



The Newsletter of the
**Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan
Studio**
2242 University Ave
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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

The new schedule begins September 15th. The new classes are as follows: Monday night 7:30-8:30 **Weapons** class will continue to teach and review the Sword and Sabre and will teach the **1st Section of Wu-Tang Fencing**. 8:30-9:30 will be an **Introduction to Pa-Kua Chang**, covering basic hand, stepping, and partner mechanics. Also at 8:30, **Liu Ho Pa Fa 12 Animals** will be accepting new students.

Tuesday night 6:00-7:30 will continue **Roll-Back – Half the Mastery of Pushing-Hands** and will simultaneously run an **Introduction to Pushing-Hand Drills**, utilizing the new room. 7:30-8:30 is the annual beginning of the **T'ai-Chi San-Shou 2-Person Form**. It takes about 9-10 months to learn the form, with the balance of the time for review. 8:30-9:30 **Praying Mantis Level I**, is open for old and new students alike, we will be teaching a new **hand form** and will review **blocking and trapping drills** and **6-Harmony Staff**. Those interested in Praying Mantis can join this class or the Thursday class at 8:30.

Wednesday night 7:30-8:30 the **Hsing-Yi** class will begin, for new students the **5 Elements**, and for veterans the **12 Animals**. 8:30-9:30 **Pa-Kua** will continue to learn and review the **64 Palms** and a **Yin-Style 2-Person form**.

Thursday night **Shaolin** at 7:30-8:30 will continue with **Tan-Tui** and the **Butterfly Knife form**.

The rest of the schedule will remain the same. ☺

Summer Retreat Triumph!

By Kim Hayward

Our 3rd Annual Summer retreat was a smashing success! We had 48 participants this year, which nearly doubled our number from last year. In fact, it was fortunate they had to move our group to a new dormitory this year, as we wouldn't have fit into the old building. The St. Mary's portion of the Shattuck-St. Mary's campus suited us extremely well. The dorm rooms, air-conditioned lecture/ping-pong/jamming room, and dining hall were all in the same building. Convenience abounded!

The 90+ degree heat wave abated just in time for a gorgeous weekend of T'ai-Chi frolicking in the trees. The 7:00 a.m. dewy workouts were beautiful, with swords flashing in the bright misty morning sun.

There was plentiful music, movies, food, badminton, ping-pong, hammocks and frivolity. We even took advantage of the fire ring in the trees in front of the building for a Saturday night bonfire. By the end of the retreat, when minds were full, spirits vitalized and bodies tired, everyone summoned their last bit of energy for sword fencing instruction. Dozens of adults went after one another with foam-covered, duck-taped dowels. It was wonderful.

If you went, I probably don't need to add anything. For those who didn't, we have a few photos (on page 6) and chances are you can find a few of your classmates who were there to get more reports. Hopefully, next year we will again have a huge, happy crowd. Mark your calendars for the second weekend of August. ☺

Guidelines & Suggestions for T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Practitioners

By Paul B. Gallagher, Founder and Chief Instructor, Deer Mountain Taoist Academy and the Center for Personal Mastery

Levels of Practice and Commitment

There are several levels at which you can practice and grow in the art of T'ai-Chi:

First Level: “Checking it out.” Many people’s first exposure to T'ai-Chi is seeing some relative, friend, or even stranger practicing the slow, balletic movements and thinking to themselves, “Hey, I’d like to try that!” What most beginners don’t know is that the graceful and effortless appearance of T'ai-Chi requires a tremendous amount of power and controlled effort. Some people are fascinated and drawn further into the study; others enjoy a tip of the tongue taste of the art and go on their way.

Second Level: Beginner to Middle Timer. Once you have decided to really practice the art on a daily basis, you become a student, one step up from mere curiosity. Until you can practice the entire Long Form with a certain degree of smoothness and expertise, you remain a beginner. After the Form has been mastered to a certain degree and the principles of T'ai-Chi slowly begin to permeate your life, you evolve into a “Middle Timer.”

Third Level: OLD TIMER. Old Timers have a considerable level of proficiency in the Solo Form, have gone on to some level of expertise in Two-Person work, and usually are conversant with at least one T'ai-Chi weapon. More important than mere mastery of forms, however, is Old Timer’s Mind—where the philosophy of T'ai-Chi starts to shine in a person’s life. This is a state of mental “mellowness” and unflinching helpfulness to lower level students.

