



The Newsletter of the
**Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan
Studio**
2242 University Ave
St Paul, MN 55114
(651) 767-0267

Wu-Dang

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www.tctaichi.com
email: tctaichi@minn.net

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

New Schedule

By Ray Hayward

The new schedule starts Monday, September 15th with the **Weapons** class 7:30-8:30 open to any who have finished the Solo Form. **Pa-Kua** 8:30-9:30 will be focusing on 2-Person Pa-Kua practices—no previous experience is required. **12 Animals** is open for new students as well.

Tuesday's **Pushing-Hands** class 6:00-7:30 is now open for new students who have completed the Solo Form. **San-Shou** (T'ai-Chi's 2-Person Form) is now open. It takes almost a full year to learn one side, so we will only be accepting new students for one month.

Liu Ho Pa Fa is the first of Saturday's new additions, which will run from 11:30-12:30. The prerequisite for this class is completion of the 12 Animals class. The other is Saturday's **Pushing-Hands** class 2:00-3:00, which is open to all students who have finished the Solo Form. All other classes are ongoing except those designated by level. If you have any questions, please talk to Ray or Paul. ☺

The 10th Anniversary Book is Done!

If you signed up for a book, please pick yours up. They are \$40, please make checks payable to TCTCC.



Extra thanks to Julie Cisler, Delores Steinlicht and Kim Husband for all of their care, expertise and hard work to get this project done.

Important Notices from the TCTCC Board

At their most recent meeting, the Board of Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan voted to make two policy changes as follows:

As of September 15, 2003, any past arrangements with students for reduced membership fees or "scholarships" other than those on the printed fee schedule will be null and void. If you have any questions about your status, please see Ray Hayward or call Kim Hayward at 651-767-0267.

Asking students for donations towards gifts or other good causes beyond the studio's annual solicitation for the Special Fund will no longer be allowed. We feel that our students come here for relaxation and they should not feel pressed to give money. And since our membership do not nearly cover our operating expenses and since we are organized as a not-for-profit institution, any studio donations should go toward our instructors' benefits and studio improvements as specified in the tax-exempt Special Fund we set up for that purpose.

Just a reminder—When we greet new students or bring them to a first class, be sure to introduce them to both of our instructors even if one of them is not teaching that particular class. Any new student deserves to meet both Ray and Paul if possible. ☺

Remembering Bob Geis

By Paul Abdella

This past August, Bob Geis, who was one of Master Liang's Minnesota students and a long time friend and early member of our studio died of cancer at the age of 60. Bob was among the first group of students who traveled to St. Cloud, Minnesota to study with Master Liang where he learned the core practices of Liang's T'ai-Chi system. Many of us who studied in St. Cloud would congregate at the small school run by our classmate Jonah Friedman and practice forms and pushing-hands together. Bob was among the students who would join in the practices. This group of students would form the core group that eventually became our studio.

On many occasions Ray, Jonah, Bob, myself and various other students gathered after class at a local Chinese restaurant and over a bowl of rice noodles and too many pots of tea, discussed T'ai-Chi, our philosophies of life, and generally got to know each other.

I discovered that Bob lived across the alley from me behind my apartment in South Minneapolis. Soon we were getting together to practice T'ai-Chi and I began to learn of Bob's deep and varied spiritual interests. Bob was knowledgeable in Native American spirituality (he moved his family to the Rosebud Indian reservation in South Dakota and lived there five years), Judeo-Christian religion, Psychology, Taoism, and eventually Buddhism, which captured his deepest interest the last twelve years of his life.



As the demands of his life as a social worker for Hennepin county and his increasing devotion to Buddhist practices made greater and greater demands on his time we eventually saw less of Bob at the studio. He always kept in touch with us and managed to show up for awhile at every new incarnation of the studio. T'ai-Chi remained an integral part of Bob's life and he was disciplined about maintaining a daily practice.

On the occasion of Master Liang's 100th birthday Bob traveled to New Jersey and gave a moving tribute to Master Liang and the remarkable influence he's had on so many lives including his own. He went on to publicly acknowledge our efforts at the studio to continue Master Liang's work in T'ai-Chi.

Bob's gifts as a counselor, healer, and teacher found a home at Pathways, an alternative healing center in Minneapolis dedicated to providing free or donation-based alternative healing services to sick and terminally ill patients. Bob donated his time there every week for the past ten years as a counselor and meditation teacher, working with people with cancer and other illnesses.

I visited Bob in the hospital last January a few days before he was to have a cancerous tumor removed from his brain and was surprised to find a man enveloped in a deep and centered calm. He spoke of his illness as a gift that would allow him to experience what many of his patients had gone through which would eventually make him a more effective counselor for them. This was not an act but rather the byproduct of a life deeply focused on discovering life's essential truths.

