



Wudang

2/20

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER



From Sifu Paul

Greetings to everyone, and Happy New Year of the Rat. Despite our common perceptions of the wily rodent, in China, the rat is respected as a symbol of intelligence, resourcefulness, and fertility.

The Rat takes its place at the head of a 12-year lunar cycle based on the legend of the Buddha, who summoned 12 symbolic animals to him before he departed the earth. The Rat, with his resourceful intelligence, rode on the back of the Ox for the journey; as the Ox approached the Buddha, it bowed down before him, and the Rat climbed down the Ox's snout and arrived first. Buddha awarded him the honor of the first position in the lunar cycle.

Thanks to all of you for your generosity, red envelopes, and other gifts this year, and to Todd Nesser for the amazing New Year cakes and LaVonne Bunt for the festive fruit basket. May the year ahead be filled with opportunity, health, and prosperity.

In this issue, we celebrate T.T. Liang, remember Daoist Master Da Liu, feature upcoming classes, and more.



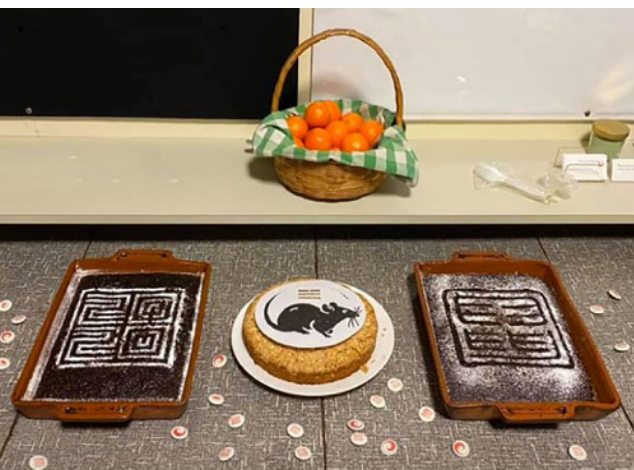
Happy Birthday Master Liang

T.T. Liang's birthday was on January 23. Born in 1900, he passed in 2002 at the age of 102. This year, he would have been 120 years old. He came to America in 1963 with his teacher, Professor Cheng Man-Ching. They were invited to give the first official demonstrations of T'ai Chi Ch'uan at the United Nations. The Daoist T'ai Chi Master Da Liu held a position there and was responsible for the invitation.

Da Liu was among the first teachers of T'ai Chi in the United States and the author of several books including: *Tai Chi Chuan and Meditation*, *Tai Chi Chuan and I Ching*, *Tao of Health*

<<

New Year cakes by
Todd Nesser; lucky
Mandarin oranges
from LaVonne Bunt



and *Longevity, The Tao and Chinese Culture*, and others.

The following article was written by a Danish T'ai Chi student who came to the U.S. to meet Master Liu.



A Taoist in New York

Written by Lars Bo Christensen

Since 1956 there has lived a Taoist and Tai Chi master on Manhattan's Upper West Side in New York.

Da Liu moved to the States in 1956 because of the political revolution in his native country. He became a Tai Chi teacher at The UN's Chinese institute and was absolutely one of the first Tai Chi pioneers in the West. Da Liu began practicing Tai Chi in 1928 with Sun Lu-Tang in Kiang Su in East-China. Later during the Japanese occupation he was forced to leave and went to the Southeast provinces. Here he studied with many famous masters. It was here he went from practicing Sun to Yang style, which he has been teaching for more than 40 years in New York.

I visited Da Liu in the month of July 1991. I looked in the Manhattan yellow pages, and to my big surprise there were a lot of Tai Chi schools. But none of them attracted me very much. Then I saw a notice about Da Liu, whom I knew very well from his books, which have been available to buy in Denmark for many

years. Also I remembered that Bill Dockens from Sweden, had studied with Da Liu.

I didn't succeed in finding his class, because there were some changes due to the summer holidays. Instead I found one of his students who has been practicing with him for 18 years, Luis Ortega. It struck me that maybe Da Liu had been a student of Cheng Man-Ching, due to the pictures of him, and Luis's form confirmed my impression. But this wasn't quite so. Because Da Liu's Yang style teacher was Li Li-Chou. He was the president of the Shanghai Tai Chi Association and it was here Cheng Man-Ching was their vice president.