Fourth Level: Associate Teacher. Associate Teachers remain within the Deer Mountain Fold, teach the Deer Mountain curriculum and remain true to the attitudes and ethics, which are part of the Deer Mountain way of life and practice. To be an Associate Teacher, one has to substantially master Forms and have a reasonable proficiency in Two-Person work. More importantly, an Associate Teacher must have a broad knowledge of T'ai-Chi history and tradition, and the philosophies, which underlie the tradition. Mere mastery of Forms is NOT enough. Beyond this, an Associate Teacher must have a well-developed teaching style and must constantly seek to perfect and hone their teaching abilities.

Any student at Middle Timer level or above who aspires to be a Teacher should make this known to me

and I will guide your training accordingly. It will be more demanding and encompassing than that of the average student.

Guidelines for Class Conduct

In China, any art such as T'ai-Chi was taught with a certain informal (as compared with Japanese martial arts), yet very well defined, protocol. Here are a few guidelines, which will help your practice.

Attend every class. Real emergencies do arise on occasion and will prevent your attendance, but otherwise, plan on attending every class. Don’t let fatigue, cold, heat, or other factors give you an excuse for not coming to class.

After all, T'ai-Chi is a martial art and as such seeks to develop a spirit of courage and indomitable commitment. And your teacher, who experiences fatigue, cold, heat, just as you do IS there for every class.

If you must come late to class (rarely, we hope), please enter the studio as quietly as possible. This may seem obvious courtesy, but I am always amazed by T'ai-Chi students who loudly walk into a class already in progress. One of the ways I know someone is approaching Old Timerhood is that if they are late, they come into a class so unobtrusively that the class is barely aware of their arrival.

Pay full attention in class; don’t let your mind wander. The more you concentrate your energy and focus your mind, the more energized and refreshed you will feel.

Take every instruction the teacher gives (even to other students) as instruction given to you personally. Even if it does not seem to fit in the moment, it may be very meaningful later on, if you just keep an open, attentive mind.

Correct or help other students only if asked to do so by the Teacher.

If the teacher is giving prolonged personal instruction to one student at a given time, either pay total attention to that instruction, or go on practicing your own forms. Don’t just stand around!

If you decide to discontinue study for any reason, inform the Teacher; please do not just “disappear into the night.” In T'ai-Chi tradition, this is extremely

disrespectful, and even in the good ole' U.S., it's just common courtesy.

Etiquette Toward Masters and Teachers

We've covered some of this already. In China, the Teacher was not considered merely a purveyor of information, but had to EMBODY what was taught. The Teacher was the living example of the art or subject he or she espoused. There was a profound art of etiquette between teachers and students. I have written a detailed article on this fascinating art, which is available on request. Here are a few brief guidelines:

The True Master is often a paradox to American students. In my experience, the master who have the greatest proficiency in martial arts are often very humble and quiet—not at all the “macho” image portrayed by the media. This sometimes leads students to adopt an overly casual, or even disrespectful attitude toward them.

In general, anyone who has practiced 30 years or more and whose character has matured, may be called a Master, though the more mature masters have often practiced 50 or even 60 years. These people should ALWAYS be addressed as “Master...” even though they will generally say that they are not a master. Calling them Master indicates your respect for them and their teaching.

Be supremely respectful of the Master's way and pace of teaching. No real master will ever hold back a student unnecessarily. Any good master will have a rationale behind their teaching style and that rationale may only reveal itself to you over a period of time. I have seen so many instances in which students pester their teachers or masters for more knowledge, or complain about their teaching style. If a teacher's style of instruction genuinely is not right for you, you may best be advised to move on. But first, ask the teacher respectfully about WHY the teaching is proceeding as it is. A good teacher will always respond to this type of polite inquiry and the answer may give you some valuable insights into yourself and the art.

If, at some point, you decide to teach the art you learned from your teacher, always approach the teacher to ask permission first. In China, not doing this would be unthinkable, and would almost certainly break the student/teacher bond, perhaps even result in a challenge. In America, the teacher-student etiquette is much looser than in China, but asking permission is a sign of respect and courtesy. Your teacher might advise that you are still too immature in the art to teach

properly, or might give you invaluable guidance on your teaching. I once had a student who informed me she was going to teach some powerful ch'i kung and meditative work, which she had learned from me a week before in a one day seminar!

Always remember: 100 days=small accomplishment; 1,000 days=middle accomplishment; 10,000 days=great accomplishment. In general, you should never teach anything you have not practiced daily for at least three years, and that is an absolutely minimal requirement. And also, never teach anything you don't practice devoutly yourself.

