



Wudang

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

4/19



From Sifu Paul

Greetings everyone,

Spring is officially here, and we're so grateful that it feels like it. In this issue: unraveling the mystery of double weighting, my upcoming trip to China, World T'ai Chi Day, special graduation news, and more. Enjoy the energy and motion of the season.

Question of the Month

Q: I have heard the term "double weighting" used in reference to T'ai Chi practice and that it is something to be avoided. What is double weighting, and why is it considered to be an incorrect practice in T'ai Chi?

A: Double weighting refers to the act of keeping the weight equally distributed (50/50) on both feet in the Solo Form or partner practice. Additionally, in partner work such as Push Hands, pushing with the same hand and foot, e.g., right hand pushing, right foot forward and weighted, is also considered to be double weighted. To understand why these conditions are to be avoided in T'ai Chi, it will be easier to examine solo and partner practice separately.

As Easy as Riding a Bike

T'ai Chi Ch'uan is based on the principle of yin and yang: complimentary opposite forces that cannot be separated. These forces are always moving and transforming and are balanced and harmonious. When riding a bicycle, pressing both feet equally on the pedals (double weighted) produces no movement. Only when the feet move in an alternating cycle of active (yang) and passive (yin) pedaling does the bike move forward.



If we were to push firmly on a closed door, leaning in with all our weight on the forward right leg while pushing with the right hand (a double-weighted condition similar to the bicycle pedal example), and the door suddenly swung open, the pusher would fall through the doorway and topple over. If the push on the closed door were produced with the right hand and balanced with the weight on the forward left leg (a condition known as single weighting), and the door burst open, it's likely the pusher would remain upright simply because the yin and yang/empty and full forces were balanced and evenly distributed in the body.

It's easy to imagine a Push Hands partner in place of the door not only getting out of the way of the double-weighted push but also helping to off balance the pusher by pulling their arm. This is why the T'ai Chi classics state: "We often see one who has painstakingly practiced T'ai Chi for several years but cannot neutralize an attacking energy and is generally subdued by an opponent. This is

<<

Q& A: What is double weighting?



because he has still not understood the fault of double weighting.”

Embracing Undulance

The T'ai Chi Solo Form embodies the principles of yin and yang for a practitioner. The constant shifting of the weight, stepping and changing of the feet and hands, moving forward, backward, left, and right, in a rhythmic and harmonious way while relaxing the body, breath, and mind are what produce the myriad health benefits attributed to T'ai Chi. When we keep the majority of the weight on one leg at a time (single weighting) and constantly shift from one leg to the other while moving through the sequence of postures, the unweighted, less active limbs can release tension and relax. This undulating rhythm (from the root word *undulant*: rising and falling in waves) between tension and the release of tension stimulates the circulation of oxygenated blood and other fluids such as lymph.

Imagine an aquarium $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water. Normally it sits on a stable base (the equivalent of double weighting), so it remains in a fixed position and the water remains still. If the base were replaced with long rockers like you would find on a rocking chair and it rocked from one end to the other, the water in the aquarium would begin to move and circulate in waves as one end bore the weight while the

other was lifted and empty (the equivalent of single weighting).

To perform the Solo Form with double-weighted footwork produces awkward and disconnected movements. To engage in double-weighted Push Hands practice with a skillful single-weighted T'ai Chi player will result in frustration and defeat.

The final line of the classic quoted above summarizes this idea well: “If you want to avoid the defect of double weighting, you must know yin and yang.”

Journey to the East

On May 10, I will be returning to China for a three-week study trip in Qigong, Taoist practices, spiritual science, and philosophy. I will be returning to Beijing, China's capital city, Xian, China's ancient capital, and five sacred mountains: Hua Shan, Chaing-bai Shan, Weibao Shan, Guelin, and Yangshuo. I will touch on four of the highlights of the trip below. With deepest gratitude to those who have sponsored this rare educational opportunity for me.—Paul

1. Mt. Hua (Hua Shan) is translated as Flower Mountain, Tao Sacred Mountain of the West

Mt. Hua (Hua Shan) is translated as Flower Mountain, Tao Sacred Mountain of the West. Flower Mountain is China's “Taoist Yosemite,” with temples perched on the edge of dramatic granite cliffs, with 72 caves. Its major peaks are in the shape of a five-petalled flower, a natural symbol of the Five Phases/Elements.

