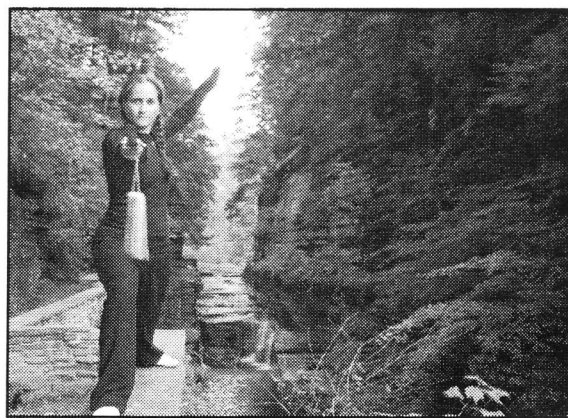


TongRen

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November 2009 Novembre Volume 16 . Issue 4 Numéro

Jill Heath, Oakville, Ontario
(also on front cover)



TongRen

November / Novembre 2009 . Volume 16 . Issue / Numéro 4

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TongRen provides a forum for the discussion, expression, and experience of Taijiquan and related subjects. Articles, reports on events, biographies, letters, book reviews, poems, illustrations, scholarly research, and philosophical musings are welcomed. Please email submissions for consideration for publication in TongRen to the editor, Michelle McMillan <ki.design@sympatico.ca>

TongRen fournit un forum pour discuter, exprimer et vivre le Taijiquan et ses domaines connexes. Articles, reportages, activités, biographies, lettres, critiques de livres, poèmes, illustrations, textes savants et réflexions philosophiques sont les bienvenus. Veuillez soumettre tout matériel à fin de publication à la rédactrice de TongRen, Michelle McMillan <ki.design@sympatico.ca>

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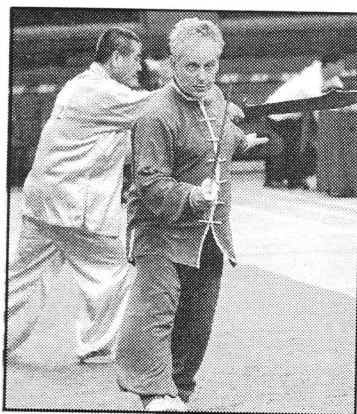
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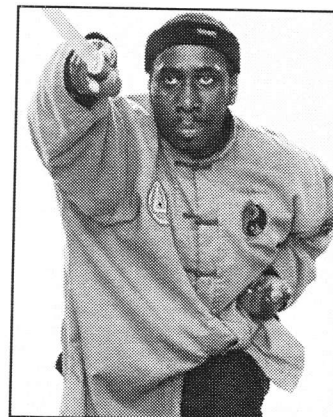
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Preparing for a Taiji competition in Hong Kong:
Jonathan Krehm, CTF Past-President, *Wu's T'ai Chi Ch'uan Academy*, Toronto, Ontario



Dennis Pounall
Elliott Lake, Ontario

TongRen

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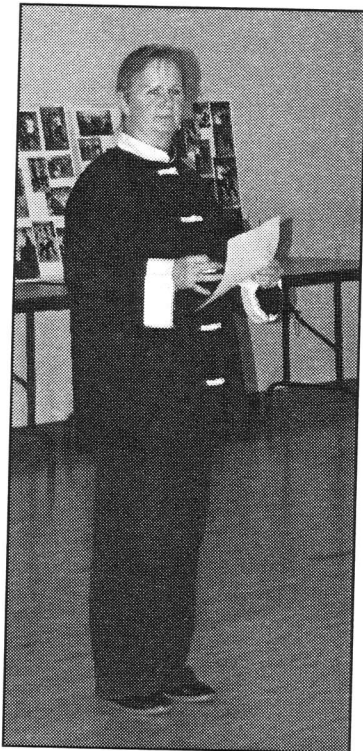
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CTF Annual General Meeting and Friendship Demonstration Day
held in Guelph, Ontario on Saturday, October 3, 2009



MC Carol O'Connor
CTF President 2009-10



Gisela Wittenberg, instructor, and Trig Smith of the late, great, Tessie Smith's *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds* (Milton and Georgetown), demonstrate Tai Chi Chi Kung 13-movement form, as popularized by Mantak Chia.

Iaido demonstrator Sensei Kim Taylor, *Sei do kai*, Guelph, Ontario in background

**Thankyou to everyone who helped make this year's AGM a success:
demonstrators, workshop presenters, organizers and participants!**



Jill Heath and Adriaan Blaauw
demonstrate Sam Masich's
5-section 2-person sword form

**The 2010 CTF AGM will be held in Orillia, Ontario
hosted by Ian Sinclair, *Cloud Mountain Martial Arts***

Spur of the Moment Creativity (my thoughts)

by Sophia Nikolakakos



Oh no...nerves. Another demo – the CTF AGM this afternoon. Must practice this morning, I've not had a chance to practice much this week (feel guilty).

Practice reps:

1. Not good! missed start of music
2. Good (sigh of relief)... started with music, hit all postures and punches with beat of music
3. Great!... Another good rep., slow, breathing, relaxing, settling, extending, holding postures, fans snapping loudly with body movement
4. O.K. not bad
5. Oh no. Form too fast for that part of music. Oh, no... wrong angle for the fan. Not high enough, not low enough... overdid it, time to stop

Too late, did what I could to practice; besides, I've done this Fan demo a few times now.

But the nerves....

(while dressing)... Oh, I can't wear the same outfit again. Oh, my... same demo, same music.

I must make a change.

O.K., my Sifu said "an outfit can change the mood of a performance". Well, I have a different coloured Taiji top. And, oh, how about a long black skirt instead of pants?

Have to try on my long skirt and practice in the basement! Step, step, turn, low posture... good, not stepping on long skirt! But this is tango music! How about a red hip scarf and a black dressy top?

Hmmm... (light bulb in head shines) I can wear black top under Taiji long top and I have red fans. Great!

(light bulb shines again) Now, how do I introduce a costume change in front of an audience? Hmmm... (while driving to my demo)... I can start my intro with my traditional outfit with matching fans. Then I can stop and indicate to the audience something is wrong and then I can proceed to alter my appearance to suit my tango music. I must have help with starting my CD... I must tell someone when to press "play".

