone with their dexterity, vigor and power, but even more remarkable was his ability to defeat challengers from many other styles and specialties. Though still a young man, he met each challenge easily and 'his art never left him.'

"Soon he had a comfortable position as guard and teacher at a prince's mansion in old Peking. He continued seeking martial arts teachers and studying assiduously and grew even more formidable as a boxer. One day an elderly Taoist priest came to visit the prince and young Hsu was asked to demonstrate his skills with the spear. Thought the demonstration was flawless, the Taoist was clearly unimpressed and casually remarked that the young man's 'kung fu' was no more than superficial youthful vigor. At that, Hsu became enraged and challenged the Taoist. The prince hastened to intervene, but the Taoist calmly rose from his seat and said simply, 'Come on.'

"Hsu charged in, but was completely incapable of hitting the Taoist. Using the best of his foot and fist techniques, he found that it was like trying to penetrate an empty robe. He never felt his strikes land on anything more solid than thin air, or the outer edge of the Taoist's cloak. Frustrated, Hsu pressed on his raging attack with all the power and skill he could muster, but striking the Taoist was like 'hitting at clouds or chasing the moon.' Never once did the Taoist use an offensive move until suddenly with a wind-swift foot sweep, he dumped young Hsu solidly on the ground. In time-honored fashion Hsu touched his forehead to the ground and begged to be accepted as the old Taoist's student, but the Taoist refused, saying that he was an old man who cared only to nurture his longevity during his final years. Gazing off into the distance, he stroked his beard with his first three fingers and thumb, then returned to converse with the prince.

"Hsu immediately detected the Taoist's hidden message and appeared at his doorway the next morning at 3AM. They spoke for several hours and by dawn Hsu had decided to leave his post and become a follower of the Way. Not much was heard from him for several decades, when it became known that he was dwelling at Hollow Valley, living the simple life of a mountain hermit.

"Our Elder asked him if he would reveal how he had decided to embark on the Way, and leave his position as the prince's bodyguard. My two companions and I had almost drifted off to sleep, but now sat up in rapt attention. Yes, that afternoon and night with Cloudless, my revered Taoist mentor, was the turning point in my

life and set me on a Path I have never for a moment regretted taking. When I was knocked down by that old man, all of my previous training as a martial artist seemed fruitless and foolish. Of what use to train assiduously for years, even decades, only to be toppled by a graybeard? My ambition had been to become a supreme martial artist and to live my life in comfort practicing and teaching my skills in the nobles' palaces of the Old Capitol. And I had made considerable progress in that direction, despite my relative youth. When I found that I could not even touch Cloudless, my faith in my skills and techniques was severely shaken, but even more so when I was soundly defeated in the blink of an eye.

“That night Cloudless convinced me that the path I had chosen could only result in increasing mental turmoil and a sad end. While young, I could count on my youthful vitality, and during middle age on my technical skill, but there must come a time when my mind would be forever preoccupied with anxiety. Would I still be a peerless martial artist at an advanced age? Would I be able to hold my own against determined youthful challengers? Having no literary attainments, I knew that only my martial prowess could give me any security or station in life. And it was immediately clear to me that at some point maintaining unbeatable martial prowess would itself become a burdensome duty rather than a source of energy and joy. While I had always aspired to be a consummate martial hero, I saw that the other side was the ever-present onus of having to ‘prove myself’ at any time, and the inevitable anxiety that would bring.

“Cloudless offered me a chance to accompany him as an assistant and to learn the rudiments of harmonizing with the Way. His presence was so ‘soft,’ yet powerful, that I accepted immediately. Though I continued my martial arts practice for many years thereafter, my main focus became meditation and study of Nature. I learned Horticulture, Herbal Medicine, and Geomancy. Cloudless and I would closely observe the coursing clouds, meandering streams, and arrangements of hills, always seeking the subtle movements of ch’i, which underlie all external appearances.

