



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

Wu-Dang

Vol. 12, No. 3
 June 2005

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

Our new schedule begins June 15, with a few new classes. **Monday Night Weapons** class **7:30-8:30** will review the **Sword, Knife and Cane**, and for those who have completed the Sword, we will learn the **Double Sword Form. 8:30-9:30 Liu Ho Pa Fa** will be open for new students to learn the **12 Animals** and their training methods and applications. **Tuesday 6:00-7:00 Pushing-Hands** will be open for students who finished the Solo Form around the time of Chinese New Year. **Saturday 11:30-12:30 Liu Ho Pa Fa** will be offering the **Mother and Sons/Loi Hung Bat Sai** to those who have completed the Liu Ho Pa Fa 12 Animals. Check the schedule on page 8 to confirm class days and times.

7:30 & 8:30 Classes—Take Note!

Due to a recent break-in at the Studio building, the landlord is locking the building at 7:40pm. Until we find a better solution, be at the Hampden door at 8:25 for the 8:30 classes. Or, come in before 7:40 and quietly practice or wait for your class. We will remedy this before it gets cold.

RESCHEDULED SEMINAR

Saturday, October 1, 6-10:00 p.m.

American Red Cross Adult CPR Course

Everyone should know what to do in an emergency. You should know who to call and what care to provide. Learn all the skills of adult CPR needed to save the life of an adult victim of sudden cardiac arrest. In this course you will learn: Rescue Breathing, CPR, First Aid for choking, use of a breathing barrier and disposable gloves, recognizing signals of heart attack. Each participant will receive a certification for Adult CPR from the Red Cross. **We need sign ups to meet the minimum by September 10. Cost is \$50 per participant.**

Annual Summer Retreat!!!

It is time to reserve your spot for the annual retreat. We will again meet in Faribault at the Shattuck/St. Mary campus. The dates for this year's retreat are **August 12-14**—beginning at 7pm on Friday and concluding at 5pm on Sunday. The theme this year is: **“Formulating Your Personal Practice Plan.”**

We will have body workers available throughout the weekend—some old, some new, so save up and treat yourself to a massage. The fee this year is \$185, with a \$50 deposit due by July 1. The fee includes food, lodging, and instruction. We must have checks in hand by that day, however, we won't cash them until the week of the retreat. Space is limited so sign up early.

Please let Kim know of any rooming/food/other special requests when you sign up.

Fee Increase Slated for Fall

The Board of Directors has decided as of September 1, 2005 we will increase our membership fees by \$5 per person per month across the board. Since our inception in 1993 we raised the fees only twice, in 1996 and 2001. This is not being done because of financial crises; instead it is a natural and healthy cost-of-living increase.

	Full Membership	Age 55+ or Once Per Week Membership
Single Members	\$70	\$50
Household of 2	\$115	\$85
Household of 3	\$155	\$110
Jr/Sr High Students	\$25	

If you have any questions please see one of our Instructors or Board Members.

Quality and Quantity – Part I

By Ray Hayward

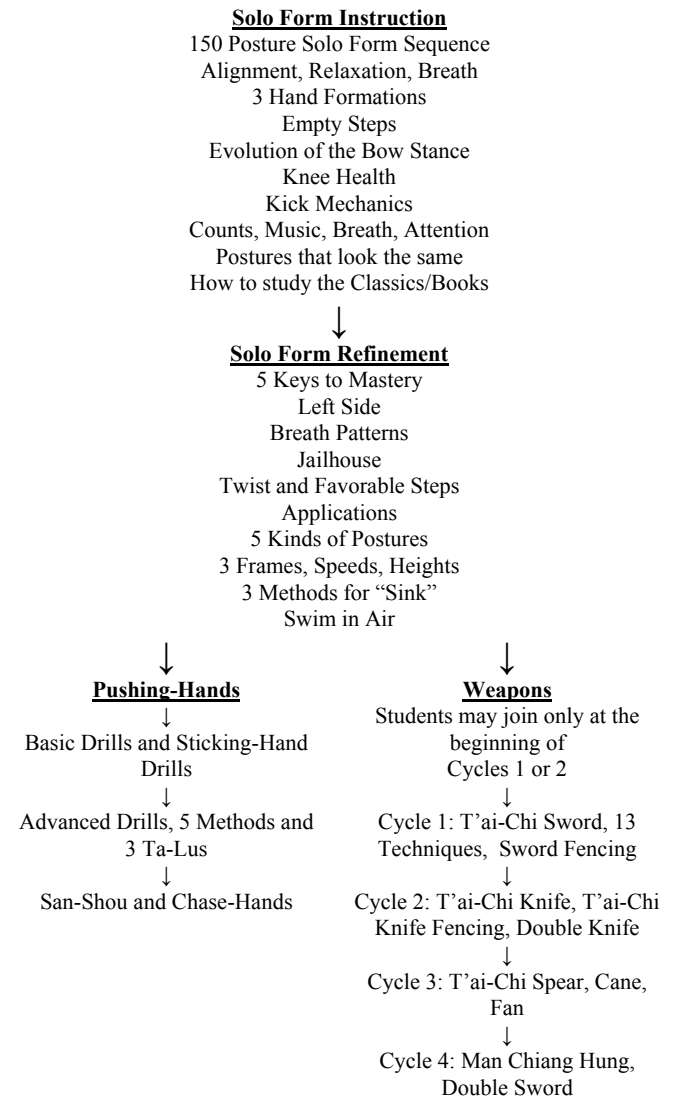
When Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio reopened its doors on September 14, 1993, in a new space and as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the average number of students per month was 23. Our schedule offered 16 hours of class-time per week and an average class had 5-8 students. At that time, there was plenty of time and space to ensure that students received quality instruction, correction, and refinement. Now, our monthly average is 125-130 members, with an average class having 35-40 students, while offering 24 hours per week of class-time. To ensure that the quality of instruction continues to grow with the other aspects of our Studio, we are reorganizing the T'ai-Chi classes into a system so that all levels of students are able to learn, digest, and refine the different practices before going on to new levels and material.

