



Yang Style Tai Chi, Cheng Man Ch'ing Lineage

Reminders For Practice

In Class:

- *Focus upon what is happening now.*
This is the single most important aspect of this training. Bring your attention into the present moment. As you redirect your attention to the process and guidelines presented in this class, you can develop increased mental focus and experience a profound sense of relaxation.
- *Do the movements seem too complex?*
Keep your attention on one aspect of the process. For example, stay focused on the movement of your hands, the position of your feet, or changes in the direction you are facing. Notice your breathing, your alignment. Relax.
- *Are you feeling frustrated because you can't remember the moves?*
Keep in mind that this is not a performance! Your own process is what is important. Just breathe and relax into this moment. tai chi is a lifelong practice. There is no rush. You will be able to remember the movements over time and through regular practice.

At Home:

- *Establish a regular time and place to practice.*
Try practicing routinely, mornings before eating & evenings before retiring .
- *Do it everyday.*
The length of practice is not as important as the regularity.
- *Each time before beginning, notice your posture, breathing and surroundings.*
You can do this anytime to enhance your appreciation of this moment of life.
- *Spend as much time relaxing into the flow of the movements as you do checking for accuracy of the form.*

May you become strong as an oak, flexible as a willow, and clear as still water!

Overview Of Tai Chi

Origins

Tai chi originated in China around the 13th century A.D. as a synthesis of martial arts exercise and sitting meditation. The perspective of the *Tao* was integral to the philosophy and culture of China for thousands of years and naturally influenced the development of tai chi. *Tao* is translated as "road" or "path." The *Tao* is a path for living in harmony with the earth and with other humans. According to this perspective, living simply, being quiet and observant and willing to move with the flow of things promotes long and harmonious life. This insight is based on astute observation of nature's cycles and on a cosmology that is compatible with modern theoretical physics.

Ancient naturalists and astronomers spent time each day observing their own inner process and meditating on the rhythms and currents within their own bodies. They realized that the body is a microcosm of the universe and that one's personal health is influenced by the rhythms of life on earth, the patterns of the larger universe, and all relationship to other humans. All of life is interconnected. Over time, this exploration of inner realms produced an intricate map of the energy conduits or acupuncture meridians within the body through which *Qi* or "life force" flows.

This process had an influence on the martial arts. tai chi, which is based in self defense movements, evolved as a physical activity for integrating mind, body and spirit to function in harmony with the external world. Rather than cultivating brute force, which inevitably becomes depleted. tai chi (which means "Supreme Ultimate") cultivates The Middle Way, a peaceful path.

Recent History

For many centuries, tai chi was practiced privately, passed on from father to son in the Chen Village in northern China. Beginning in the mid-1800's Master Yang Lu Shan, founder of the Yang Style form, was the first to teach tai chi publicly. It soon became popular in martial arts circles as an advanced self-defense method. In the early 20th century Lu Shan's grandson, Master Yang Cheng Fu promoted tai chi as a health exercise. Since then, it has enjoyed widespread popularity in China. Adults of all ages practice the flowing postures every day. Many older adults begin learning tai chi after retirement.

Each morning, China's parks are filled with people performing this ancient exercise. Early risers do their round of tai chi before going to work, while later arrivals include retired elderly who come to socialize as well as practice. Any day, in almost any weather, millions of people in China are practicing tai chi.

Cheng Man Ch'ing Lineage

In the late sixties, tai chi began to take root in the United States and Europe. Grand master Cheng Man Ch'ing, of the Yang Style lineage, came to New York and was one of the first to teach this ancient exercise openly to non-Chinese students. Since then, Masters Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo and William C.C. Chen and other Yang Style teachers have taught tai chi to thousands of students across the United States and Europe, making it the most popular form worldwide. In addition to Yang Style, the Chen and Wu systems of tai chi are growing in popularity. Increasing numbers of people are finding this combination of movement and mental focus an excellent approach to both physical and mental fitness.

Health Benefits

Tai chi is a weight bearing and moderate-intensity cardiovascular exercise. Current research suggests that practice of tai chi can improve balance, reduce falls and increase leg strength. It also lowers blood pressure, stress hormones, enhances respiratory and immune function, and promotes emotional well-being.

Guidelines for Tai Chi Practice

Mindfulness

Basic to the practice of tai chi is an attitude of mindfulness, or awareness of the present moment. Attention is focused on the position and feeling within the body. Surroundings are experienced with the senses. In that tai chi requires mental focus, it is critical that the practitioner take a moment to bring full attention to the present before beginning the sequence. During practice, the mind naturally wanders. Simply refocus on the movements, balance, posture or breathing in order to redirect attention into the present moment.

Postural Alignment

Maintain focus on alignment throughout the sequence, checking to see that the body is upright, the head erect, spine comfortably aligned, shoulders balanced and relaxed, and the weight evenly distributed on the soles of the feet. While moving, the body remains upright and the shoulders remain aligned over the hips.