Problems or Difficulties in Your Practice

You may find the first few weeks or months difficult; perhaps you will feel clumsy or uncoordinated, though the element of novelty will also stimulate and excite you. Later, as the process goes deeper, you may experience periods of euphoria or periods where long dormant tensions arise to the surface. Don't worry about or get caught up in any of these fleeting phenomena. Look at practice like the play of waves on the sea. Some days will feel absolutely wonderful, as if you are already a Master. Other days you may feel somewhat uncomfortable or stiff. Learning T'ai-Chi is NOT a linear process. Accept the rhythms of ease and occasional difficulty in your daily training as a very deep lesson, which you apply to every area of your life. You will unfailingly progress as long as you practice daily and remain centered while observing the process.

In Closing

Remember that above all, the purpose of training in T'ai-Chi or Tao is to enjoy life energy. It is much like learning to play a musical instrument. At first it will feel awkward and probably sound terrible. But with concerted practice, you will soon come to enjoy the beautiful sounds you are making. Don't be discouraged, just practice consistently (and with a sense of exploration and even playfulness) and the rest will take care of itself.

Creating your own group of nearby “T'ai-Chi Friends” for practicing outside of class will enhance your training beyond belief.

I am looking forward to training with you and walking the endless path of Eternal Spring, as the Tao unfolds for each of us. ☺

Thursday Night

By Chris Venaccio

Thursday night. June 28, 2001. Warm Springs Lodge. Pennsylvania. We were sitting downstairs in the basement prepared for our first night of the annual T'ai-Chi retreat. There was a muted excitement among the attendees. People checked and double-checked their cameras. The excitement was over a shrouded box standing in the corner of the room. Inside that box was a sword. Not just any sword. This was a sword approximately 150 years old from the late Ch'ing Dynasty. This was a sword used as a real weapon, it's center of gravity being the center rather than at the hilt. This was a sword that sang with an indescribable energy when you pulled it out of the sheath. This was the 'Blue Copper Sword' as the characters on the blade denoted. More than that, this was "Ray's sword."

Since my beginnings and Diane Cannon's Ming-Tao studio in Delaware, I have always heard the phrase "Ray's sword" in passing. On my first retreat, Ray would joke about Diane getting him "his sword" this year. On Ray's visit in November, we drove up to Chinatown to eat and visit "his sword." He would look at it through the glass. The shopkeeper would allow him to hold and even unsheathe it. Ray smiled ear to ear as he ran through some postures, then with a sigh would hand the sword back to the shopkeeper and comment that we would be back next year. And this is how it was for the three years I have known Ray. This was our routine when he visited Delaware. From what I gather, this was a routine much longer than three years old. It had achieved mythical proportions.

Diane mentioned that Ray's 25th T'ai-Chi Anniversary would be coming up in the next year. This set a string of events into action. With the combined efforts of our local T'ai-Chi contingency and the Twin Cities Studio, we were soon driving up to Philly to purchase "Ray's sword." We brought it back to Delaware and stared at it for a while as if a seven-year quest was finally fulfilled. A group of diligent workers constructed a display box for the weapon. Don lent his artistic talents and created a work of art out of the bleached wood. When the retreat finally arrived, we snuck it into the basement and waited for the night to begin.

Ray came in and sat down in the only empty chair, positioned conveniently to keep his back to the covered box propped in the corner. After handing out the agenda and some general introductions, Ray opened the floor to stories and questions. Diane stood up and congratulated him on his upcoming 25th Anniversary. People shuffled in their seats. Diane led him to the box. Flashes powered up.

I think his first reaction when he saw the sword was somewhere between disbelief and total surprise. He finally opened the box and took it out among the flashes and the whir of cameras. He thanked everyone repeatedly. He let everyone hold it. He was touched. The true testament of how touched he was came over the time of the retreat. He always carried it with him, sometimes to dinner. When we held our classes, he had it near him. In the open time between classes, you might catch a glimpse of him in a more secluded area of the Lodge practicing the sword form—always with a smile. It was the first thing he showed Master Liang on our annual visit.

There are very few times in one's life when you can touch the core of another's. Thursday night was one of those nights. ☺



Ray's Sword – Miscellaneous Information

Calligraphy on the Blade

The Calligraphy on the blade says 'Xing Tong Jian', which translates as 'blue copper sword'. There is a peony (modan or moudan) flower on the back. The peony symbolizes good fortune, love, and affection, spring. It is the king of flowers.

Another person has translated the name as 'bronze sword'. Apparently the type of metal of 'blue copper' or 'bronze' was the primary metal for these weapons for years.