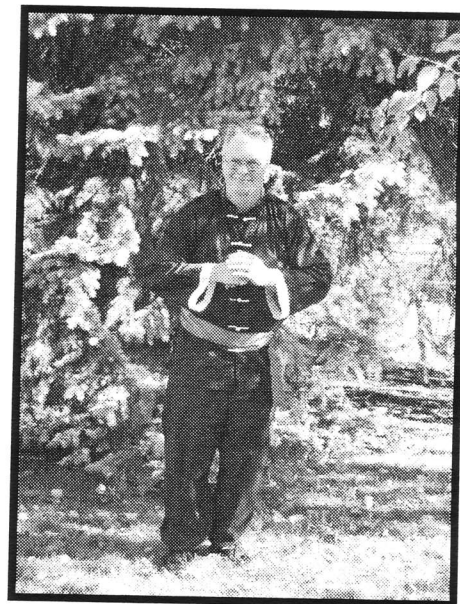
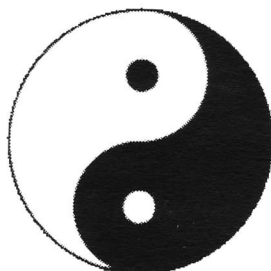
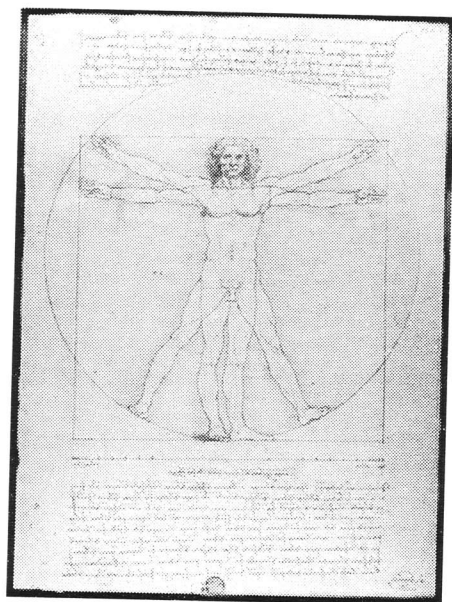
So with a smile, added flare and a bit of dance, I refreshed, enhanced and renewed my performance for a beautiful Taiji double fan form to the beautiful music of Argentine tango. This spur of the moment creativity gave me a new perspective of my double fan form, as well as hopefully providing an entertaining experience for the audience.

I acknowledge and thank my Sifu, Steve Higgins, for his instruction, encouragement, acceptance of individuality, and love of music. I extend my thanks to Sifu Jill Heath for introducing and instructing our club on the Flying Rainbow Double Fan Form. I acknowledge and thank Master Helen Wu for her video on the Taiji Double Fan Form, which I spent many, many hours studying.

Sophie Nikolakakos has studied Taiji for the past 4 years, most recently with Sifu Steve Higgins at Cold Mountain Internal Arts in Kitchener, Ontario and Master Haibin Gao. An enthusiastic road cyclist, Sophie enjoys Latin and Ballroom dance and Argentine Tango.

Tai Chi Learning Techniques from the Italian Renaissance© *

by Randall Templeton



At first glance the Italian Renaissance would seem to have little in common with the late Ming Dynasty – the period in China’s history which gave birth to Tai Chi; however by borrowing from the methods of Leonardo Da Vinci, one of the Renaissance’s most accomplished masters, a practitioner can expand their knowledge and appreciation of Tai Chi in all of its richness.

In his popular book How To Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci, Michael Gelb explores seven principles, which he believes made Da Vinci such a master of art and science. By incorporating these principles into one’s Tai Chi practice, the full richness of the art can be experienced. The seven principles are:

Curiosita: An insatiably curious approach to life and an unrelenting quest for continuous learning;

Dimostazione: A commitment to test knowledge through experience, persistence, and a willingness to make mistakes;

Sensazione: The continual refinement of the senses, especially sight, as a means to enliven experience;

Sfumto: A willingness to embrace ambiguity, paradox and uncertainty;

Arte/Scieza: The development of the balance between science and art, logic and imagination. “Whole-brain” thinking;

Corporalita: The cultivation of grace, ambidexterity, fitness and poise;

Connessione: A recognition and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things and phenomena. Systems thinking.¹

¹ Gelb, Michael, How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci Workbook, Dell Publishing, New York: 1999, p 10

* *Tai Chi Learning Techniques from the Italian Renaissance*© Copyright 2009 Randall Templeton

To me, this suggests a number of principles for Tai Chi study. For example:

To practice **Curiosita**, be constantly open to learning from everyone. Personally I sometimes find it difficult to maintain my “beginner mind” because I am already full of prejudices about what works. By staying in touch with my curiosity to know what others think however, I can stay open to new levels of understanding. By openly discussing different perspectives, a better interpretation can often be found.

Push hands practice is an excellent way to practice **Dimostazione**, and to prove the quality of your balance and rooting. Use of punching bags and striking pads is also useful to demonstrate the quality of your form. Although the martial application of Tai Chi is not a focus for everyone, the integrity of each move can be demonstrated by use of striking pads. Recently I attended a mixed martial arts seminar given by Chuck Liddell. Imagine my surprise to see an Ultimate Fighting Champion teaching brush knee and other movements from the Old Yang Form as powerful striking techniques. In my opinion it is very important to respectfully challenge your Tai Chi instructor to demonstrate the application of each movement. Much of Tai Chi’s power is being lost for the sake of artistic interpretation, to the extent that some forms done in exhibition have become a dance routine. The skill and artistry of these forms is often very good, but they have lost connection with Dimostrazione.

Da Vinci’s focus was on painting and sculpture, so his practice of **Sensatione** was predominately visual, and the forms, weapons practice and colourful uniforms provide a great way to experience this but in Tai Chi, the art is as much kinaesthetic as visual. The subtle changes in skin temperature, internal body alignment, balance and breathing all provide rich signals to our senses. The art of “listening” to a push hands opponent and the subtle recruitment of muscles in each movement is what makes Tai Chi an “internal martial art”. By using Sensatione, one can get the full experience of this internal process.

For some, the ambiguity of some moves in the form is frustrating, but if one is willing to practice **Sfumato**, one can embrace this ambiguity in a healthy way. At a deeper level, Tai Chi practice in itself is a paradox; because the way to mastery is to “relax harder”, to focus on a movement while at the same time letting the body move in a natural unforced way, and understand the martial application of a movement without thinking about it too much. I believe that Tai Chi offers a way to communicate with our sub-conscious mind, so to me Sfumato is a way of communicating with parts of your mind that use sensation and emotional logic. Tai Chi provides a way to connect with the 90% of your mind that is not easily accessible with logic and words.

Tai Chi truly is a blend of art and science (**Arte/Scieza**). The recruitment of very specific muscles to execute each movement properly is a lesson in anatomy, but if you dissect the movements too much the fluidity and power is lessened. If Tai chi is reduced to mechanics, the art, and the power is lost.

The practice of Tai Chi will definitely enhance balance, posture and poise; but the practice of **Corporalita** suggests other things as well. Exercises like “River walking” and backwards walking can be very beneficial. Learning the mirror reflection of the form will also lead to new insights.

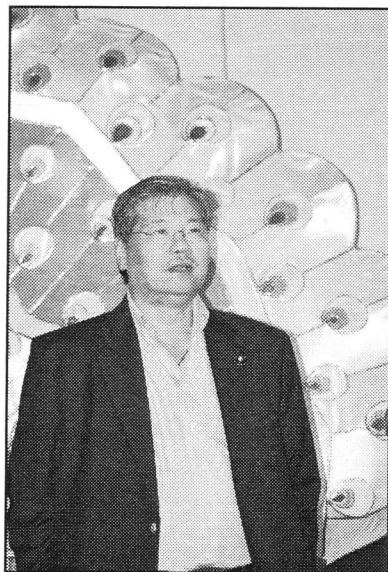
The connectedness of the body is a fundamental learning of Tai chi practice. To practice **Connessione** however we must also connect with other students and teachers. In some ways the communal aspect of Tai Chi is its highest principle, and one which, in my opinion, sets it apart from other martial arts and health practices.