The old masters of T'ai-Chi taught the Art in a specific, linear fashion starting with the Solo Form, progressing to various partner-works, and culminating with weapons. Many taught the Ch'i-Kung and Standing Meditation last, as these were considered the secret training methods. Master T.T. Liang taught T'ai-Chi in the Solo-Partner-Weapons progression for most of his career. Later, he changed to teaching the forms for all the levels first, then he would teach practices such as Pushing-Hands and Ch'i-Kung. When I was learning from Master Liang in Boston, as a private student, I learned in the traditional order. When he left to go to St. Cloud I had not finished his complete system. When I moved to Minnesota three years later, I was surprised to find my classmates all practicing forms I had not learned, like Double Sword, or had not completed, like the six sets of Wu-Tang Fencing. I found out that he had skipped over most of the Pushing-Hand Drills and Techniques because he was actively training a demonstration team to go to China with him and he only gave them enough partner-work and applications to understand the forms.

Beginning September 15, we will have two kinds of Solo Form classes. These classes will be divided into Solo Form Instruction and Solo Form Refinement. (The Monday and Thursday 12:30-2:30 classes will remain the same as before.) Solo Form Instruction classes will be where new members start. They will learn the sequence and get corrections and lessons to help improve their form. When the instructors are satisfied with their proficiency and progress the student can then move into the Solo Form Refinement class. Here the instructors will begin a new level of correction as well as refinements and practice methods. Again, when the instructors are satisfied with the student's proficiency the students will be able to go into the partner classes or the weapons classes. The partner-work classes will be taught in three parts, each requiring a certain level of proficiency before progressing to the next. The weapons will be taught in four cycles and an explanation chart will follow.

The Solo Form Refinement classes will be Monday and Thursday evenings, 6:00-7:30 and will be open to all students who finish the Solo Form before June 15, 2005. The Solo Form Instruction classes will be Wednesday 6:00-7:30 and Saturday 12:30-2:00. This will be the beginning/start-anytime classes and will be open for all new members. A few tutors or helpers will be asked to assist in these classes. If you finished the Solo Form more than six months ago, you cannot attend the Solo Form Instruction classes.

The following chart shows the progression for the classes. If you have any questions ask the Instructors, or the Board Members; Julie Cisler, Sally Polk, Morgan Willow, Patrick Jarvis, James Postiglione, or Joanne Von Blon for an accurate answer.



In the next issue of Wu-Dang: Other Styles classes will be addressed.

The Quest for Chi

By Lawrence Tan

(from *Inside Kung-Fu* Vol.3, No.8 August 1976)

In my quest to find chi, I went to Hong Kong. Instead of trekking up to mountaintops bathed in mist to find a master, I ascended the roof of an apartment building. I seemed to have transcended both the magnificence and squalor of one of the world's most crowded cities. Here I could see the clear blue sky, the mountains of Hong Kong, and the harbor with ancient junks and modern ships side by side - a sight one is apt to miss in the bustling streets below.