Breath Awareness

Natural diaphragmatic breathing patterns are maintained throughout the entire sequence. Many people hold their breath while concentrating. Tai chi trains breath awareness with movement.

Active Relaxation

Many people are unaware of the tension they hold in their bodies. Active relaxation involves integrating mindfulness with physical relaxation and facilitates simultaneous awareness of all parts of the body. It involves being both alert and calm at the same time and promotes the flow of *Qi* or life force throughout the body. Tai chi training reinforces active relaxation, both when being still and when in motion. Like any skill, it is learned gradually through practice.

Slow Movement

Most exercise programs focus on exertion and straining as a means to achieving increased strength and endurance. Tai chi facilitates both strength and endurance through slow, relaxed movement. With the knees bent and the body relaxed in proper alignment, dramatic load-bearing benefits occur. The continuous movement in a flexed stance promotes endurance. The slower and lower the movement, the greater the strength and endurance benefit.

Weight Separation

During transitions and weight shifts onto the back foot, the weight ideally is 100 percent on one foot, keeping the body upright. Commonly referred to as "separating the weight," it contributes to better balance and increased leg strength.

Integrated Movement

The head, trunk and pelvis rotate as a single "column" aligned over the stable base in the feet. All arm and hand movements are initiated by the upright rotation of this "column." There is no twisting of the spine.

Guidelines from a Tai Chi Master

Tai chi Master Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo summarizes guidelines for practice in his Five Basic Principles as follows:

- **Relax** (Mindfulness, Active Relaxation).
- **Body Upright** (Postural Alignment).
- **Separate Yin and Yang** (Weight Separation).
- **Move from the Waist** (Integrated Movement).
- **Keep Fair Lady's Wrist** (wrists neutral, element of Active Relaxation).]

Movements Of Yang Style Short Form (Cheng Man Ch'ing Version)

1. Preparation
 2. Beginning
 3. Grasp Sparrows Tail--Left Ward Off
 4. Grasp Sparrows Tail--Right Ward Off
 5. Grasp Sparrows Tail--Rollback
 6. Grasp Sparrows Tail-- Press
 7. Grasp Sparrows Tail--Push
 8. Single Whip
 9. Lift Hands
 10. Shoulder Strike
 11. Stork Spreads Its Wings
 12. Brush Knee And Twist--Left
 13. Strum the Lute
(Repeat Brush Knee And Twist--Left)
 14. Deflect Downward, Parry
 15. Punch
 16. Withdraw And Push
 17. Cross Hands
 18. Embrace Tiger, Return To Mountain
(Repeat Single Grasp Sparrows Tail And Single Whip Diagonally)
 19. Fist Under Elbow
 - 20, 21. Repulse The Monkey--Right--Left--Right
 22. Diagonal Flying
 - 23, 24. Waving Hands In Clouds--Left--Right--Left--Right--Left
 25. Snake Slides Down
 26. Golden Pheasant Stands On Left Leg
 27. Golden Pheasant Stands On Right Leg
 28. Separate Arms And Kick-- Right
 29. Separate Arms And Kick-- Left
 30. Turn And Strike With Heel
(Repeat Brush Knee and Twist Left)
(Brush Knee And Twist--Right)
 31. Low Punch
(Repeat Grasp Sparrows Tail And Single Whip)
 - 32, 33. Fair Lady Weaves The Shuttles--Right--Left--Right--Left
(Repeat Grasp Sparrows Tail: Left Ward off, Right Ward Off. Press, Push)
(Repeat Single Whip and Snake Slides Down)
 34. Step Forward To The Seven Stars
 35. Step Back And Ride The Tiger
 36. Turn And Sweep Lotus With Leg
 37. Bend Bow And Shoot Tiger
(Repeat Deflect Downward, Parry And Punch - Cross Hands)
- Conclusion

Books

Introductory Books On T'ai-Chi Chuan

Kline, Bob. Movements of Magic. (Newcastle Publishing Co.) 1984.

Liang, T.T. T'ai-Chi Ch'uan for Health and Self-Defense. (Redwing: Boston) 1974.

Yu, Tricia Tai Chi Mind and Body (DK Publishing: London) 2003

Form Practice Guidelines

Cheng, Man-Ch'ing and Smith, Robert. T'ai-Chi. (Tuttle: Rutland, Vermont) 1967.

Kauz, Herman. T'ai-Chi Handbook. (Dolphin: Garden City, New York) 1974.

Classic Works of Chinese Philosophy, Medicine, Meditation and Martial Arts

Feng, Gia Fu. Tao Te Ching. (Random House: New York) 1972. -Philosophy

Mitchell, Stephen. Tao Te Ching. (Harper and Rowe: New York) 1988. -Philosophy

Veith, Ilza. The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine. (University of California Press: London) 1949.