Application of these seven principles has definitely enhanced my study of Tai Chi. I hope it works for you also!

Randall has been studying martial arts on and off since 1978. He received his second degree black belt in Kenpo Karate in 1990. He joined *Cold Mountain Internal Arts* in Kitchener, Ontario, in 2005.

CONGRATULATIONS CTF Member Medalists

*Canadian Organization of Traditional Taiji Quan Associations (COTTQA)
2009 Canadian Open Taiji Championships Toronto, Ontario, September 12, 2009*



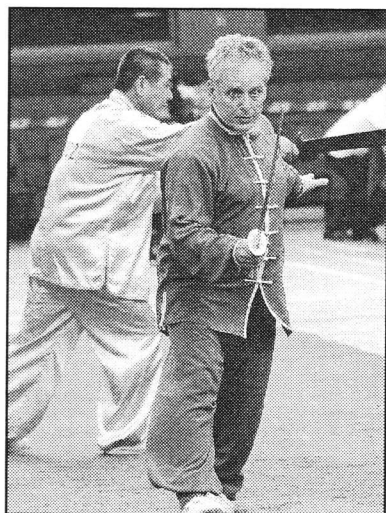
Eddie Wu
COTTQA President

Dennis Pounall
Gold Medal: Miao dao
Silver Medal: Traditional Yang style Taijiquan
Silver Medal: Yang style broad sword

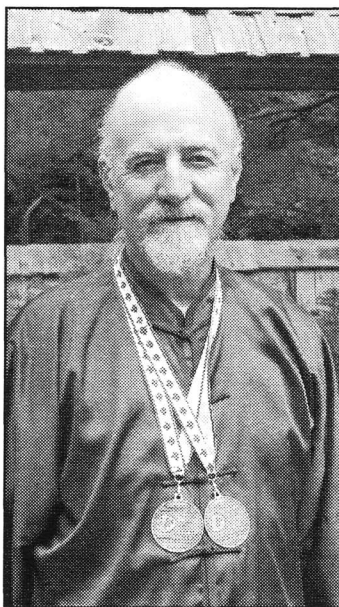
Martin Kennedy
Silver Medal: Taiji spear
Bronze Medal: 54 Wu style



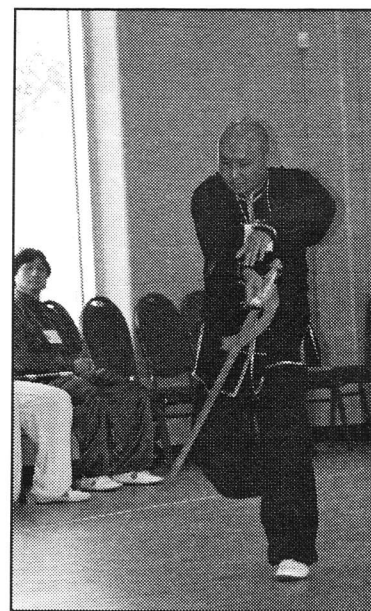
Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto



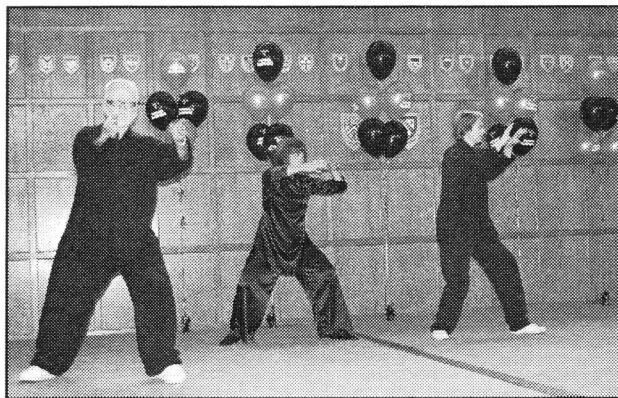
Johnathan Krehm
Silver Medal: 54 Wu style
Silver: Wu style broad sword
Bronze Medal: Wu style hand form



John Peel
Gold Medal: Traditional Yang style
Silver Medal: Yang Style Sabre



Haibin Gao
Silver Medal: Chen style straight sword



Steve Higgins, Sophia Nikolakakos, Jan Fogolin performing at the *East Asian Arts Festival* in September



COTTQA Medalists from *Cold Mountain Internal Arts*:
Alpha Montemayor, Carol O'Connor, Sopia Nikolakakos, Tanya Korovkin, with Sifu Steve Higgins

Cold Mountain Kudos

A group of *Cold Mountain Internal Arts* members are exploring the joy of public performance. Over the past twelve months they have performed at roughly ten events, including *The Canadian Opens*, the dedication of the new *Wu's Taijiquan Academy* in Toronto, Kitchener's *Silk Road Festival*, the inauguration of the *Central Ontario Chinese Cultural Centre*, and Waterloo Region's *Open Ears* festival.

At the *Open Ears* Festival of experimental music they provided six hours of Taijiquan performance to accompany a fourteen-hour performance of Erik Satie's "Vexations".

At the 2009 *Canadian Opens* in Toronto, four members brought home nine medals: 6 bronze, 2 silver and one gold!

Most recently, in September, they performed at Renison College's *East Asian Arts Festival* at the University of Waterloo.

The members of *Cold Mountain* are looking forward to more opportunities to express their enthusiasm for Taijiquan in the new year!

Steve Higgins, Kitchener, Ontario

Tanya Korovkin

Silver Medal – Traditional Yang style Taijiquan Bronze Medal – Yang style straight sword
Bronze Medal – Yang style broad sword

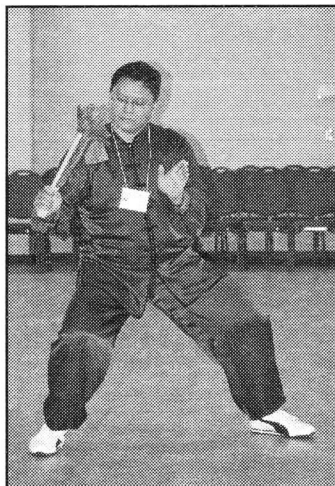


Carol O'Connor

Silver Medal – Flying Rainbow Taiji double fan

Bronze Medal – Yang style straight sword

Bronze medal – Yang sabre

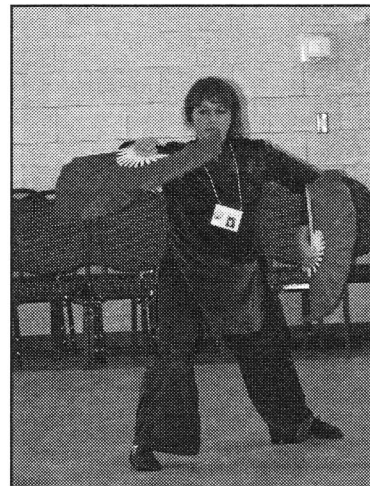


Alpha Montemayor

Bronze Medal – Taiji fan

Bronze Medal – Yang style straight sword

Bronze Medal – Traditional Yang style Taijiquan



Sophie Nikolakakos

Gold Medal: Flying Rainbow Taiji double fan

Ever Faster

by Pierre Huot

94 000 000 000... .. light-years in diameter and expanding faster with every second. This is a latest measurement of the dimension of our known universe. And the bigger it gets the faster it grows.