In a sense, this master's rooftop abode was similar to a mountain retreat. The walls of the roof were lined with potted plants, trees, flowers, and a weapons rack. There was the sound of chirping birds in cages and two huge German shepherds wandered around. A diagram of the Pa-Kua was painted on the rooftop floor. I entered a small room with calligraphy and paintings hanging on the walls between shelves filled with books. Here I met a smiling Chan Yick-Yan, who dwells in this rooftop apartment. He is master of Six Combinations and Eight Methods Kung-Fu; he is also a master of chi.

Master Chan appeared to epitomize the romantic version of a Kung-Fu master: kind, learned, humble, and wise. I was especially honored to be able to see him, since up to then, he refused to be interviewed by Hong Kong's leading martial arts magazines. He answered our questions simply yet thoroughly without trying to brag about his style or overwhelm us with his knowledge - as seemed to be a habit of so many so-called masters. Occasionally, when words were inadequate for explaining detailed points or subtle theories, he demonstrated on me. Interesting. For a day earlier, Kam Tung, one of Chan's favorite disciples, also demonstrated some of their style's techniques and I was fairly impressed with his abilities. But this time I was truly amazed.

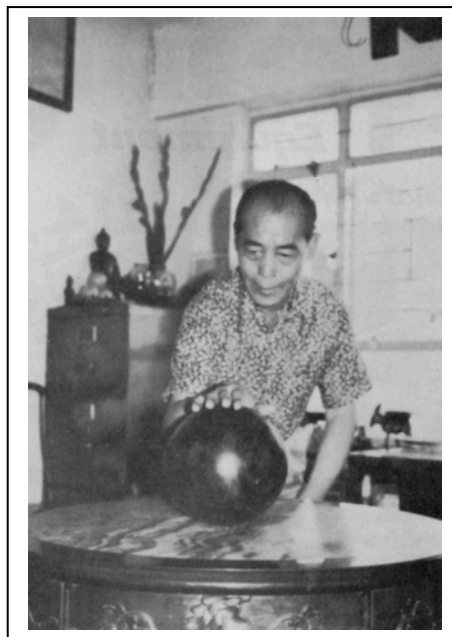
Now that I could compare the movements of a top disciple with those of the master himself, I was able to "feel" the difference between one who is highly skilled in a system with one who has mastered the system. While both Kam Tung and Chan Yick-Yan's blocking and striking hand techniques were precise and deft, there was still a gulf. Master Chan's motions were impeccable and by far more polished. When he blocked my punches, I could not detect any muscular force - at times apparent with some of Kam Tung's powerful blocks - and my blows just seemed to simply fall short from their targets; evidently Chan was using the barest amount of energy to deflect my blows. Once his arms, which seemed acutely sensitive to all my motions, came in contact with mine, they seemed to stick so that I was unable to penetrate his defense to hit his head or body. Throughout this free-flow exchange of techniques, his hands and arms remained relaxed and soft - yet when they rested on or followed my arms they felt heavy. I was aware of the tremendous latent power which he seemed to be able to

explode through his arms; fortunately for him, he unleashed this force only occasionally - and lightly, at that - against my shoulders.

In regards to chi, what was happening? According to internal strength theories, everyone has chi in their bodies - or else they'd be dead. How a normal person differs from one who has practiced an internal system like T'ai-chi is that one who practices daily for many years is able to cultivate the chi, that is, to consciously circulate throughout the body. The more experienced the practitioner, the more chi he is able to nurture in his body. Consequently, a master such as Chan Yick-Yan has developed an excess amount of chi that is stored in the center of the body about two inches below the navel. This is called the Tan T'ien. After years of training, the master learns total control over this life force and, at will,

can regulate it to his limbs.

Training the muscles and body to be soft and relaxed is necessary if one wants to utilize the chi for combat. When soft and relaxed the master can "interpret" his opponent's moves or "feel" the direction and force of the opponent's body and limbs. Because the master's arms have a relaxed



sensitivity, he can detect even the slightest force before the technique has built up momentum. Hence, he need only use a minute force in a circular motion to redirect the blow. Ideally his block will disturb the enemy's balance and will enable him to also "borrow" the attacking force so that it will be used against the attacker. Since the master's arm is relaxed, his speed is increased and at the point of contact with his opponent's exposed body, his inner strength shoots from his Tan-T'ien through his arm-like water gushing through a hose - and is transmitted into the enemy's body. This theory may sound simple when described but it is a rarely achieved skill.

While, as I said, I was quite impressed, I still wasn't satisfied. After all, if I looked at it skeptically - as one should do - there are numerous masters of "soft" systems who could approximate his motions without using chi. I still wanted to witness chi. Due to Master Chan's seemingly genuine humble attitude, it did not seem as he was going to display his famous ability. Luckily, some of Chan's friends - realizing my hopes - coaxed him until he consented into demonstrating for me.