Bob was a bright light who focused his life on helping others and trying to leave the world a better place. With a broad smile, a quick sense of humor, and a big heart he succeeded in doing exactly that. He will be missed. ☺

T'ai-Chi Pushing-Hands: A Laboratory for Personal Growth

By Anita Ryan

Every day we go out into the world with our own unique set of armor to protect us from our fears and hide us from the judgments of fellow workers, bosses, acquaintances, friends and sometimes, even lovers. At this time in my life, my particular growing edge revolves around personal integrity. It seems to be vitally important for me to remain constant and true to myself in as many different life situations as I can. Unfortunately, there is a significant gap between my desire to do this and my demonstrated ability. Any number of times during the course of an average day, instead of being quietly centered, I will unconsciously act or react out of ego, slipping into my armor, throwing out a smoke screen when it seems too dangerous to let people in.

To come to a martial arts studio as a respite from the tension created within this life of hiding seems like a good and natural thing to do. Within the practice of T'ai-Chi Pushing-Hands there are the obvious opportunities to vent away this tension through physical exertion, the effort of learning new skills and of course the presence of social distraction. But if I engage in Pushing-Hands practice and remain only at this venting level, I am in danger of missing the deeper spiritual and psychological lessons, which will in the end, improve and strengthen the martial arts aspects of my training.

For me the beauty of T'ai-Chi Pushing-Hands is that it allows me to practice finding, losing and regaining my physical and spiritual center over and over in a very short period of time. At each practice session, I work first with one partner, then another, then another. Each person presents me with new opportunities to feel myself in relation to a new personality, a new level of skill, a new level of spiritual and emotional development. And of course, there is no hiding for me or anyone else in the room. The physical proximity and the sensory intensity of Pushing-Hands does not allow it.

Even as I stand in preparation for Willow practice, in a bow-stance, not touching but only inches apart, I can feel the coming exposure. Once we touch, beginning to press and push and pull, both my partner and I inevitably begin to learn one another's secrets. As my body stiffens, he will understand my hatred of being controlled. As he repeats old but proven techniques, I begin to understand his fear of moving into the unknown. As we move from partner to partner, the full palette of human emotion is exposed. I've been able to practice being centered and aware in the presence of anger, joy, embarrassment, pride, surprise, fear of harming, and fear of being harmed. I've practiced being myself in the face of extreme aggression and overwhelming generosity.

At different moments in time my partners have been caring, trusting, overbearing, engaged in game playing and deadly serious.

The privilege of working within this T'ai-Chi laboratory has allowed me to wrestle with my ego in relative safety. It continues to help me move closer to the personal integrity that I've been searching for, and ironically the T'ai-Chi mantra of "invest in loss" seems to gradually be improving my push hands and general T'ai-Chi skills.

Each Tuesday evening, as my teachers pass through the practice line critiquing and supporting the efforts of all the students, I find myself immensely grateful for the double row of partners who open themselves to me and allow me to be open enough to learn the lessons of Pushing-Hands. Without these people, the principles of T'ai-Chi would remain theoretical constructs instead of inspired templates for living with integrity. ☯



Comments on the 2003 Retreat

By Mark Tomlinson

As a recent participant in the 2003 TCTCC Shattuck/St Mary's retreat I wanted to write in praise and recognition of what I feel went very well this year in order to reinforce further improvement to the program.

The facility: The patina of a well worn yet well maintained facility makes for the right mood of gentle reverence for things other than shiny and new. [Which by the way is what most of us are anyway, right?] If the event took place in a spa with air conditioning, saunas, new sheetrock, plastic paneling, rubber carpeting, and dispersed housing, we would not bond as a group nearly as well. We are treated with a large practice area well shaded with mature trees; a smooth hard surface for morning group forms; an expansive fire pit for meeting and socializing; a gym in the event of rain; a large meeting room indoors for music, lectures, and videos; and abundant secluded areas to relax and recharge. And who can argue with the price for room and board? It is a terrific bargain.

The food: When I am exercising vigorously I look forward to abundant quantities of simple, healthful food that will satisfy my hunger and not poison me. It is not gourmet dining, but the range of choice at each meal allows each of us to gather onto our plates the food that will satisfy our needs whether it be vegetarian or omnivorous.

The lessons: This year I felt the content was simple enough that I could get a significant hold of a new form to the extent that I could further pursue it with at least a cornerstone of understanding for a foundation. It takes carefully leavened restraint to introduce and guide without overwhelming. For a slow learner like myself, I felt I was able to grasp the new material with plenty of opportunity for repetition. It was also helpful to have additional teachers available to spread out the information through more conduits. As an example, I enjoyed the tassel making mini lesson that Dominick offered to us. Participating

in the creation of my weapons always inspires me to invest more of my senses in the learning.