For the last 2½ years I have been telling my Hunyuan students when we do the big circulation with our wooden rulers to reach out to God... or at least the limits of our universe. The figure I have been giving them was 78 billion light-years. I have now had to up this number by 16 billion. This is how fast the universe has expanded. With each second it is getting bigger in an exponential way.

When we practice our Taiji and Qigong forms, this is how big we should project ourselves into space. With each outward repetition we grow bigger, with each repetition inward we bring more of this expanded universe to ourselves. Then we expand further away and take in more. Our repetitions are never the same since the universe is never as small as when we started. The more you do it, the more there is out there to deal with; the more you do it, the more there will be in you to grow with.

Spread your wings this large. Repulse this 94-billion+ light-year monkey. How far deep is the needle at the bottom of the sea when the sea is this deep and is always getting deeper? How big is the coat whose buttons you have to tie up? How far do you have to swing the whip if it is to touch the farthest end of an ever and faster expanding universe? How do you handle its return without getting hurt?

And at the end of your practice, when you take all this into your dantian and meditate on it, how does it feel? How big is your small belly? How big is your mind? Your chi? Are you "peng"?

The LHC and Hunyuan Taiji and Qigong

This summer the 17-mile wide, 8-billion dollar+ new particle accelerator, LHC or Large Hadron Collider, became operational in the heart of a mountain more than 500 feet below ground near Geneva, Switzerland. Built over a period of 13 years by 10,000 scientists and engineers, it will be able, using the power of 14 trillion electric volts, to accelerate streams of atomic particles to over 99.999% of the speed of light from opposite directions, to crash them into one another at the rate of up to 600 million times per second in 4 giant detectors and thus replicate the conditions in the universe 13.73 billion years ago, just a billionth of a second after the Big Bang, when the universe was roughly as big as a solar system.*

With this largest and most sophisticated scientific instrument ever devised, the LHC, humans hope to burst open the ultimate and deepest secrets of our universe and even those before it came into existence!

Hunyuan Taiji and Qigong is a discipline that, by its very name, "Hunyuan", deals with the original energy that is the most fundamental element of our known universe. Hunyuan practitioners want to bring their awareness to this energy that has kept unfolding to create what we consider our world of form. We want to allow it to become a conscious part of our very lives. We want to feel, see, hear, and touch this deep aspect of reality. We meditate on it as our very own dantian.

*"The Genesis Device", Tom Huston, "EnlightenNext" magazine, March-May 2009, Issue 43, p. 81

Some scientists are beginning to ponder whether there is, embedded in the fabric of our universe, a sort of genetic code that begs to develop an advance life form that would allow this universe of energy to accomplish its real goal. Only through this advance life form could it do so. This advance life form is the "Human Being".

Others believe that our universe is in fact made of more than the three dimensions that we know. In the words of theoretical physicist and futurist Michio Kaku, it would be "a symphony of strings – cosmic music resonating through eleven-dimensional hyperspace."**

11 dimensions? Surprising? For those who do the basic 12-form Hunyuan Qigong, this number is quite familiar. It is the number of forms in the practice before the massages. We go through 11 different manifestations of the constitutive energy of the universe, after which we mix them and balance them in our bodies to finally return to our meditation that started the whole process. From One, all returns to One. After each form and at the end of it all, it is as it was before it ever began.

Could it be that science will discover the proofs of the stunning intuition at the root of our art and of our lives?

Hunyuan Taiji and Qigong is a mystical way, very much in line with Kaballah, Sufism, Buddhism, union with the body of Christ, the devotion of Hanuman the Monkey for Rama, and Heaven and Earth as one in and through Man.

For those of you who are involved with this practice, I encourage you to ponder about the wonders that fill our universe. It could be that, one day, as opposed to fighting it, science will catch up to Revelation and assist humanity in its role of fulfilling God's creation. Matter fully spiritualized. Form and Formlessness not as two. Creator and Creature as One. One Pure Consciousness.

I might be off the mark. But this is how I see Hunyuan Taiji and Qigong. This is my practice. This is what I teach. This is what I live.

**"The Genesis Device", Tom Huston, "EnlightenNext" magazine, March-May 2009, Issue 43, p. 78; **idem, p. 80

This article was originally published in Pierre Huot's 'Chung-Ming Zak' Bulletin number 27, March 2009

Pierre Huot teaches Taiji and Qigong in Ottawa-Gatineau. His classes focus on the principles and training methods taught by the late Gilles Vaillant, Sam Masich, and Joseph Chen. Master Chen certified Pierre in Hunyuan Qigong. Pierre teaches kids, teens, adults, seniors, and people with special challenges or needs; like stage training for a stand-up comic. He was authorized by John and Kim Bright-Fey to use their New Forest Way. He has created a structured, well-rounded water Taiji program that he teaches on a weekly basis. He has completed his certification in Helen Wu 's Therapeutic Qigong with Jill Heath and has begun studying the Practical Method that Master Chen teaches. He has recently opened his own school, which is affiliated with Master Chen's world Hunyuan Chen Academy, and begun publishing a regular e-bulletin, both under the name of Chung-Ming Zak. His teaching draws also from ai chi, feldenkrais, mentastics, sensorial gymnastics, voice and singing, and his background as an actor, dancer, and authentic movement practitioner and leader. He was a founding member and Vice-President, Teachers` Training and Special Workshops, of the Gilles Vaillant Tai Chi Center. Pierre is a former Director of the CTF and a member of the National Canadian Kung Fu Fellowship. He has been recognized as a Level II Senior Associate Instructor by the CTF.

How to Read Daoist Texts

by Bill Hulet



Eight Daoist Immortals

by Tani Buncho

Since I first started on the path that leads away from the land of dust, there has been an absolute explosion of books written on Daoism. This means that when someone develops an interest in the subject, there are no end of books that he or she can read. Unfortunately, they can be pretty hard to understand, so I thought it would be useful to put forward some of the insights that I think I have gained from a lifetime of reading and thinking about such things.