Master Chan told me to use all my force to punch him. Again my skepticism arose: big deal! There are lots of martial artists, boxers, or just plain hefty guys who can stand there and take a punch; chi's got nothing to do with it, having a muscular abdominal region's got everything to do with it. But what the hell... I began with my best "Sunday" reverse punch but it ended "not with a bang, but with a whisper" (to quote Elliot). There was no hard impact! When my fist made contact it was a strange sensation; it was not like hitting someone in the stomach. It actually felt as if my fist was swallowed up in Jell-O or bean curd.

A boxer or ordinary martial artist will tense up his muscles to take a punch. Internal stylists say that a person with chi will do the opposite: he will relax. By relaxing his body, the opponent's punching force will penetrate the body without any resistance - like punching the wind - and it will be absorbed by the excess reservoir of chi stored in his lower abdomen which would have either consciously or unconsciously (depending on the master's ability) channeled to the area being hit. Achieving this ability, one has reached the "receiving energy" level or the ability of one to use chi to absorb the opponent's blows.

Well, this was different, but then again taking a punch isn't that spectacular. As if Chan was aware of my doubts, he told me to punch again. This time I "cheated" a bit—for the sake of scientific inquiry, of course—and I used a tiger claw thrust instead of a clenched fist. This way, perhaps I could get a better "feel" of what was going on. After thrusting I grabbed at his flesh - it definitely was not hard tensed muscle, in fact, it was more like clutching fat. Then suddenly a surging force erupted from the depths of Chan's stomach and my tiger claw came flying out! Actually, it was more like my hand was ejected out like a missile.

Before I got over my amazement, Master Chan using both his hands held my forearm and pulled my tiger claw into his Tan-T'ien region. A bubbling-out type of force was generated against my tiger claw (again holding on to his flesh); Chan regulated the duration and intensity of the force—light, light, strong, medium, strong, etc. My arm felt as if it would be bouncing in and out like someone on a trampoline were his hands not holding my arm into his stomach. Finally the spasms became a strong steady surge of force that pressed against my tiger claw. Because his hands prevented my hand from coming out of his stomach, there was tremendous pressure on my bent wrist; had he not released my arm - when he noticed my pain - I believe my wrist would have been sprained or



perhaps even broken. He smiled warmly and massaged my wrist, my skepticism was appeased.

This last demonstration of chi revealed that Master Chan had achieved an advanced level of internal strength that surpassed the "receiving" energy stage. Known as the "returning" energy level, this is the ability to return the same amount of energy that the attacker expends on his attack; in other words, if the attacker hits you with 200 pounds of force, his fist would automatically bounce out with 200 pounds of force. Upon reaching this "returning" energy level, all self-defense motions of attack or defense are thoroughly unconscious; these motions are expressed by the body instinctively without premeditation. For at this stage, when the chi is strong and "in tune" with the external environment, the body will spontaneously and naturally respond to the external stimuli.

When one has reached such levels, one has little to worry about as far as self-defense and fighting is concerned. But does that mean one's quest has ended? If this were so, many masters like Chan would have forsaken the art long ago. The quest has no more ended for them as the quest for knowledge has ended for one who receives a doctorate degree. The real journey has begun. For seeking perfection in the martial arts is but a microcosm of perfecting one's self. And ultimately, finding a master, cultivating chi and learning to harness its power for individual combat are but phases in the endless process of developing the self.

For Master Chan, daily practice is no longer aimed at fighting - he long ago fulfilled that lower need of his self - but is used as spiritual exercise that has become a way of life. Practicing internal forms is to be meditating in motion. When Chan is doing a form he relaxes his mind and body, his breath is slow, deep and rhythmic and he centers in his self - his ego is forgotten and his mundane cares drift away. He is peaceful just as if he was doing seated meditation but he is moving. Chi permeates his body and pours out into the universe where it flows between Heaven, Earth and Man, and then it returns to him - a cyclical give and take exchange of the "life force." During this active meditation, in a sense, Master Chan is dancing with the universe and playing with the energy of the cosmos. He is balanced on the edge.

To the initiated, the alchemists' quest for the "philosopher's stone" was not for the sole purpose of converting base metals into gold (as our grade school chemistry books misinformed us), but was rather a symbolic term for the alchemist's endeavor for spiritual transformation. So too, the quest for chi is not only for the purpose of developing energy to beat the hell out of somebody, but for the martial artist's spiritual growth. Similarly, King Arthur's knights' search to find the "Holy Grail" (the chalice Christ supposedly drank from during the Last Supper) was, in fact, a spiritual expedition. Chan Yick-Yan, like those rare masters of chi, has attained astonishing skills with his chi, but to him, his journey has begun: he can use his chi to conquer an enemy, now he must use his chi to cultivate his self spiritually.