We will stay in monasteries or caves used by ancient Tao adepts to dream their Way to immortality. Chen Tuan was one such

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

<<

A double-weighted pusher would fall toward an opening door—or a moving partner.

immortal and is credited with being the legendary source of our Liu Ho Pa Fa lineage.

2. Li River Fantasia Peaks (Guelin and Yangshuo)

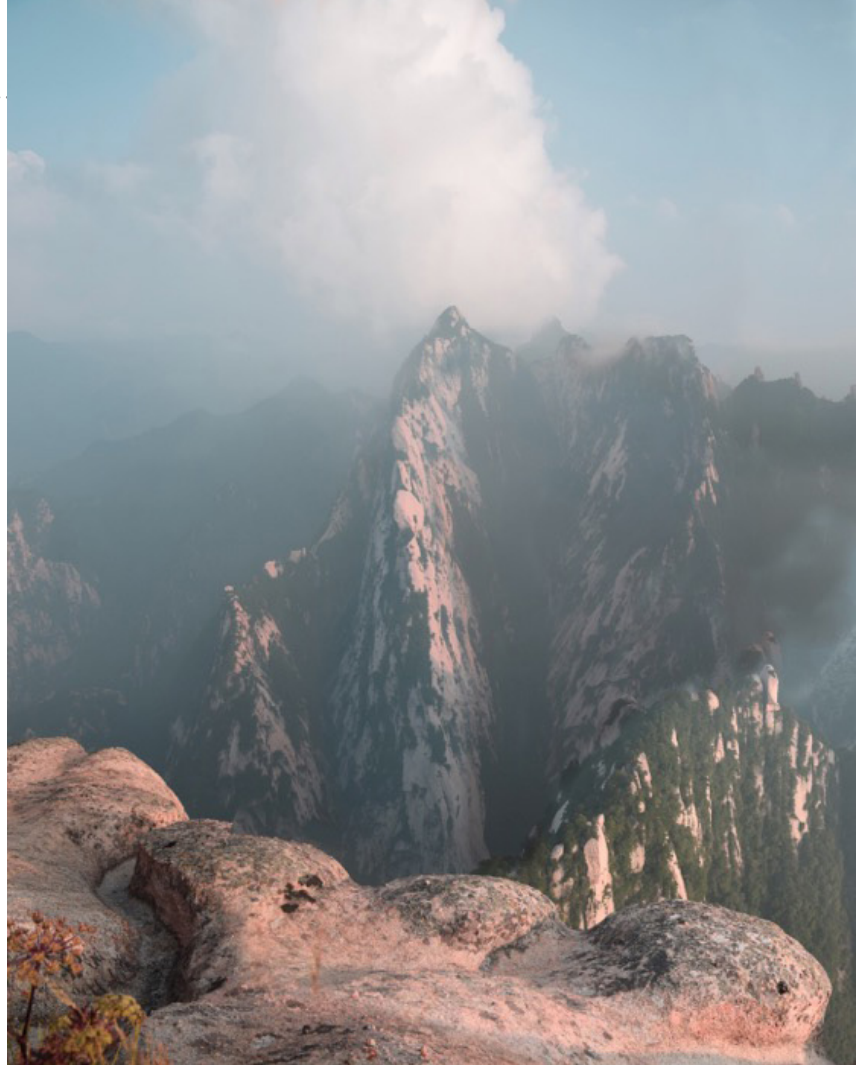
Along the Li River and its Yu Long tributary, the land looks like Mother Nature imagined a Fantasia-like realm of earthly beauty. Taoist artists and poets have long sung praises to Nature's wild and free spirit. That vision is given form in the peaks of Guelin and Yangshuo. The land itself has an incredible power of imagination that stimulates our own.