Probably the most important thing to know about Daoist writings is that in many cases the author is doing something very different stylistically from what a modern Western essayist attempts. That is to say, what I try to do when I write is to be as clear and precise as possible in my descriptions and explanations. In contrast, in most cases Daoist and Zen writers are trying for something very different---they are trying to be evocative. That is to say, a good essayist pars down most of the ways in which his words can be understood to a very few in order to attempt to limit what the reader's understanding to precisely what the author was thinking of when he wrote them. In contrast, Daoist writers are trying to get people to think in a specifically new, much more creative, way. As such, they are attempting to expand the range of ways in which a reader can understand the words on the page---and, by implication, the way she sees the world around her. So instead of limiting the range of interpretations---like the essayist---the Daoist is often instead trying to expand the range of interpretations beyond the usual.

Let me illustrate this point with a story from the book *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. (As much of the subject of this article applies equally to Zen Buddhism and Daoism, I am ignoring the distinction and use this first apropos example.)

A philosopher, Tanzan, was visited by a Buddhist priest, Unsho, who was very strict about following the precepts. Tanzan was drinking wine, which is supposed to be forbidden for priests.

"Hello, brother," Tanzan greeted him.
"Won't you have a drink?"

"I never drink!" exclaimed Unsho solemnly.

"One who does not drink is not even human," said Tanzan.

"Do you mean to call me inhuman just because I do not indulge in intoxicating liquids!" exclaimed Unsho in anger.
"Then if I am not human, what am I?"

"A Buddha," answered Tanzan.

(Number 13, "A Buddha", 101 Zen Stories, trans. by Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps)

When I first read this story (many years ago) it seemed to turn my assumptions on their heads. Philosophers are supposed to be overly rational and incapable of understanding the spirit behind Zen. Zen masters, on the other hand, are supposed to be unconventional and crackling with life. Yet in this story it is the academic, Tanzan, who seems more relaxed and "comfortable in his skin". In contrast, Unsho, seems to have totally self-identified with his position as a priest, to the point where drinking a glass of wine with a friend is not only no longer a "live option", but is totally beyond contemplation.

After thinking about the story, I came to the conclusion that the story is "about" the way we attach labels to people---like "philosopher" and "Zen Master"---and project these assumptions onto them. The idea I took away was that we need to constantly "be in the moment" and see what is in front of us instead of what we think we see.

That was when I read it the first time. When I read the text this time, however, I noticed a lot of different things.

First of all, I notice that there is no mention that Unsho is a Zen Master. Instead, he is identified as a "priest". It may be that I was right in my initial read – years ago – to think that he supposed to be a Zen Master. But it may be that I was projecting my assumptions onto the page.

I also noticed another thing. The philosopher, Tanzan, doesn't simply offer Unsho a drink. He makes the comment that "One who does not drink is not even human". Is this an insult towards Unsho? It seems that Unsho thinks so. At that point he responds and it looks like Tanzan was testing Unsho. Unsho responds heatedly to this "slight" and Tanzan drops the coup de main of suggesting that Tanzan is not living up to his ideal of being a Buddha.

Tanzan is suggesting that Unsho's zeal in following the precepts of Buddhism is getting in the way of Unsho's ultimate goal – achieving enlightenment. The implication is that Buddhas (or to use the Daoist term "realized men") do not do things just because they are the "rules". Instead, they always have the option of doing whatever is physically possible. People who have not realized their true nature, on the other hand, find themselves bound by the rules and conventions of their past history and the world they find themselves inhabiting.

The point of the story isn't any sort of "moral" that I may be able to identify, however. The goal of the story is to get me, the reader, to think about it and all the ideas that it creates in my mind. Indeed, this sort of story is intended to be mulled over while sitting in meditation and then, perhaps, discussed with a teacher. As such, my attempt to write out my particular reaction to the story, in effect, "damages" this story for anyone who might read this essay. This is because any person who reads the story will have his mind cluttered up with my particular thoughts and these will no doubt colour his own particular attempts to wrestle with it.

Another thing that Daoist stories are trying to do is to create a set of conceptual "building blocks" that the reader can use to look at the world

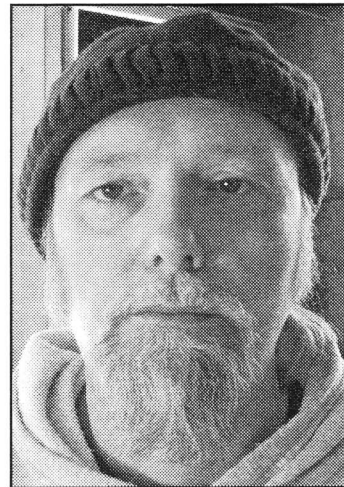
around him or her. For example, consider the first chapter of Zhuangzi where he talks about the enormous K'un fish and P'eng bird, the short-lived mushroom, motes of dust, and ordinary creatures. The chapter is about different scales of existence – size, duration, point of view, and so on. If Zhuangzi were writing today, no doubt he would talk about the enormous age of the earth, the huge number of stars in our galaxy and the astronomical number of galaxies in the universe. The point is to not be so immersed in our own particular part of the world that we forget about how limited it really is.

I once referred to this chapter to a Roman Catholic environmentalist who was being a little down about the fate of the earth. I pointed out that our world is less than a tiny pinprick in the universe. What happens here is of very little ultimate significance. He said he'd never thought of things in that way before. Afterwards, it occurred to me that it made sense he'd never thought of it that way. The Christian faith is based on a world view that implies that the planet earth is the absolutely most important thing that there is. Man is made in God's image and God is so obsessed by this little blue marble that he sent his son to die on it. That is why the Church felt so threatened by Gallileo's insistence that the earth is not the centre of the universe. Whereas Christianity's stories emphasize the ultimate significance of humanity, Daoist ones tend to emphasize its ultimate insignificance. This releases the Daoist from his "burden of guilt" in much the same way that the doctrine of atonement seems to work for some Christians.

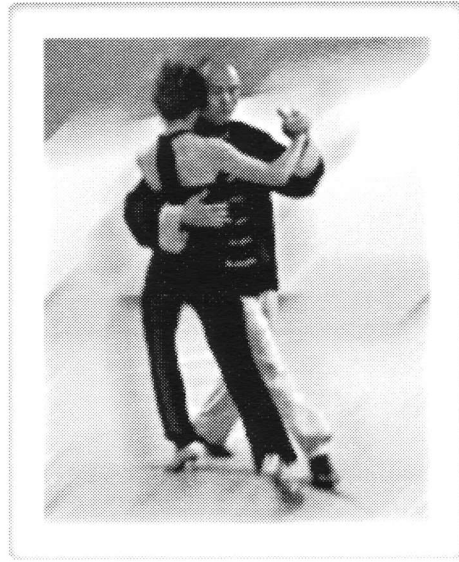
Another thing that Daoist texts do is give people hints of the day-to-day life of a Daoist. One thing that you will see over and over again in the literature are examples where initiates have to go through extreme hardships in order to achieve realization. Some stories talk about adepts having to be boiled in caldrons. Others talk about being dumped into pits with tigers. Others talk about masters forcing disciples to eat bowls of rotting, maggot-ridden dog feces.