Watson, Burton. Chuang Tzu. (Columbia University Press: New York) 1968. -Philosophy

Wilhelm, Richard. The Secret of the Golden Flower. (Harcourt and Brace: New York) 1962. -Meditation

Great Originals and Translations from Chinese on T'ai-Chi

Chen, William. Body Mechanics of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. (Wm. CC Chen, 2 Washington Square Village #101, New York 10012) 1989.

Davis, Barbara The Tai Chi Classics North Atlantic Press 2004

Jou, Tsung Hwa. The Tao of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. (Tuttle: Rutland, Vermont) 1980.

Lo, Benjamin and Inn, Martin. (Translators) Cheng Tzu's Thirteen Treaties on T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. (North Atlantic Books: Berkeley) 1985.

Lo, Benjamin and Smith, Robert. (Trans T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Ta Wen (North Atlantic Books: Berkeley) 1985.

Lo, Benjamin et al. (Translators) The Essence of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. (North Atlantic Books: Berkeley) 1985.

Lowenthal, Wolfe. There Are No Secrets: Professor Cheng Man Ch'ing and His T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. (North Atlantic Books: Berkeley) 1991.

Wile, Douglas. (Translator) Cheng Man-Ch'ing's Advanced T'ai-Chi Form Instructions. (Sweet Chi Press: Brooklyn) 1985.

_____ Master Cheng's Thirteen Chapters on T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. (Sweet Chi Press: Brooklyn) 1982.

_____ T'ai-Chi Touchstones: Yang Family Secret Transmissions. (Sweet Chi Press: Brooklyn) 1983.

Qigong (Chi Kung)

Chia, Mantak. Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao. (Aurora Press: New York) 1983.

Cohen, Kenneth. The Way of Qigong (Ballantine Books: New York) 1997.

Videos/DVDs

Yang Style Short Form, Chen Man-Ch'ing Lineage

Tai Chi: Exercise for Lifelong Health and Well-Being, (VHS/DVD) with Tricia Yu founder of the Tai Chi Center of Madison, reviews the Yang Style Short Form, its principles and philosophy in beautiful settings and in a clear and easy-to-learn format... Available at the Tai Chi Center and at 1-800-488-4940.

Tai Chi Ch'an with Cheng Man-Ch'ing Demonstration by the Grandmaster and teacher of Benjamin Lo and William Chen. \$80. Cho-San Inc. P.O.Box 820792, Houston Texas 77282 or Patrick Cheng, P.O. Box 32275, Asheville, North Carolina, 28802. (704) 298-7098.

Simplified T'ai-Chi Ch'uan by Ben Lo, an internationally recognized master is a very clear, step-by-step demonstration of all moves, with emphasis on basic principles. Contact Ben Lo, PO. Box 210537, San Francisco, CA 94121.

Yang Style Short Form by Terry Dunn, (VHS/DVD) a skilled tai chi player. Includes good warm-up and detailed form instruction. Contact Wayfarer Publications, P.O. Box 26156, Los Angeles. CA 90026 or call 1-800-888-9119.

Tai Chi Fundamentals

Tai Chi Fundamentals: for Mastering Tai Chi Basics (VHS/DVD), with Tricia Yu, teaches a systematic approach for mastering tai chi basics, suitable for a wide range of abilities and experience. Available at the Tai Chi Center and at 1-800-488-4940.

Tai Chi Fundamentals: Training for Health Care Professionals and Instructors with Tricia Yu and Jill Johnson, (VHS/DVD), Includes the entire program from above video. In addition, a physical therapist analyzes the movements, their clinical applications, and functional benefits using Western medical terminology. Includes an instructional manual and audio guide. Available at the Tai Chi Center and at 1-800-488-4940.

Warm-ups

Energize: Daily Warm-Ups for Flexibility and Strength with Tricia Yu, (VHS/DVD), includes short routines which range from simple, short stretches to more advanced exercises for tai chi practitioners. \$19.95. Available at the Tai Chi Center and at 1-800-488-4940.

Qigong

Sheng Zhen Wuji Yuan Gong by Li Jun Feng, includes excellent demonstration of the following routines: Kuan Yin, Jesus, Mohammed Standing and Sitting qigong, and Return to Spring. \$80. Contact Gina Colwell (608) 231-1694 to purchase.

Qigong: The Chinese Way of Health by Ken Cohen-Basic Qigong Healing Sounds and Standing Exercises. Clear presentation and summary of principles. Highest rating from Internal Arts Magazine. \$49.95 plus \$4.00 postage from PO. Box 1727 Nederland, CO 80466. (303) 258-0971.

Wai Dan Chi Jung: The Eight Pieces of Brocade. Yang Jwing Ming Fundamental. Popular routines, both sitting and standing exercises. Call 1-800-888-9119, or write Wayfarer Publications at P.O. Box 26156, Los Angeles, CA 90026.