“As time went on I saw that Nature in its entirety is an energy-flow of vast dimensions. The sweep of tides, rivers, clouds, the patterns of growth in living creatures, and even the movement of Earth in its solar orbit, and of the entire Solar System in the Milky Way, is part of a gigantic ebbing and flowing of ch’i embodying tremendous, unbelievable power. If we can tune into this power and absorb it into our own body and spirit, the need for ‘self-defense’ appears trivial and childish. Nature itself becomes our protector at all times. Study of Tao is to live in this ever-present power flow with simplicity, economy, and trust, always guarding Lao

Tze’s ‘Three Treasures.’ You trainees are still young, but I hope you can heed my words.”

From Drawing Silk, by Paul Gallagher, pp. 136-139.



A little criticism makes me angry, and a little rejection makes me depressed. A little praise raises my spirits, and a little success excites me. It takes very little to raise me up or thrust me down. Often I am like a small boat on the ocean, completely at the mercy of its waves. All the time and energy I spend in keeping some kind of balance and preventing myself from being tipped over and drowning shows that my life is mostly a struggle for survival: not a holy struggle, but an anxious struggle resulting from the mistaken idea that it is the world that defines me.

As long as I keep running about asking, “Do you love me? Do you really love me?” I give all power to the voices of the world and put myself in bondage because the world is filled with “ifs.” The world says, “Yes, I love you *if* you are good-looking, intelligent, and wealthy. I love you *if* you have a good education, a good job, and good connections. I love you *if* you produce much, sell much, and buy much.” There are endless “ifs” hidden in the world’s love. These “ifs” enslave me, since it is impossible to respond adequately to all of them. The world’s love is and always will be conditional. As long as I keep looking for my true self in the world of conditional love, I will remain “hooked” to the world—trying, failing, and trying again. It is a world that fosters addictions because what it offers cannot satisfy the deepest craving of my heart.

“Addiction” might be the best word to explain the lostness that so deeply permeates contemporary society. Our addictions make us cling to what the world proclaims as the keys to self-fulfillment: accumulation of wealth and power; attainment of status and admiration; lavish consumption of food and drink, and sexual gratification without distinguishing between lust and love. These addictions create expectations that cannot but fail to satisfy our deepest needs. As long as we live within the world’s delusions, our addictions condemn us to futile quests in “the distant country,” leaving us to face an endless series of disillusionments while our sense of self remains unfulfilled. In these days of increasing addictions, we have wandered far away from our Father’s home. The addicted life can aptly be designated a life lived in “a distant country.” It is from there that our cry for deliverance rises up. ☯

From The Return of the Prodigal Son, by Henri J.M. Nouwen, pp. 42-43.



Notes on ‘Lessons with Master T.T. Liang’

By Joe Lapadat

Preface

This is the summary of one tai chi student’s perspective on the book, ‘T’ai-Chi Ch’uan: Lessons With Master T.T. Liang’, by Ray Hayward. The purpose of these notes is to emphasize that all lessons in T’ai-Chi are best manifest within the mind of the student. The endeavor of this series is to encourage all students of T’ai-Chi to digest the lessons it has to offer for their own interpretation.

p. 81 par. 3 - From constant practice, the chi will become so hot that it will evaporate and permeate the bones to become marrow. When the bones are full, they will become strong and heavy. This is what is meant by “Iron bars wrapped in cotton.”

Note: This is the key to fighting arthritis and healing bone disease.

p. 15, par. 1 - The T’ai-Chi Classics say, “The lowest vertebrae should be plumb erect.” If you don’t practice T’ai-Chi according to this principle it is not T’ai-Chi. Make sure your hips are tucked under and your spine is erect. Only this is T’ai-Chi’s way. Of course, if you do the Solo Form with your buttocks protruding, it’s Shao-Lin’s way.

Note: This opens up the pathway to flowing energy.

p. 15, par. 3 - Slow-motion is good for health because, first of all, by practicing slowly the chi can sink in to the tan-t’ien. When the chi sinks to the tan-t’ien, the blood will circulate throughout the body without hindrance. If you use this kind of slow-motion energy, it will come from your sinews and tendons. If you use external force to move your body, it will tense up and your chi will rise. This is not good for health. If you practice the slow movements of T’ai-Chi, the energy will gradually penetrate into the sinews and tendons and make the blood circulate throughout the entire body. When this happens, it will really be good for health.