Li Li-Chou was one of the greatest Taoist masters at the time and he had adopted the Yang Style in his practice. So he wasn't a student of one of the famous Yang families, and in that area it might have been a tradition to practice the Yang Style in this manner.



Contact Us

For timely updates, follow Twin Cities T'ai Chi Ch'uan on **Facebook**.

Email: mail@tctaichi.org

Website: tctaichi.org

Phone: 651.767.0267

<<
Master T.T. Liang
with his teacher,
Prof. Cheng Man-ch'ing

<
Da Liu, one of the
first teachers of
T'ai Chi in the
United States

Maybe this explains, why Cheng Man-Ching deviated from the form made by Yang Cheng-Fu.

Luis heard about our Tai Chi Magazine and agreed to arrange an interview with his master. New York is extremely hot and moist during the month of July, it was 100° Fahrenheit, and moist so you became damp.

And yet I wore some long pants and a nice shirt, so I was presentable.

Da Liu was extremely kind and it didn't take long before I had great sympathy for the little old man. He lived in a big apartment, which he had had for more than 30 years. He turned on the air conditioning and asked if I could take the heat. He hadn't been outside the States since he came there, but he knew where Denmark was and that the summers were cooler there. I asked him the questions I had prepared. He answered willingly, but without any great interest. When I was finished, he took over. He put a videotape in the VCR and while I saw this, he walked around in his seven room flat and found books and tapes and explained to me a lot of interesting things, without me asking. He knew of the Tung family and had a ragged copy of Tung Ying-Chieh's book.

I asked about the coherence between spiritual practice and martial art. To this he said "It's one and the same, true martial art is with Chi (Qi). I can push people far away with my thumb. It comes from within". Luis confirmed that master Liu often pushed people with a little twist in his thumb, just to show it's not necessary to have big muscles. On the videos he showed me, which were more than 10 years old, he was a young man at the age of 77; he was teaching one of his student classes how to use Tai Chi. Here he showed an impressive 'one inch punch' against a piece of paper, which were held for him. It flew several feet (try it yourself). He also pushed every one in the class "gently" toward the wall from about a distance of two feet. Only with the thumb, but it was clearly they were shaken, especially the guys, who he would push the hardest.

On the video his class was doing the sword, push hands and four corners; Even though there were some differences in the form, these forms were very like the ones I know. I asked Da Liu if he knew Cheng Man-Ching, because I knew he had taught in New York for some years. He did, actually I sat in Cheng's old room on his old bed. Also T.T. Liang, who is a famous student of Cheng, had lived there while he lived in New York. So you can say they have had a Tai Chi shared house. But otherwise he



lives mostly isolated. He has only minded his teaching and written books; And there have been quite a few. One of the famous ones is 'Tai Chi Chuan and I Ching'. It has sold more than one million copies and been translated to five languages. I have read many books on Tai Chi and related subjects, and I have to say that Da Liu's rises beyond many others. Da Liu has written about other things other than Tai Chi: 'Tao of Chinese culture' etc, a translation of the I Ching, a book on healing exercises and one on meditation. He showed me a new book on the Tai Chi sword, and it was surely the best on the subject up until now.

Da Liu doesn't teach the 'Dao'(knife), he doesn't feel it's soft enough for spiritual practice, but he has learned it once. But in return he teaches the sword 'Chin', which is much softer. He showed us a real 'Dragon

well Sword'. It wasn't very big, but very beautiful and had good workmanship. It had a carved slice of jade to weigh down the silk tuft and it was surprisingly light. "The swords they call 'Dragon Well' today, are dipped in water from the Dragon Well, but they are made in a factory. This sword is handmade and hardened in water from the 'Dragon Well'.

I asked Da Liu if he sees any difference between students from the East and the West. "I see a difference in the past and the present. In the past people had the time and energy to practice. The hippies were alright, they didn't work so much and had the time to learn Tai Chi". Da Liu teaches his own short form, which he feels is more suitable for the busy Americans. He does teach the whole form (long form), but only to those who practice persistently. Da Liu looks like an old man, but my wife and I did Push hands with him, and he was certainly not fragile. As my own Master Kai-Ying Tung, he was extremely clear and controlled the conversation, so nothing negative or unnecessary did sneak in. At the same time he came with some very personal remarks, which indicates his great knowledge. Da Liu is also teaching Tai Chi meditation, I Ching and Chinese astrology.