Practice time: This was crucial. Learning a little bit of material fairly thoroughly is much more productive than being exposed to a lot of material and then not having sufficient time to embrace the form into the kinesthetic memory. Learning a little bit well whets the appetite for more rewards.

Relax/regroup time: I learn much more receptively if I feel refreshed after a rest break. All those loose brain cells get a chance to percolate back to the ready position. My enthusiasm and confidence is higher when I sense myself progressing.

Social time: The chance to gently merge with a like-minded community is also very helpful as I deepen the commitment I make with my practice. Feeling part of a greater whole leads to humility, which by the way has as its Greek origin the base word "humus" meaning "of the earth". When I sense humility in myself, I am aware of the non-need to affect a defensive, prideful attitude. By not feeding fear, I can direct my energy to the joy of discovery. It is amazing what a shared cigar or story around the campfire can do for the betterment of my T'ai-Chi practice.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Kim, Ray, and Paul for the generous effort, which brings these retreats to reality. Their generosity becomes contagious and we all carry that feeling into our practices and interactions, first with ourselves and then with our community. In Buddhism, the "6 practices which lead to enlightenment" begin with generosity. ☺

NOTE: We had our generous body workers come to Faribault again this year. If you liked their work or heard about someone else's good experience, please feel free to contact them for another appointment. Their information is listed on page 5.

T.T. Liang Meets Ana in the Afterlife

By Morgan Grayce Willow

She is performing double knife
when he ambles over the hill.
She does not see him.
Her fury flashes off the blades.
Her face is set in concentration.
Her eyes are deep
and so full of rage
that no light can pass them just now.

T.T. Liang pauses.
He does not advance.
His eyes gleam.
They carry more than enough light
for both of them.
The corners of his mouth are turned up slightly,
but his smile does not come from his mouth.
It comes from deep behind his face.

Ana, unaware of his presence,
steps through the formation.
She executes each posture precisely.
Only T.T. Liang sees the little frown
that gives away her tiniest mistakes.

She completes the set.
She bows as if the ancestors
were lined up before her.
In the instant when her eyes are looking
downward,
T.T. Liang places himself where the ancestors
would be.
Somehow he does this with no visible movement.
When Ana has straightened again,
she lifts her eyes.
They open very wide.
Now T.T. Liang smiles with his eyes
and every muscle in his face.
“You are stiff,” he says.
You must play with whole heart.”

(stanza break)

Ana steps into his arms
open as wide as they have ever been.
Into his shoulder she weeps
exactly as if she were a little girl.



Haiku on the 1st Anniversary of Master Liang's Passing

By Thor Pruszynski

teacher's teacher
the grass this morning holds
last night's rain



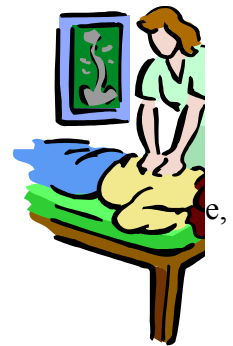
A Quote from Grandmaster Wai-Lun Choi

Make your health better,
Make the Art better,
Make all people better!

Body Workers' Information

(from the Retreat)

- Diane Barry, Chiropract
651-690-9366
- Mike Clemens (in Gran
218-327-9212
- Andrea Deese, Swedish relaxation and
therapeutic deep-tissue trigger point massage,
612-824-2258
- Natacha Drechsler, Wallace Method, 651-917-
9715
- Lucy Franklin, Orthobionomy, 651-690-2790
- Treece Kampmeyer, Swedish and myofascial
release and specialty is deep- tissue and deep-
relaxation massage, 651-222-5552
- Char Terrana, Wallace Method, 612-267-6603



Emperor T'ang's 100 Character Reminder

Translation & Commentary

By Master T.T. Liang

The farmers work hard, but they themselves don't have much rice to eat.

Weaving girls work very hard, but they don't have much clothing to protect them from the cold.

You have three meals every day, the farmers have much bitterness.

You wear one thread of clothing, you have to remember the weaving girl's toil.

One inch of thread costs 1,000 lives (silk worm's lives).

One bowl of rice uses 100 whip lashes (on the ox's back).

You are not yet married, you still have some benefits, But even sleeping and eating are not very comfortable.

You should make friends with the Virtuous, It's best to quit a friendship without benefits.

Only take money entitled to you.
Don't take too much wine.

Restrain yourself from spending too much.
And, you have to shut your mouth.

If you can live according to my way, these 100 characters,
Your life will be truly successful.

Master T.T. Liang's Commentary

He lived quite long (Emperor T'ang). He left 100 words or characters to remind you what you should do, what you should not do.