Graduation News

This will be the final Grad News of this kind—noting completions of a sequence. The next Grad News will be in more detail. Your progress is important and acknowledged by the Instructors.

Solo Form

Andy Bezella
Tom Crable
Bob Dietz
Jason Eaton
Chad Giblin
Josh Ingram
Inez Jennings
Chris Medower
Pat Merrigan
Bob Modaff
Rich Palmer
Pat Stapleton
Karen Taylor
Zukai Wang

T'ai-Chi Sword

Ben Mills
Anita Ryan
Sam Whatson

T'ai-Chi Cane

LaVonne Bunt
Jeffrey Christianson
Bill Cronin
Bob Ford
Dan Frederick
Giovanna Fregni
Tom Hautman
Patrick Jarvis
Dennis Kelly
John Keske
Chris Knudtson
Matt Lauters
Dan Miller
Bob Modaff
Kimiko Molasky
Michael Pilla
Karin San Juan
John Stitely
Loc Truong

Hsing-Yi 5 Elements

Bill Carone
Tom Crable
Bob Dietz
Jamie Hepner
Josh Ingram
Inez Jennings
Ralph Jerndal
Emily Mecklenburg
Douglas Rohde
Pat Stapleton
John Stitely
Matt Thompson
Andy Tudor
Barry Tudor

Pa-Kua Swimming Dragon

Bill Carone
John Clifford
Rob Crandall
Andrea Deese
Peter DuCane
Bob Ford
Steve Freedman
Chris Garczynski
Tom Hautman
Jamie Hepner
Josh Ingram
Patrick Jarvis
Inez Jennings
Vin Lu
Chris Schleicher
John Stitely
Theresa Strike
Robert Wozniak

He Has Closed His Hands

By Ray Hayward

Closing ones hands is a metaphor for when a teacher retires from teaching, or from teaching publicly. On May 1st, 2005, Grand Master Wai-Lun Choi “closed his hands” and closed his school’s doors, retiring after more than 30 years of spreading the Chinese Martial Arts message in Chicago. I was fortunate enough to study with Master Choi for the last 11 years and he has promised to continue teaching some of us privately.

You may have noticed the weapons and extra equipment at the Studio, these are all from Master Choi. Those of you who studied the Sword last summer, had the last public seminar Master Choi taught at our Studio.

What does the future hold for Master Choi? He plans to continue “researching and analyzing,” writing, traveling, teaching a few private students, and producing instructional DVDs, of which his Introduction to Hsing-Yi 5 Fists went on sale this month.

We wish Master Choi a happy retirement and are planning a retirement part after the “dust settles.” In the next issue of Wu Dang Paul and I will offer our reflections on our last classes and our experiences.

Items for Sale

Books

Lessons with Master T.T. Liang - \$20
Collection of years of notes. By Ray Hayward
String of Pearls - \$15
Collection of articles written by Studio members.

Video Cassettes

Solo Form, Warm-ups, Chi-Kung - \$20

DVDs

Solo Form Class Basics - \$20
(Warm-ups, Chi-Kung, 1st Section)
Hsing-Yi 5 Elements - \$35 *NEW
T'ai-Chi Fan - \$18
Praying Mantis: Jai-Yao Epitome - \$20
Praying Mantis: Beng-Bo - \$20 *NEW

Studio Logo Shirts

(Sizes M, L, XL – 2X cost slightly more)

100% Cotton T \$8

100% Cotton Long-T \$12

50/50 Sweatshirts \$16

We have many in stock, but other colors, styles, shirt-types can be ordered. See order sheet in Studio office.

Class Schedule for June 15—September 15, 2005

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: Drills/Methods	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	11:30-12:30 Liu Ho Pa Fa Level II
7:30-8:30 Weapons-Review/ Double Sword	7:30-8:30 2 Person San-Shou	7:30-8:30 Hsing-Yi 5 Fists	7:30-9:00 Praying Mantis Level III	12:30-2:00 Solo Form
8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua Swimming Dragon/ Liu Ho Pa Fa 12 Animals	8:30-9:30 Praying Mantis Level I	8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua Mother Palms		

NOTE: The Studio will be closed Monday, July 4, Saturday, August 13 through Sunday August 21, and Monday, September 5.

**TWIN CITIES T'AI-CHI CH'UAN STUDIO
2242 UNIVERSITY AVE W, SUITE 207
SAINT PAUL, MN 55114**

FIRST CLASS MAIL