3. Yunnan's Mt. Weibao: 22 Amazing Taoist Temples

The largest Taoist temple complex in all of China is hidden atop a seldom-visited mountain in the southwest province of Yunnan (borders Burma and Tibet). This is where Taoists from other parts of China come to get away from crowds and meditate in the serene stillness of lush forests surrounding ancient temples. Yunnan has deserts, jungles, snow-capped peaks, and valleys with thousands of terraces filled with rainbow-colored crops. It has 55 ethnic tribes with gorgeous costumes and wild folk dances and exotic cuisines. In a remote part of this "beauty province" is tucked Mt. Weibao—a treasure of inner spiritual beauty.

4. Mt. Changbai (Chaingbai Shan)

This is Healing Tao USA's root sacred mountain. Our Healing Tao lineage of practices comes from adepts One Cloud & White Cloud in the Wandering Taoist lineage. This is



where they achieved the breatharian state. Mt. Changbai (translates as Eternally White Mountain) is the "crown chakra" of China's sacred mountains. Revered for thousands of years, it embodies the energy of Taoist Water and Fire Alchemy. The deep pure waters of Heavenly Lake rest atop the most active volcano in China. It radiates a phenomenal energy field revered by China's emperors for its worldly power and by Taoist adepts for its spiritual power. Its ginseng, deer antler, and other wild herbs are famous for being of the highest potency in all China.

This sacred mountain in Manchuria (China's Siberia) on the North Korean border is covered in snow for nine months of the year—hence its name. The coupling of dynamic Fire Qi below the stillness of Water Qi in its volcanic lake produces a phenomenal energy field of Original Qi that quickens the Energy Body vibration of anyone who tunes in. We capture this Original Qi with the alchemy embedded in the movement ritual of Primordial T'ai Chi and other Neidangong

^
Hua Shan

<<
Li River



practices. This crater is a portal that opens deep into the root energy of Mother Earth. We will visit the Chaingbai Taoist Academy in the foothills of Mt. Chaingbai and spend time with its founder/director Ju Xi and some of his students.

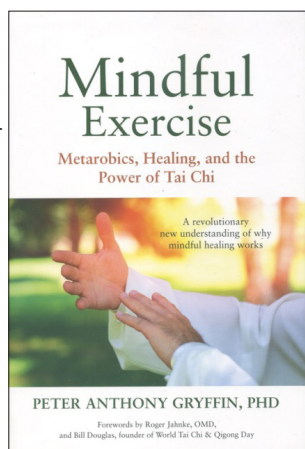
The China Dream Trips attract interesting people from a wide range of backgrounds and places—one trip had people from nine countries. Afterward, many say the incredible Dream Trip community was half the value of the trip, with China being the other half!

We visit many temples and sacred sites in Beijing and Xian and of course practice Qigong on the Great Wall.

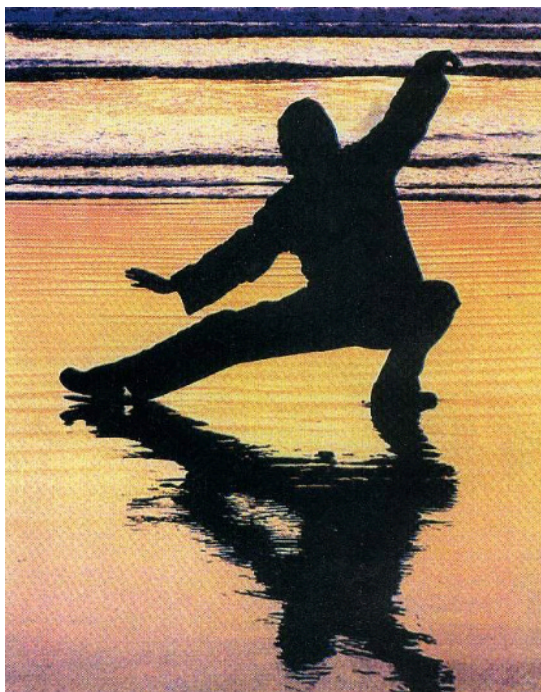
Book Review

Mindful Exercise: Metarobics, Healing, and the Power of Tai Chi by Peter Anthony Gryffin, PhD

