



stillness is the master of unrest



Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio

Wee Wu-Tang—The monthly e-newsletter

March 1, 2010

From Sifu Ray

March madness just about sums it up. The spring equinox falls around the 21st/22nd, when the light and dark are even. We, as T'ai-Chi students, must also balance our physical practice with our intellectual pursuit, to develop ourselves as a whole. Master Liang called T'ai-Chi the "scholar's martial art" and encouraged us to read as much as we practiced. T'ai-Chi books and books on the Tao Te Ching, the Art of War, and anything that relaxes you will be an excellent balance of your light and dark, yin and yang.

A special thanks to all the presenters who helped us beat the winter blues.

The Solo Form Workbook is now available. They are in black and white for \$15, a we have a limited number of a color version for \$45. Net proceeds to go the Studio. Thanks to Mike and Kim Cain for all their work on it.

Look for the 3rd edition of "Lessons with Master T. T. Liang" to be available. We have changed the layout, and added many more notes, commentaries, and photos - and you might even find a surprise or two. Sign up for your copy at the Studio.

The Thursday night Pushing-Hands class will open March 18th at 7:00 PM. If you have finished the solo form, talk to me about joining this class.

We will be hosting Master Gin-foon Mark's Art Gallery Showing and Sale on Saturday, April 24th, from 4-7 PM, and Sunday, April 25th, from 1-4 PM. Bring friends and family to see some amazing Chinese Brush Painting and purchase that special piece of art for your home or work. A percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the Studio.

"I realized that what I was looking for was not to be found, but to be made."
- John Hughes



On Saturday June 5, Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio will present our second *Night of Ten Thousand Frolics*, an evening of entertainment, silent auction, raffles, sideshows, food and spirits. Those who remember our 2008 *Frolics* know it was a great time. Chef Nick Cronin created endless platters of hors d'oeuvres, and the wine, beer and beverages poured freely. The cabaret featured clog dancing, swordplay, belly dancing, folk songs, jazz, rock and puppetry. The auction offered items as diverse as artwork to bodywork. The auction alone brought in over \$6,500. The evening was a huge success because of everyone who came and those who helped out. Here's how you can help at this year's *Frolics*. Donate an auction item or service, or ask a business that you frequent to donate an item or gift certificate (letters of solicitation will be available at the Studio or can be downloaded from our website). Volunteer the day or evening of the *Frolics*. Volunteer opportunities include coming to the site the day of the *Frolics* to set up or working with Chef Nick to prepare food. Or you can help during the night for a two-hour shift, such as in the kitchen, at the door or pouring wine. The best way to help is to come and bring friends. Tickets will go on sale April 1st. There will be group discounts. If you have an item or service to donate, contact Sharon Nyberg at s.nyberg@comcast.net or 612-920-5994. If you want to volunteer, contact Rondi Atkin at rondi@visi.com or see the sign-up sheet at the Studio. In the coming weeks you can check out the link on our website for updates of *Frolics* 2010. We hope to see you there.

The Silk Road by Dennis Kelly

T'ai Chi Practical Application

It is the year 1297 and the Crusades have mercifully abated. You are from the West, a seeker in need to heal body and mind. You are captivated by the stories of a Chinese Taoist priest and his internal system of martial arts. His name is Zhang Sanfeng. He is reported to have special powers to calm the spirits, techniques for defeating his enemies, methods for physical rejuvenation and amazing skills of divination. Your inquiry points you to the Silk Road. You quickly find that it's not a road, but a confusing series of interconnected trade routes extending over 7,000 miles through the Mongolian Empire linking the Asian continent with north Africa and eastern Europe.

You ask for directions and are pointed toward Persia and then along the southern branch via Khotan toward the court of the great Kublai Khan and into the Wudang Mountains. You are also warned about the treachery ahead. The route traverses one of the most inhospitable environs on Earth. The harsh barren Taklimakan desert serves up deadly sandstorms. The narrow icy mountain passes of the Himalayas have been an effective barrier for centuries and are crossed only at one's peril. Along with trade goods, the route has infamously transported war and plague. Marauding bandits leave their victims to rot alongside the road. You are further discouraged to discover none of the advisors plotting your path has ever traveled the entire route.



You push on, aware that there is a price to pay in all worthwhile endeavors. You pass commercial caravans carrying commodities of gold, silk, spices, plants, medicines and exotic animals. You meet traders, merchants, pilgrims, missionaries, soldiers and nomads. You soon discover that the most valuable resource passed along the trade route is the exchange of ideas. Hindus, Taoists, Christians, Judaists and Moslems openly discuss the call to "know thyself" from an ancient stonemason philosopher called Socrates. You see the deity sculptures along the roadside grottos, listen to the poetry of Rumi and hear the buzzy jawari of a sitar balanced in an Indian's lap.

You reach an oasis. The people who inhabit this midpoint settlement appear wise as they have absorbed the cultures passed along the trade route. You discover a sifu who claims to have studied under the great Zhang Sanfeng. You are cautious. You wait, watch and unpack your questions. Where is the alchemy, you wonder? The transformation? What are the forms that reweave harmony into body and spirit? You meet and talk to students who take great joy in the practice but offer no answers. You decide that there is much to be learned where you are. Your journey has begun.

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