The book Seven Taoist Masters furnishes several less extreme examples. One student ends up devoting himself to carrying people across a river (probably a metaphor for spreading the teaching.) Another spends his time digging caves for other recluses to meditate in (a metaphor for building institutional infrastructure?) One of the most poignant scenes for me is where the beautiful woman disciple disfigures her face with hot cooking oil to minimize her problems with men while travelling as a mendicant.

These stories are pretty important to me, as contrary to what you might think, there are a great many difficulties involved in following the "watercourse Way". The work of internal kungfu involves burning out the impurities of your being, which is not an easy task. Many is the time in my practice when I have thought to myself "this is just like that story where the master boils the student in his caldrun".



Bill Hulet (aka "the Cloudwalking Owl") has a Master's degree in philosophy, was initiated into an offshoot of the Quanzhen school of Daoism over 25 years ago, and has practiced Taijiquan for somewhat longer than that. This essay is a reprint from his blog: "Diary of a Daoist Hermit". Bill lives in Guelph, Ontario.



TAI-CHI, DANCE & ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

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Taijiquan As Stalking

by Duff Doel

What is stalking?

Most people think of stalking as something predatory. We hold this in a negative light. We think of a smarmy guy lurking in shadows or the ex-girlfriend that won't leave us alone. Or we think of a tiger slinking silently through the forest preying upon the unsuspecting deer. These images carry a dark feeling to us "civilized" folk.

But, if you think about it, the tiger holds no malice toward the deer, nor does it hold pity. The deer is simply lunch. It is only the human that can imbue the act of stalking (or anything else for that matter) with a dark or negative essence. It requires sentience to be "evil".

Stalking really, is the act of learning everything there is to be known about your prey. To come to know it better than it knows itself, so that when the time comes, you will just be there already, waiting for it. The successful tiger knows exactly where to place himself, when to be still, and exactly when to charge the prey. He knows it so well that he doesn't know he knows it. We call this instinct.

Aboriginals are often expert stalkers. They live with the land. They know the characteristics and habits of the animals they share the land with, both those that they might eat and those that might eat them. They know this at such a core level that they don't really know that they know it. And again, we might call this instinct. But it is learned. It is learned very young and to a great degree, indirectly. This means that they learn it by being with and watching and mimicking their elders until it is such a part of their way of being that it is nearly innate.

We "civilized" folk learn different things that way. We learn about cars and buses. We learn about TVs and computers, dishwashers and microwaves. We learn about two legged predators and identity theft. We don't learn about Nature, animals, dangers of weather patterns and water currents, etc. For us to learn these things requires

stalking. We need to spend time with them. We need to examine them in detail, to test our assumptions and observations, over and over, until they become knowledge. But then before we can comfortably and safely walk into the forest with nothing but a pocketknife, we have to embody that knowledge. We have to integrate it to the point where we are no longer aware that we know it.

How does this apply to Taijiquan?

When people begin the study of Taijiquan they often are frustrated and confused with the choreography. Some simply don't continue. Most stick it out until they have learned the sequences in a form. Then they think they know Taiji. This is like my assumption that I knew where my car was. Most people off the street, have no idea where their bodies are, what the relationship between their shoulders and heels is, what the angle of their back is relative to their legs, to the ground. This is not a criticism. It is an observation. Especially in the West, we don't learn these things. They're not relevant to our day-to-day lives. As long as we can walk on smooth concrete and negotiate stairs without falling over, we are considered competent.

For Taijiquan to be stalking, we need to be prepared to commit ourselves to diligent self-examination. We need to be willing to let go of our attachments to what we think we already know. We need to accept that we really don't know how to walk, to stand, to articulate.

In the practice of stalking, first we need to be completely present, completely in the moment. We need to become aware of being aware. In meditation terms, we must become the observer.

To illustrate this, we can think of doing a solo form. As we stand, waiting to begin, we must open awareness, become aware of everything about standing. Become aware of balance, become aware of tension in the body, become aware of the floor and the room and the people around us.

Become aware of tension in their bodies, of the movements in the room, the lighting, the air flow, the sounds from outside. Observe all these things actively without becoming fixated on any of them. Observe when movement begins in the body. Where does it come from? How does it start? Is it a conscious choice to "move now"? Or, does it seem to just start on its own? At the beginning of this process, pick a limb to follow, or just a hand perhaps. Observe that hand, what is it doing? What position is it in relative to the wrist, to the arm, to the shoulder, to the torso? Where is it in the room? Follow that hand as it rises and falls, not trying to change anything, that comes later, but just gathering data without analysis, without judgement. Follow it as it changes direction, carves an arc. Again, observe its position, its relationships.

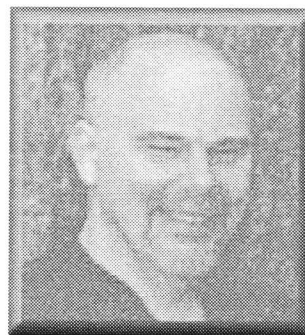
After following the hand for a while, pick another body part and do the same – and then another and another. As this becomes more natural and easier, (well, at least less stressful...) try to maintain awareness of the surroundings, the other people, etc. When we can hold a focus on any given body part in that level of detail, eventually, we become able to follow the whole body this way all at once. But that doesn't come overnight, nor in a few weeks, or months.

This is stalking. It offers the process of learning ourselves in great detail, beginning with simply how the body moves, our own individual bodies, not someone else's. But then a marvellous thing starts to happen. As we observe the body that we reside in, and how it moves, we begin to gain insight into why it moves that way. We learn about what we hold on to, what we are afraid of, what trauma we carry that we have buried so deeply that we don't even know it ever existed. We can see that when a hand always seems to be held in a certain way, it shows a pattern of resistance. We learn about the things that block us from being fully ourselves. And, as we learn those things, we are stalking ourselves. We are making our impediments and our fears and our resistance, prey. Eventually we know these fears so well, that when the time comes, we are just there, waiting for them to present themselves and we can simply let them go from our beings. This doesn't mean psychoanalyzing. We don't need to

recall childhood events. But as we can observe the tensions in our bodies and release them, we change. An example here is that if we find that in our stance, we are always leaning back, even when in a forward stance, there is a fear in the body, a desire to keep a distance. Once that is recognized, it can be changed. As the change in stance begins to become more comfortable, the fear will begin to be released from the body.

But stalking doesn't stop there. It's not just about unearthing held tensions. It is about perfecting the precision of the form. It trains us to self-correct our form. It turns us into our own teachers. By our detailed observation of the minutiae of movement and body position and by the continual awareness of the timing and sequencing of each body part relative to other body parts, we master the solo art. By stalking ourselves we begin to make our taiji our own. Whatever it is that we want from taiji, whether it is a martial art, a health exercise, a meditative practice, etc., by turning the practice into a practice of stalking, we can realize those desires.

