

Wudang

Twin Cities T'ai Chi

8/18

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER



From Sifu Paul

Greetings, everyone,

The month of July exited with a flourish as a total lunar eclipse showcased a blood-red full moon and the crickets announced the coming of August. In this issue: my mountain retreat, Twin Cities T'ai Chi at CONvergence and the upcoming 2D con, the return of open-practice Fridays, a studio photo shoot, and more.

Healing Tao Training in the Blue Ridge Mountains

In early July, I was in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina for some advanced training in Taoist meditation, Qigong, internal alchemy, and a little rest and relaxation. This was the eighth time I've been to the Asheville area for study with Healing Tao USA founder Michael Winn. My first workshops were three-day intensives in downtown Asheville and then two week-long summer retreats at Mars Hill College in a pastoral mountain valley.

This year's retreat was held at Michael's mountaintop log cabin home deep in the woods surrounded by the sounds of nature: songbirds, bullfrogs, flowing water, and the warm summer wind. The steep winding road through the wooded landscape was difficult to navigate, but the copper-roofed cabin glimmering in the sun through the trees confirmed that I had arrived at the right place.

We had seven hours of training time each day, divided by an hour-and-a-half lunch break. A typical day began with a talk that lasted an hour or so, introducing the central ideas of that day's work. Each talk built on the previous day's theme. Often the talks



would travel into uncharted and interesting territory before returning to the topic. Spirited discussions and a question-and-answer period would follow. Afterward, we needed to move the body, so warmups and the Qigong practices we were learning were next, followed by some seated meditation practice.

The weather for the first two days was cool with a soft drizzle and mist that enveloped the mountaintop, adding an element of mystery to the sessions.

At day 3, the sun emerged in a clear blue sky with a dry heat in the low to mid-eighties, where it stayed for the remainder of the week. This brought our Qigong sessions outdoors and into a ba gua circle near a garden of wildflowers and a water fountain. Large boulders of quartz crystal marked the compass points of the ba gua, with a smaller crystal in the center. Barefoot qigong on the sun-warmed

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Sifu Paul attends
Healing Tao Qigong
training

earth in the circle with our group of nine Taoist adepts was joyful and revitalizing.

Sara, who had prepared the meal from locally grown ingredients, drove lunch up the mountain daily. She took pride in describing each dish she had made and sang a little song in honor of the food each day. The food was as good as the presentation. A rest period followed the meal. I typically found a spot outside in the shade, wrote some notes, then closed my eyes and listened to the birds and the breeze move through the trees.

Our afternoon sessions reviewed the material and practices from the morning session then added to them with more discourse, Qigong, and meditation. The days were long but passed quickly.

I stayed in an Airbnb run by a local Healing Tao instructor with no television in the room. I checked email on my phone once a day in the evening and otherwise enjoyed being disconnected from the noise of the world.

The course material layered each day and built to completion by week's end, giving me much to practice and integrate over the coming year. I will return in summer 2019 for the next level of practices.

On the last day, our group hiked into a nearby property, where Michael will be building a retreat center on 150 acres of land he is purchasing. It was great to hear about his vision as he pointed to plots of land where various buildings will be built. I look forward to someday studying in them and drew inspiration for the continued growth of our own studio. Our education fund made this trip possible, and I'm grateful to all who have contributed to it.



Upcoming Classes

Healing Tao Meditation

Beginning Wednesday, September 11, we will begin learning the Inner Smile meditation. The inner smile is a seated meditation practice and is the foundation practice of the Healing Tao system. This meditation develops a deep sense of calm and self-acceptance throughout the entire body.

This is a beginner-friendly class, so if you haven't meditated before, there will be helpful guidelines and assistance in helping you build your practice in a natural and gradual manner. This is a 75-minute class on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. that runs for 12 weeks.

The class starts September 11, 2018. The session costs \$144 for nonmembers and is free to members.

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

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Healing Tao founder
Michael Winn's
copper-roofed cabin,
site of Sifu Paul's
July training retreat

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The outdoor ba gua
circle at the Healing
Tao retreat



Open-Practice Fridays

The studio will once again be open every Friday from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. for open practice. This is a great way to tune up your forms, work on partner practices, or just be around other members for a little T'ai Chi and social time.

Twin Cities T'ai Chi at CONvergence

On July 6, the studio's dynamic duo of Kim Husband and Dan Frederick presented an intro to T'ai Chi and Qigong at this year's CONvergence convention in Bloomington, MN. There were hundreds of presenters for attendees to choose from, but Kim and Dan held court for more than 50 participants at the well-attended event who stayed for the entire presentation of warmups, Qigong, and Solo Form. Thank you, Kim and Dan.

If you would like to participate in the upcoming 2DCon (a gamers convention) Saturday, August 4, see Kim at the studio for more information.



Smile and Say Chi

The studio would like to update its photo archive to better reflect our current membership and class offerings. Professional photographer Steve Schneider, who's had a studio in our building for 35 years, will be coming to the studio on a Saturday to shoot some photos of our classes. The photos will be used only within the studio, and occasionally on our website and Facebook page. The photo shoot date will be scheduled sometime in late August/early September. Look for an announcement to be posted at the studio.

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CONvergence photos
by Diana Fitzwater

Evening Rain

*An early cicada chirps and is silent;
The flickering candle sinks and
brightens.*

*Outside my window, I can hear the
evening rain*

*By the sound it makes on the banana
leaf.*

—Bo Juyi