Shut up your bloody mouth, don't make friends with bad friends, and get rid of wine, and don't dissipate. Be a spendthrift, save money. When you are wearing clothes you must think of the weaving-girls, they torture themselves like hell—and the farmers, work like hell. Then, as soon as you think of them, all right, don't dissipate, don't waste all these things.

What you should have, you take it. One cent not belonging to you, don't take it. That's all these things, so that you can follow his way. That means you'll be rich, become a high official, and keep good health for your whole life to last longer.

Quotes to Consider

“We would have all such offenders so cut off:--and we give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom the gentler gamester is the soonest winner.”

-King Henry, Act III, Scene V from King Henry V

~
The following three stories are from Soul Food, by Kornfield and Feldman (the stories are Sufi, Hindu, and Buddhist, in that order).

A man walking through the forest saw a fox that had lost its legs and wondered how it lived. Then he saw a tiger come in with game in its mouth. The tiger had its fill and left the rest of the meat for the fox.

The next day God fed the fox by means of the same tiger. The man began to wonder at God's greatness and said to himself, “I too shall just rest in a corner with full trust in the Lord and he will provide me with all I need.”

He did this for many days but nothing happened, and he was almost at death's door when he heard a voice say, “O you who are in the path of error, open your eyes to the truth! Follow the example of the tiger and stop imitating the disabled fox!”

~
When Ramana Maharshi lay dying, the cries of his devotees' grief reached his ears. He asked one of his attendants, “Why do they despair so deeply?” His attendant answered, “It is because you are leaving them, master.” Ramana turned to his attendants in puzzlement, “But where do they think I should go?”

~
It is said that soon after his enlightenment, the Buddha passed a man on the road who was struck by the extraordinary radiance and peacefulness of his presence. The man stopped and asked, “My friend, what are you? Are you a celestial being or a god?”

“No,” said the Buddha.

“Well, then, are you some kind of magician or wizard?”

Again the Buddha answered, “No.”

“Are you a man?”

“No.”

“Well, my friend, what then are you?”

The Buddha replied, “I am awake.”

Graduation News

Congratulations from the instructors to those members who have finished the 150 movement Solo Form. Many have started, few have finished. Congratulations also to those members who have completed other forms and styles. Keep up the good work and know it is an honor, a privilege and a great joy to share these arts with you.

Solo Form

Angela Amado
Andre Burgaud
Patrick Jarvis
John Keske
Diane Klinefelter
Gretchen Leach
John Myers
Greg Plum
Patrick Schilling
Chris Sorman
Matt Thompson

T'ai-Chi Double Sabre

LaVonne Bunt
Lynn Dennis
Tim Dennis
Dan Frederick
Pat Hemmis
Karen Peterson
Dominick Veldman
Morgan Willow

T'ai-Chi Sabre

Andre Burgaud
Susan Buzenberg
Marcos Carlson-Lopez
David Gray
Amie Jo Johnson
Dennis Kelly
Ed Panyk
Cathy Prody

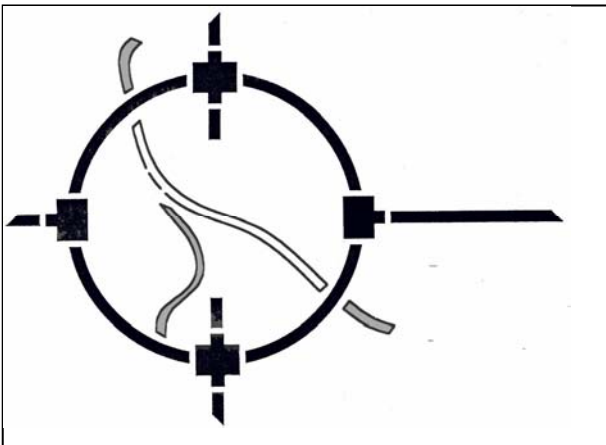
Hsing-Yi 5 Elements

Dave Dressler
Patrick Jarvis

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Saturday, September 6, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

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Join Michael & Janet Pilla
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Schedule
September 15, 2003—January 15, 2004

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
12:30-2:30 Solo Form			12:30-2:30 Solo Form	10:00-11:30 Eeclctsis
6:00-7:30 Solo Form	6:00-7:30 Pushing-Hands: Drills/Methods	6:00-7:00 Solo Form	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	11:30-12:30 Liu Ho Pa Fa Level II
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	12:30-2:00 Solo Form
8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua Sensitivity/ 12 Animals	8:30-9:30 Praying Mantis Level I	8:00-9:00 Pa-Kua Swimming Dragon		2:00-3:00 Pushing-Hands Drills/Practice

NOTE: The Studio will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, and the week of December 24 through January 2 and will reopen on Saturday, January 3.

Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan
2242 University Ave, Suite 207
St Paul, MN 55114

First Class Mail