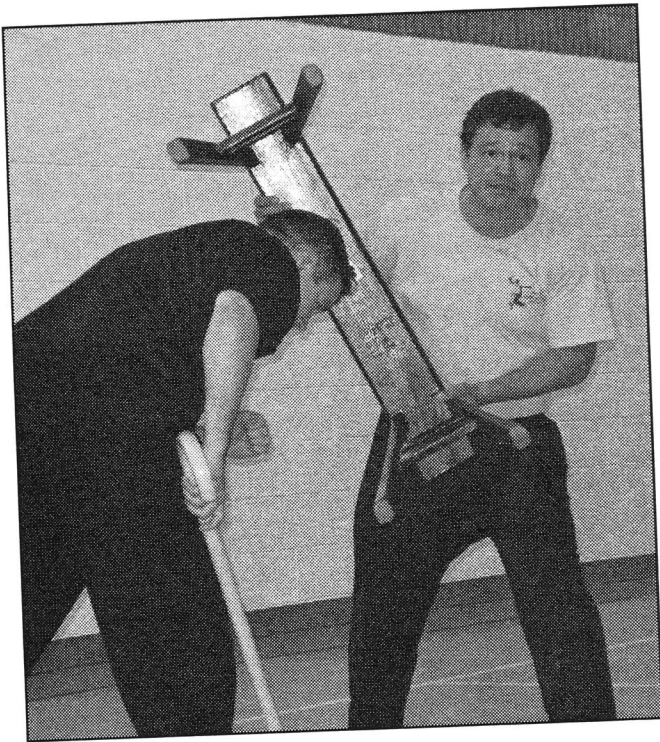
Then, of course we enter the world of stalking the relationship between ourselves and our partners/opponents. But, that's another discussion...



Duff Doel is CTF Vice-President. Duff has been a teacher of Taijiquan since 1980. He has practiced such martial arts as Judo, Karate, Hap Ki Do and Taijiquan. After many decades of seeking, practising, teaching and working with these energies, and as an initiated Master in the Usui System of Reiki Healing, Duff has developed his own syllabus of training in energy awareness, perception and interaction. Duff lives and teaches in the Dundas area.

Who Am I?

by Robin Young



As beginning martial students we were given a code without a key – questions without answers. Perhaps our teachers knew this and planned this as we started our first lessons. Or perhaps they did not. We went into a martial school, accepted a martial teacher and began to practise the martial way in an effort to help discover who we were. The first question: Who am I? First answer: I don't know.

The keys to the question of why we began studying the martial way were easy: get fit, learn technique, develop physical art, "learn to defend yourself", or perhaps just make new friends. In other cases, the code was much harder to decipher. There was another, more complex answer key. That was the one that kept many of us training long after others moved on to other things. We trained, we taught and unknowingly, we actually began our search for deeper answers.

The question kept changing through time. Who am I? Where do I fit? Do I fit? What can I learn about this school to school, master to master in search of that ever-elusive answer; we chase the dragon through the clouds. Who am I as a martial student? Who am I as a martial artist? Who am I as a martial teacher? Who am I as a martial warrior? What do I want – or even need – to convey to my students about what I know and even what I don't know? Is this what my teachers want me to pass along to the next generations of martial students? Is this what I want to pass along?

When we learn a technique we study the movement- the physical form. Then, after much practice, we hope we have mastered, or at least approached mastery of the physical form and then work on the intent of the physical form; the intent of the technique, be it martial, spiritual or aesthetic. Then we teach it to our students to the best of our ability. Then we question what is beyond the physical form. What is beyond the intent? In our quest, we search and perhaps discover other meanings: combat application, counter application and perhaps even the counter-counter application. We discover ever-alternative meanings to a single martial technique.

As we advance in physical age our technique changes again as we can no longer move as fast, dip as low or move as smooth. We change, so we seek different answers because most of our questions change. Except the first question... who am I?

Robin Young has taught Chinese Martial Arts, specifically *Hung Kuen Kung Fu* under Lor King Hong (Jimmy Lore) and Chin Fong (Jack Chin) since 1979. He has demonstrated Kung Fu and the Southern Chinese Lion Dance throughout southern Ontario and conducted Kung Fu seminars in Ontario, British Columbia and New Mexico. He presently teaches *Lor's Hung Kuen Kung Fu* as Sifu of *Jing Mo Kung Fu* club in Guelph, Ontario.

(Photo of Robin Young demonstrating with CTF Board member Ian Sinclair, Orillia, Ontario at the CTF AGM 08.)

Coming to the Milton Area in 2010

5-Section 2-Person Sword, 5-Section 2-Person Empty Hand, and 5-Section Chen Workshops

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Workshop #1	Sat & Sun 09 & 10 Jan 2010
Workshop #2	Sat & Sun 06 & 07 Feb 2010
Workshop #3	Sat & Sun 06 & 07 Mar 2010
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Workshop #5	Sat & Sun 08 & 09 May 2010
Workshop #6	Sat & Sun 12 & 13 June 2010

Information: Adriaan Blaauw ablaauw@sympatico.ca or Jill Heath jillmheath@earthlink.net

Fees (per curriculum): \$50 each workshop; \$40 if previous in series attended.

Save 10% by paying in full in advance for all six workshops on one topic: \$225. Without discount, an entire single curriculum would be \$250 (\$50 for the first workshop, \$40 for the subsequent 5 workshops).

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A two-person empty hand form that is based on Yang style taiji. Partner work helps to develop greater understanding of techniques and energies. In turn, this transfers greater depth to solo practice as the movements acquire more meaning to the practitioner.

5-Section 2-Person Sword

A rarity in taiji: a two-person sword form. Partner work helps to develop greater understanding of sword techniques and energies. In turn, this transfers greater depth to solo sword practice, much in the same way that studying two-person empty-hand work can improve solo form.

About Adriaan Blaauw

Adriaan Blaauw started studying martial arts in 1992 and has been teaching since 2003. His studies have included Chen and Yang style taiji, bagua, kali, jiu-jitsu, xingyi and xinyi. He is a graduate of the 6-week 5-section Teacher's Training and Curriculum Intensive, taught by Sam Masich, Vancouver 2007. He made his competition debut in April 2008, garnering 4 silver medals for form, weapons, fixed- and moving-step push hands. Adriaan will be appearing in the Chen section of Sam Masich's 5-section textbook.

About Jill Heath

Jill Heath has been studying the internal arts since 1990, has taught in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. since 1995, and made her competition debut in 1999 with a personal best in 2001 of 3 gold and 3 bronze medals at a single tournament for form, weapons and push hands. She has been certified as an Associate Healing Tao instructor, Tai Chi for Arthritis instructor, Senior Level instructor (Canadian Taijiquan Federation), and is a past president and director of the Canadian Taijiquan Federation. She continues her studies of the internal arts with Sifus Helen Wu, Nick Gracenin and Sam Masich. She is a graduate of the 6-week 5-section Teacher's Training and Curriculum Intensive, taught by Sam Masich, Vancouver 2007. She will be appearing in the sword section of Sam Masich's 5-section textbook. At the National Canadian Kung Fu Fellowship tournament, April 2008, she received 3 gold and 2 bronze medals in 5 events (form, weapons, moving and fixed step push hands, shuijiao).