This is a recently released book that may be of interest to members. The author profiles recent scientific evidence that examines hypoxia, a condition in which the body is deprived of adequate oxygen supply at the tissue level. This condition is linked to many common and serious diseases. Exercise such as T'ai Chi and Qigong that promotes slow movement, deep and slow breathing, and a meditative mind-intent will enhance blood oxygen saturation, diffusion, and oxygen-based metabolism that may counter the effects of hypoxia and offer a wide range of benefits for treating chronic disease. "Metarobics" is the term created by Dr. Gryffin to describe exercise such as T'ai Chi that is not aerobic or anaerobic and that creates these high blood oxygen levels. The book explains the metarobic theory, cites many promising studies related to metarobic exercise and its effect on



a variety of diseases, contains many testimonials, explains basic T'ai Chi principles, and is written for the general public. A good read for those interested in T'ai Chi and its science-based health benefits.



<<
What is metarobic exercise? This book explains.

Celebrate World T'ai Chi Day

World T'ai Chi and Qigong Day is an annual event that is held on the last Saturday of April. It began as a local event in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1999 and has since become a global phenomenon, with participation in hundreds of cities in 80 countries on six continents. It promotes the healthful properties of T'ai Chi and Qigong practice, connects prospective students to teachers and schools, and is a resource for the latest medical research on T'ai Chi and Qigong.

The simple concept of the event is to unite the planet through the peaceful practice of T'ai Chi and Qigong by collectively practicing T'ai Chi or Qigong at 10:30 a.m. on the last Saturday in April.

We invite you to bring a friend to the studio to experience T'ai Chi and Qigong firsthand on Saturday, April 27. It might just be the experience of a lifetime for them.

Graduation News

The following members have recently completed the Liu Ho Pa Fa Main Form:

LaVonne Bunt, Bill Card, Nick Cronin (not pictured), Tom Hautman, Kim Husband, and Patrick Schilling.



The Main Form (Jook Gae/Zhu Ji: the Foundation Builder) is the original form of Liu Ho Pa Fa as devised by Li Dong Feng, the creator of the physical practices of the system. It draws from the six harmonies and eight methods developed in the 12 Animal forms and brings them to a higher level of integration and energy flow. This is the densest and most challenging form taught at the studio. Congratulations, graduates!

Upcoming Classes

Monday Night Weapons Class 7:30–8:30: We will continue and complete our study of the cane in April. The month of May will be an open weapons practice. Beginning Monday, June 3, we will begin the study of the **Double Saber Form**. This is a dynamic form for building strength, coordination, right and left body symmetry, beauty and aesthetics in movement, and Brain Gym–style mental development. For those who want to learn the form, twin sticks will be provided at the studio. If you have your own double saber set, feel free to learn with it.

Wednesday Night Healing Tao Class 7:30–8:30: We will begin to learn the **Six Healing Sounds and Five Animals Qigong**. The Six Healing Sounds is one of the oldest Qigong practices in China. It is a calming energy practice that uses movement, sound, and visualization to balance the emotions, working with the energy of the body's five major organs.

This class integrates seated, standing, and moving sequences. The movement practice combines the healing sounds with five animal movements to create a short, easy-to-learn practice that's perfect for summer.

This is a 1-hour class beginning Wednesday, June 5, at 7:30 on Wednesday evenings. The class runs 8 weeks. Cost: \$96 for nonmembers. Free to members.

Saturday 12 Animals Class 10:30–11:30: Beginning Saturday, June 8, we will begin learning the **Lun**. The Lun is a mythological animal that trains the practitioner to develop pull/pluck energy and power. It is a short sequence consisting of just three movements. Open to new members. We will complete the Dragon in April and review the Dragon and Tiger in May.

Saturday 43 Postures Class 11:30–12:30: Beginning June 8, we will begin to learn Symmetry 3 (Brush Left Knee #5 through Withdraw and Push).

Sweatshirts Are In!

If you ordered one of our new embroidered sweatshirts, they have arrived and are available for pickup at the studio. There are extras, so check with Drew or Paul to see if we have one in your size. Perfect for early spring weather. Thanks to Drew and Todd for all your hard work in getting the order completed.

<
Extra sweatshirts are
available for sale.