When a person like Da Liu who has practiced Tai Chi for more than 70 years, has worked with meditation and the understanding of life through the I Ching and the Tao Te Ching and has written books about almost everything on the subject. He personally has known a lot of the old masters, such as Sun Lu-Tang and Wu Tunan, apart from this he has heard or read almost everything, and gives a special feeling that they are not only interested in the materialistic things. At one time Da Liu asked if I wanted a cup of tea. I said if he was going to get some, then I would love some. I didn't want to let an old man make me some tea. Later he came with the tea in a mug with a print of New York on it and to keep it warm he used a mini Frisbee. It wasn't an old lacquered bowl with a decorated lid. Aren't you going to have some? I asked. "I don't drink" he said, "don't you drink tea"? "I never drink fluid, but I do eat from time to time. I

can circulate the fluid inside my body, try and listen". Then I could clearly hear how the water ran down his throat, so he had to swallow all the time. I had heard about Taoists who could do this, but never thought they were for real. I myself eat a great deal and have to drink much fluid to sort out the waste products and to prevent drying out. I told him that I might have been eating too much myself, but he dismissed me by saying "no, no, you are young", which calmed me a great deal. I had spent a great deal of my vacation to buy and consume a great deal of food. When you are spending a long time in a city like New York, where you can get anything and where everyone tries to gain more, it was a nice experience to meet a person like Da Liu.

.....

*"For a day, just for one day,
Talk about that which disturbs no one
And bring some peace into your
Beautiful eyes."
—Hafiz*

.....

Upcoming Classes and Schedule Changes

Weapons Class, Monday, Feb. 3, at 7:30–8:30 p.m.: We will begin to learn the T'ai Chi Fan Form. The practice of T'ai Chi Fan develops grace and beauty in your empty-hand forms. In their utilitarian form, besides being used to cool oneself and provide shade, fans were made of fine paper and silks and were decorated as works of art.

The class is open to anyone who has finished the Solo Form. This is a great form for those who are not particularly interested in the weapons training aspect of T'ai Chi. Principles of movement as extensions of the Solo Form will be emphasized.

T'ai Chi 43 Postures Form, Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6:00–7:25 p.m., and Saturday, Feb. 8, at 11:30 a.m.–12:25 p.m.: We will learn Symmetry 5,

which covers the postures Turn and Chop, Parry and Punch, Step Forward Ward Off Right, Cloud Hands, High Pat on Horse, Separate Foot, Kick With Heel, Punch Downward. Come and learn Symmetry 1 if you've finished the Solo Form.

The Healing Tao, Wednesdays, at 7:30–8:45 p.m.: Beginning March 18, we will start learning the Microcosmic Orbit. The Microcosmic Orbit is the best-known Daoist meditation practice. The orbit meditation activates two primary deep channels in the body, which help control the balance of energy flow in the body. The course will teach a standing practice, which opens the orbit pathways, as well as a seated microcosmic practice. 12 weeks; \$144 (free to members).

Eclectis: Boxing Fundamentals, Saturday, Feb. 8, at 9:30–10:25 a.m.: Learn the fundamentals of boxing and acquire the five elements of martial arts—speed, timing, accuracy, power, and foundation—through carefully selected drills and practices. These activities are great for reflexes, conditioning, and understanding the core principles of martial arts. This class teaches how to strike and throw combinations of punches with proper body mechanics, flow, and rhythm to maximize leverage and conserve energy and also how to train with a partner using safe training



gear: focus mitts, punch balls, and foam sticks. It's also a lot of fun. This class develops an understanding of the striking aspects of T'ai Chi. Beginners are welcome.

12 Animals Class, Saturday, 10:30–11:25 a.m.: The 12 Animals is the foundation practice for the Liu Ho Pa Fa system. Beginning March 7, we start to learn the Snake Form. The Snake teaches intercepting and coiling techniques. Beginners are welcome. Check with Sifu Paul if you're interested in joining the class.



<
Snow shadows on
Chaingbai Mountain,
China

Photo by Paul Abdella