Both Adriaan and Jill will be assistant teachers at Sam Masich's 5-section Curriculum Intensive in Gatineau QC in July 2010.

EVENTS / Événements

A Taste of China

16th Annual Autumn Qigong Retreat
Shiba Luohan Qigong: Ancient Health Exercises of
Bodhidharma and the Eighteen Immortals
Taiji Qigong and the Key to Longevity
with Dr. Jay Dunbar

Friday 13 - Sunday 15 November 2009
Winchester, VA, USA
Contact: Pat Rice (540)667-7595
www.atocitaijiqian.com

Teacher's Seminar

with John Oliver Peel

Saturday 28 November 2009 (10am-3pm)

Temple Knights Martial Arts Academy
1018 Moot Rd. Hwy. 117 E., Muskoka, Ontario
Contact: (705)767-1177 <info@templeknights.com>
www.templeknights.com

Yang Style Pushing Hands: Si-zheng and Ba-pan with Sam Masich

Friday 13 – Sunday 15 November 2009
Middle Street Primary, Middle Street, Brighton,
England
Contact: Simon or Cher 01273 239054
www.sammasich.com

5 Section Taijiqian Full Curriculum Intensive with Sam Masich

Friday 20 November – Monday 14 December 2009
Madrid, Spain
Contact: www.sammasich.com

Tai-Chi, Dance & Artistic Expression

with Steve Higgins and Steve Lee
Sunday 29 November 2009 (9:30am-3:15pm)
The Beckett School of Music,
5 Michael Street, Kitchener, Ontario
Contact: Steve Higgins (519) 576-3206
stevehiggins@rogers.com
www.taichitango.com
www.cloudmountaininternal arts.com

5-Section 2-Person Sword, 5-Section 2-Person Empty Hand, 5-Section Chen

with Jill Heath & Adriaan Blaauw
Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 January 2010
Saturday 6 – Sunday 7 February 2010
Saturday 6 – Sunday 7 March 2010
Saturday 17 – Sunday 18 April 2010
Saturday 8 – Sunday 9 May 2010
Saturday 12 – Sunday 13 June 2010
Milton, Ontario

Contact: Adriaan Blaauw ablaauw@symaptcico.ca
or Jill Heath jillmheath@earthlink.net

Canadian Taijiqian Federation Annual General Meeting and Friendship Demonstration Day 2010

will be held in Orillia, Ontario
Hosted by Ian Sinclair, Cloud Mountain Martial
Arts, Orillia, Ontario
Contact: Ian Sinclair (705) 770-0279
www.cloudmountain martialarts.com



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**Please log into the members section
of the CTF website
www.canadiantaijiquanfederation.com
and update your profile!**

Once you have created your own password and accessed your personal file, please update your contact information for our database. You can promote your classes and related events by creating your own listing that will be displayed on the website (a service for CTF members only).

If you have any comments or questions about the website, please contact our website manager, Ian Sinclair, CTF Board Member and Sifu of *Cloud Mountain Martial Arts*, Orillia, Ontario. You can do this from the website.

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Mission

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To encourage development in the practice of Taijiquan and preserve its characteristics as an expression of Chinese culture and philosophy.2. To stimulate public awareness of and participation in Taijiquan.3. To inclusively link practitioners of Taijiquan from various styles and traditions without precedence – whether as individuals or gathered in groups, clubs and organizations across Canada – as they join the Federation family.4. To network nationally and internationally with other Taijiquan practitioners, groups, clubs and organizations with the aim of broadening and strengthening the Canadian Taijiquan experience. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourager la pratique du taijiquan et préserver son caractère culturel et philosophique chinois.2. Stimuler la connaissance et la participation du grand public en matière de taijiquan.3. Relier tous les praticiens de taijiquan, peu importe les styles et les traditions, qu'ils soient seuls ou affiliés, partout au Canada.4. Élargir et renforcer l'expérience canadienne du taijiquan en créant un réseau national et international pour les individus, les groupes, les clubs, et les autres organisations. |
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Membership / Membriété

Annual CTF membership includes:

- A subscription (received by mail) to the CTF's quarterly journal TongRen
- One complementary official CTF crest for each new membership.

Benefits of CTF membership:

- Access to Taijiquan Teacher Training workshops sponsored by the CTF and facilitated by experienced Taijiquan teachers
- Access to the CTF Taijiquan Teacher Certification program
- Email notices of CTF-related news and upcoming events
- Access to the 'members-only' section of the CTF website which includes expanded event postings and links, an archive of back issues of TongRen, photographs, blogs and forums
- Postings to the public-access pages of the CTF website for your club/school, workshops/seminars and other Taiji-related events
- Opportunities to connect, meet, share and further your Taijiquan-related knowledge and experience with other practitioners
- Opportunities to get involved and make a difference in the Taijiquan community by sitting on the CTF Board of Directors and its various committees (volunteer)
- Discounted enrollment is often extended to CTF members for workshops and activities organized by CTF members
- Purchase of official CTF T-Shirts and crests

Une membriété annuelle vous offre:

- Un abonnement à TongRen, la revue trimestrielle de la FCT, que vous recevrez par la poste
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Avantages supplémentaires:

- Accès aux ateliers de formation des instructeurs, ateliers parrainés par la FCT et donnés par des enseignants chevronnés
- Accès au programme de la FCT de certification des enseignants de taijiquan
- Avis électroniques des nouvelles et des événements à venir de la FCT
- Accès à la section pour les membres du site web de la FCT qui présente une liste étoffée des événements et des liens, les anciens numéros de TongRen, des photos, des blogs et des forums
- Pages publiques pour annoncer votre organisme, vos ateliers et tout autre événement lié au taiji
- Des occasions de contacts, de rencontres et de partages avec des praticiens du taiji pour accroître vos connaissances et votre expérience
- Des occasions de vous engager comme bénévoles et d'influencer la communauté du taiji en joignant le Conseil d'administration de la FCT et ses multiples comités
- Des inscriptions à tarif réduit à des ateliers et activités organisés par nos membres
- Possibilité d'acheter les t-shirts et les écussons de la FCT



Canadian Taijiquan Federation Membership Application Form
Formulaire d'Inscription à la Fédération Canadienne de Taijiquan

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Individual membership \$35 (Canadian or US) / Family membership \$50 (Canadian or US)
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Please copy and mail completed membership form along with your cheque or money order to:
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Waterloo, Ontario
Canada N2J 4T7

Your membership renewal date is printed on the mailing label of your TongRen.
La date de renouvellement de votre membriété apparaît sur l'étiquette d'envoi des numéros de TongRen.



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TongRen (T'ung-jen)

TongRen is the 13th hexagram of the I Ching (Yijing); meaning "Fellowship" or "Sameness with People".

"Sameness with people means other people and oneself are as one. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is heaven, strong, and below is fire, luminous: employing strength with illumination, making illumination effective by strength, being truthful within and adept without, developing oneself and others as well, it is therefore called sameness with people."

The Taoist I Ching (trans. Thomas Cleary, Shambala Publications, 1986
ISBN 0-87773-352-X pbk)