Documentation of Dimensions

<u>Part</u>	<u>Dimension</u>
Blade	29 3/8" from tip of cross piece to end
Grip	including pommel: 7 1/2" excluding pommel: 5 7/16"
Total Length	with scabbard: 40 15/16" without scabbard: 39 1/4"
Width of Blade	1 3/8" at widest point
Cross Piece Width	3 3/4"
Cross View of Blade	diamond shaped
Scabbard	32 3/4"

For Ming Mei (Bright Sister)

Like peeling the layers of an onion,
I look back over the years.
There, I find you as a student
Seeking more out of T'ai-Chi,
Than mere movement.
Next, I recognize a fellow enthusiast,
Exploring the many possibilities.
Then, evolving to a disciple,
A student possessing discipline,
Setting the example from now on,
For disciples to be.
Now, a sister unlooked for,
Friend, family, fun.
So today,
I pick up my Blue Copper Sword,
And Smile.

Shu Kuang



The Lost Story of Dr. Seuss

By Chris Venaccio

It was time once again for a trip to Warm Springs
I stood in my room unpacking my things
Then from the Midwest blew in Ray and Paul
“We’ll show you the postures! We’ll show you them all!
You can wave your hands to
You can wave your hands fro
You can Separate Right Foot for an hour or so!
White Crane Spreads Its Wings
You can High Pat on Horse
But all this leads to drumming, of course!”

Paul grabbed his guitar and strummed out a few chords
And Ray ran around playing with his new sword
With Don and Diane they broke into song
“Til next year,” they sang. It wouldn’t be long.

Saturday Night Free Seminars By Ray and Paul

All members are welcome
Seminars will be 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Nov 3 – Introduction to Taoist Meditation
Dec 8 – Twenty Minutes to a Healthy Spine
Jan 12 – Classics – Mental Elucidations of the
13 Postures

T'ai-Chi Shoppe

Video, Warm-ups, Ch'i-Kung & Solo Form, \$20 (member-only price \$25 non-members)

Video, Sword, Knife, Staff, Cane, Fan, \$20

Book, Ray Hayward's *Lessons with Master T.T. Liang*, \$20

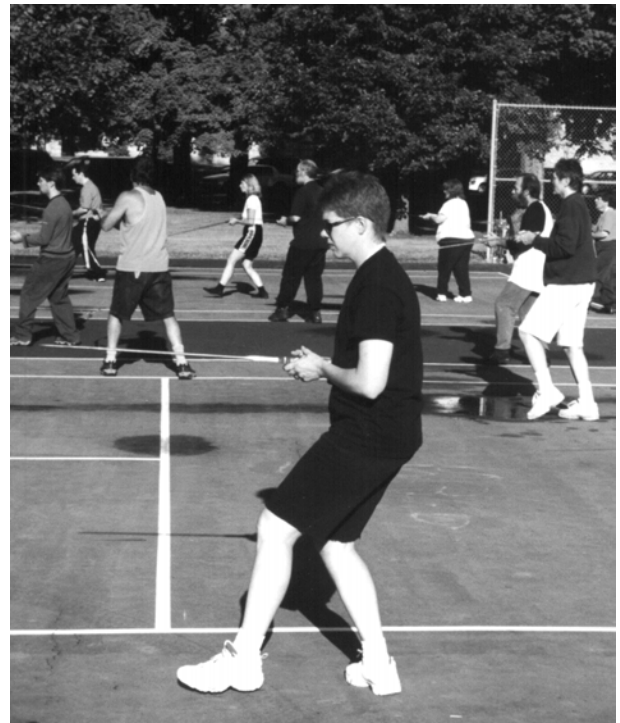
CD, Master Liang's T'ai-Chi music, with and without counts, and 45-minute interview with T.T. Liang, \$15

Cassette, Master Liang's T'ai-Chi music, with and without counts, \$6

Pushing Blades

By Tim Dennis

Cultivating quiet, I stride through the grass.
Power comes from the breath with each pass.
This form promotes uniform leveling
Except the tall flowers' flashier reveling.
Relax the arms, with a grounded feeling
While scythe-like blades send opponents reeling.
Actively balanced, push now with precision,
Then effortless, roll-back, advantageous position!
The moral high ground, the height of decorum
Is this brand-new, push-mower, Yang lawn form.