Note: Flowing blood reduces disease, like flu and other diseases caused by stagnation. An old saying goes, “That which doesn’t move, dies.” Also, to accumulate chi such that it will not be detrimental to your skeletal structure, one must reduce weight around the midsection. To do this, first loosen the joints.

p. 17, par. 1 - Only by practice, gradually you can reach the highest levels.

Note: The only secret to tai chi; do the form!

p. 17, par. 2 - Don’t use energy. You are soft, but still quite strong. Relax’ gradually your intrinsic energy will come. Don’t use ‘hand business;’ there is nothing to do with hands. Use your whole body as one unit.

Note: This is the same as discovering ‘latent’ energy within you, and then trusting it without controlling it. This also points to the value of nine-joint harmony.

p.17, par. 4 - According to Professor Cheng, you may sweat a little bit while you practice, but if you sweat more, you should stop practicing. Don’t exercise any more. More means your chi, everything, is being wasted. If you lose it, you must replenish it. In T’ai-Chi you should reserve-too much sweating can hurt you.

Note: Gatorade is good.

p.17, par. 5 - When your hands are swollen and your body is tingling, it feels so comfortable, that means you got something. If after you practice one round and you feel tired, that means you are tense. You have to find out your defects, your tension spots.

Note: The best way to learn the value of this early in your tai chi, path is through standing meditation.

p. 18 par. 1 - In the Solo Form you push by imagination. Don’t put energy into your body. So you must relax, sink, but don’t collapse, don’t drop. Collapsed means your blood won’t circulate. Be relaxed like a snake, a live snake. A dead snake is collapsed. When you are relaxed, the energy is preserved internally.

Note: This is the practitioner’s opportunity to be a ‘ghost within themselves.’ The goal is true quietness.

p. 18, par. 2 - You must practice the Solo-Form smoothly, without jerks or fast movements. When practicing, you must imagine the air around you is heavy. Imagine that every movement is difficult due to the restriction of the air. Without this, you won’t advance. When the Classics say, “Mobilize energy as if reeling silk from a cocoon”, implies the same principle.

Note: I never met anyone who had anything good to say about hyperextension.

p. 18, par. 3 - Cheng Man-ch’ing said, “When practicing alone, presume you have an opponent in front of you. When facing an opponent or giving a demonstration, imagine you are practicing alone.”

Note: Cheng Man-ch’ing stresses that to be content with a field of view is detrimental. This reinforces the notion that ‘imagination equals intent.’ This is training for that philosophy. ☺

The Five Fundamentals of the Mind

By Wong Hong-Jai/Wang Xiang-Zhai

Translation and Explanatory Commentary

By Grandmaster Wai-Lun Choi

There are five basic fundamental concepts which will allow a practitioner the insight or background needed to develop a clearer idea as to how to achieve greater levels in the Martial Arts.

These concepts will help you in your overall relaxation (meditative) skills.

The importance of your ability to relax is due to several factors: the first and foremost is that when you are in a relaxed state, your breathing is not restricted. The breath is full and natural. Secondly, your alertness (focus) is clear and refined and finally your reaction time is quick and uninhibited.

In order to achieve this relaxed state you must practice meditation, however, the usual method of meditation emphasizes the physical acts of monitoring your breathing, feeling for any stress or tension, etc.

These five guidelines deal with your state of mind, a precondition of one's behavior.

Respect – Respect makes reference to how you treat others. You should always maintain a sense of mutual respect. You should not take a position of superiority, whether or not it may be justified. The reason being that there exists an infinite amount of experience in a lifetime and a single person cannot have participated in or have been witness to every possible event or situation. Therefore, your fellow man has experiences and ideas that you may never have encountered or contemplated. It is here that you can always learn from others. In the area of the Martial Arts, you classmate/opponent possesses differing ideas, skill levels, etc., all of which are legitimate. There may exist better, faster, more effective techniques, but nevertheless, your opponent's are real and must be addressed. Everyone will not attack and react in the same way (power, angle, or methods). If you are perceptive, you can learn from every variation/situation that exists.