Clockwise, from top left:

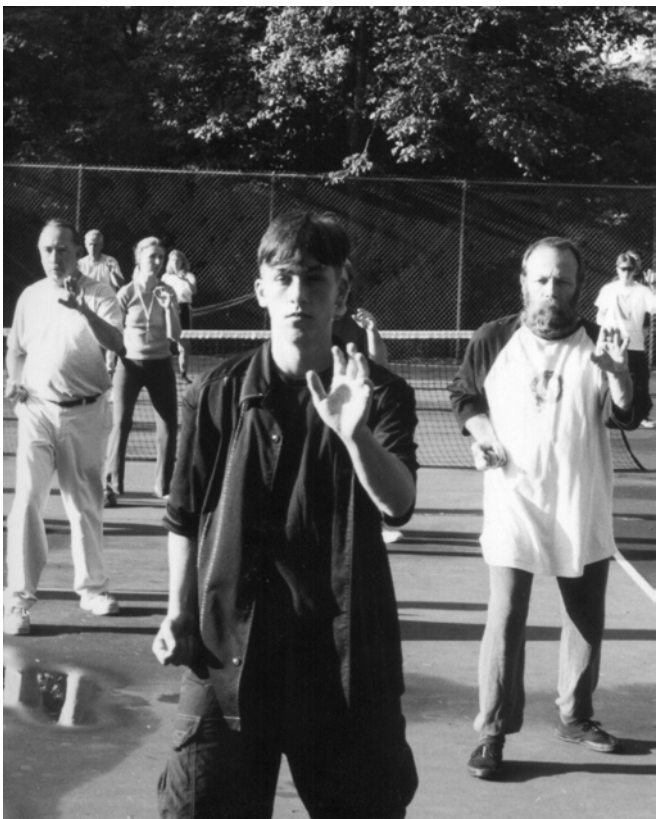
Andrew, Karen, Lynn and Brandon complete with swords

Kim and others stabbing the day away

Early morning solo form

(Almost) everyone on the front steps.

Dan, Bob, Lucy, Linda, Brandon, Bill, Holly, John turning and chopping



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

Sasha Boulavinov
David Gray
Tom Hartman
Allan Kouchich
Steve Miller
Shari Otterblad
Cathy Prody
Anita Ryan
Tom Schunk
Robbie Wozniak

T'ai-Chi Knife

Brandon Sherman

T'ai-Chi Cane

Bob Amis
Scott Lindall
Janet Marzolf
Sharon Nyberg
Mark Tomlinson

T'ai-Chi San-Shou

Joe Kloiber

Hsing-Yi 2-Handed Sabre

Jesse Bartlett
John Belbin
Peter Borgen
Brad Felske
Joe Hart
Chris Inda
Patrick Philips
Dominick Veldman
Ian Williamson
Robbie Wozniak

Praying Mantis Kicking Form

Betty Carlson
Rob Crandall
Brad Felske
Dan Hajek
Anika Inda
Chris Inda
Preston Irish
Darius McCool
Vince McHie
Patrick O'Brien
Ben Ollendick
Steve Peterson
Beth Van Dam
Kyle Wicklund

Minnesota Karate Supply

Brings their inventory into town
Saturday, December 1, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
to display and sell their wares.

Get yourself that sword you've wanted.
Get yourself a Christmas present.

"with a little help from my friends"

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all my friends at the Studio who have helped me over the summer with the renovation of my new house. It was an enormous undertaking, which couldn't have happened without the time and energy of all who have helped.

With deepest gratitude,

Paul

THANK YOU

A very special thanks to the following people for donating their time, talents, and resources to the completion of our beautiful new annex:

Cleaning Micah Lopez & Brandon Sherman
Construction Bill Krumm, Steve Martin, & Mark Tomlinson
Drywall Taping Fred Sparks
Floor Funding Andrew Scott
Painting LaVonne Bunt, Julie Cisler, Lucy Franklin,
Pat Hemmis, Kim Husband, Joe Kloiber, Laura Kohlhase, Joe Lapadat & Woody Wolston
Preparation and Paint Donation – Pat Hemmis

Coming in the Next Issue of Wu-Tang:

A brief Introduction to the Evolution of the Solo Form

Schedule
September 15, 2001 – January 15, 2002

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: Roll-Back/ Pushing-Hand Drill Intro.	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	11:30-12:30 Jump Rope/ Conditioning or Stretching *
7:30-8:30 Weapons	7:30-8:30 2 Person San-Shou	7:30-8:30 Hsing-Yi	7:30-8:30 Introduction to Shaolin	12:30-1:30 Chi-Kung, Standing Meditation and Energy Work
8:30-9:30 12 Animals/ Intro. to Pa-Kua	8:30-9:30 Praying Mantis Level I	8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua 64 Palms	8:30-9:30 Praying Mantis Level I	1:30-2:45 Solo Form

* First and last Saturdays, 11:30-12:30 are Stretching, all other Saturdays are 11:30-12:00 Jump Rope and 12:00-12:30 Conditioning.

NOTE: The studio will be closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan
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First Class Mail