When you take on a position of superiority you create an artificial barrier between yourself and others, this barrier will automatically create tension. Tension is the single most important hindrance you must avoid in order to achieve higher levels.

Care – Be thoughtful and careful when acting. It is important that you analyze and commit yourself to whatever actions you take. You must believe in the decision-making process you undergo. If you do not believe (have faith) or do not understand, you will create a mental block, which will hinder the end result. Once you understand how a process will help you then your

mind will accept it, giving it value and allowing you to concentrate. It will also allow you to expand, gaining greater insight into how other issues relate to one another.

Thought – This is a simple process. Understanding that you are only capable of doing one thing at a time, you can only process (solve) one issue at a time. Do not try to do two things at once, this will only separate your focus as you move from one problem to another, bring about anxiety and stress. This single-mindedness will allow you to attack the opponent with unrestrained whole-body power.

Cut – You must understand completely what you are trying to achieve; meaning what is the end result of what is to be gained. You must therefore, strip away all the process and methods to seek the essence of the subject matter. At this point, you then will understand the process and the method at which you are achieve the desired end.

Harmony – Your interaction with others should be based on self-respect and honor. You should not take a position of superiority or inferiority. In this harmonious (neutral) posture you are at ease with others, allowing yourself to be relaxed, calm and composed.

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Wang Xiang-Zhai is the founder of Yi-Chuan. Wang was born in 1885 in Hebei Province. In his childhood he was weak and often sick so his parents send him to study from Mr. Guo Yun-Shen, the most famous Hsing-Yi master of the day. Wang worked hard and in a short time mastered his teacher's teachings and became the top student. In 1907, Wang Xiang-Zhai traveled all around China looking for the most skilled masters to compare skills with and learn from. In the mid-1920's, as a result of his long-time practice, research and rich experience in actual combat, Wang Xiang-Zhai founded Yi-Chuan or mind-intent boxing.

~

Wai-Lun Choi is grandmaster and lineage holder of the Liu Ho Pa Fa style. Choi is also a master of Hsing-Yi, Pa-Kua and T'ai-Chi. He learned Liu Ho Pa Fa from the previous grandmaster, Chan Yik Yan.

In 1968, Wai-Lun Choi became an assistant instructor with Chan, and he set up his own school the following year. In 1971, he won the Pan Southeast Asian Hand-to-Hand Martial Arts Tournament. He proved his fighting skills many other times—going undefeated also in three years of full-contact competition in Hong Kong. Later he was ordained the grandmaster of the style by his teacher. In 1972, Master Choi emigrated to America and now teaches in Chicago.

Schedule
June 15 – September 15, 2003

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
12:30-2:30 Solo Form			12:30-2:30 Solo Form	10:00-11:30 Eclectsis
6:00-7:30 Solo Form	6:00-7:30 Pushing-Hands Research: Methods and Basic Drills	6:00-7:00 T'ai-Chi Practice	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	11:30-12:00 Jump Rope 12:00-12:30 Conditioning or Stretching*
7:30-8:30 Weapons	7:30-8:30 2 Person San-Shou	7:00-8:00 Hsing-Yi	7:30-8:30 Praying Mantis II	12:30-1:30 Chi-Kung, Standing Meditation and Energy Work
8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua Lien- Huan Chang/ 12 Animals/	8:30-9:45 Praying Mantis Level I	8:00-9:00 Pa-Kua Swimming Dragon		1:30-2:30 Solo Form

* 12:00-12:30, first and last Saturdays are Stretching, all other Saturdays are Conditioning.
(11:30-12:00, Jump Rope every week.)

NOTE: The Studio will be closed on Memorial Day, May 26, and Labor Day, September 1st.

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