

# Wudang

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

Twin Cities T'ai Chi



## From Sifu Paul

The equinox has come and gone and our journey into long nights has begun. I love the feeling of autumn and its light and color. The changing temperatures always make me want to move more but also meditate more deeply. We have opportunities for both at the studio. In this issue: fundraiser and board updates a tutor training opportunity, the question of the month, and more. See you at the studio.

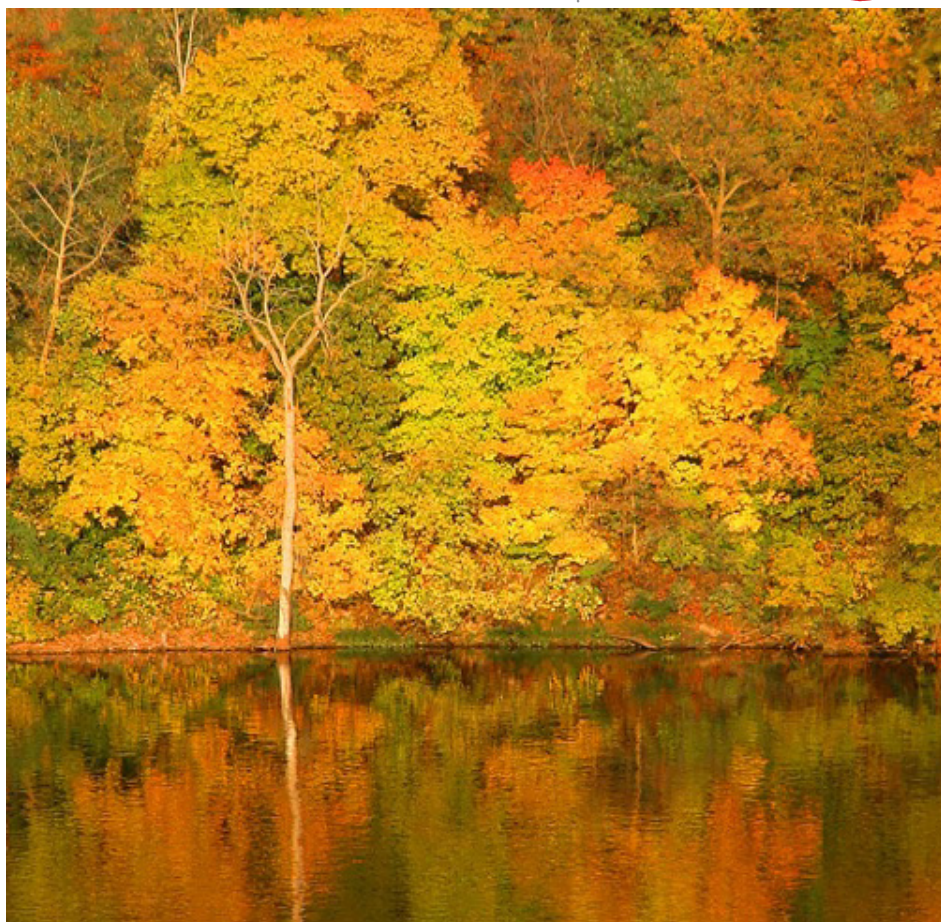
## Fundraiser Update

Our fall fundraiser is off to a great start; we are now a little more than halfway to reaching our \$5,000 goal, at which point that figure will be matched dollar for dollar. To donate, simply leave a donation in the pay box in the office or swipe a card there, mail a donation to the studio, or add it to your upcoming dues. Please write "matching grant" in the memo of your check made out to Twin Cities T'ai Chi.

The matching grant opportunity will run through November 15. Help us celebrate our more than a quarter century as Twin Cities T'ai Chi by making a donation!

## Making the Wheels Go Round

Thanks to those of you who have expressed an interest in helping on the board. We so appreciate it, and we can use your help. We're still looking for someone to step into the position of board president—even on an interim basis. If you feel a desire to help out, have management skills, have board or non-profit or business experience, or just feel like you can do this, contact Paul to talk more about it.



## To Teach Is to Learn Twice

Beginning in January, Sifu Paul will open a tutor training program for those who would like to become tutors at the studio and help teach the T'ai Chi Solo Form.

Teaching T'ai Chi requires experience and understanding of the Solo Form (a minimum of five years of continuous study and practice in our form is required), an ability to teach, explain, and demonstrate the movements of the form, and a desire to give back and share the gift of T'ai Chi with others. If you are interested, talk to Paul at the studio or send us an email expressing your interest or for more information.

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Coming soon:  
tutor training

## Question of the Month

**Question:** In the warm-ups, we end with two segments, one called Waking the Bones, which consists of striking the bones of the body with hollow fists, and another called Shaking the Tree, which bounces on the heels and shakes the body. What is the purpose of these exercises?

**Answer:** Bones grow and are repaired and replaced by a process called remodeling. Although remodeling is produced by a number of internal processes, a key element in stimulating bone growth is repeated stress to the bone that results in the bone thickening at the points of maximum stress. Bone material has the ability to transform mechanical stress into electrical energy. This is called piezoelectricity (pee-aye-zoe electricity) or the piezo-electric effect.

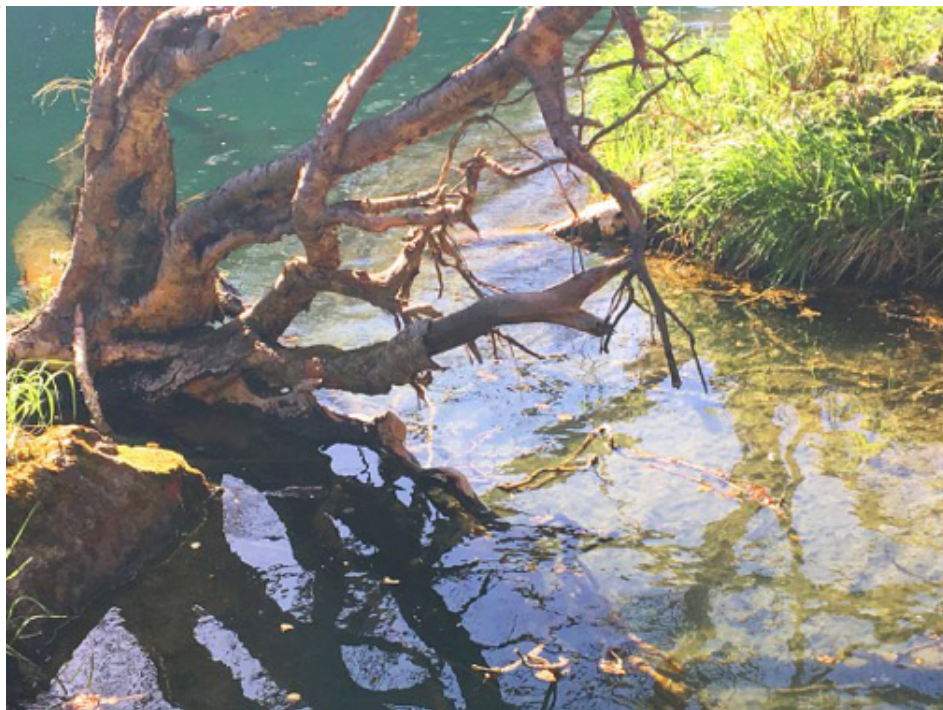
Protein mixed with minerals makes up our bone matrix and is both flexible and strong: hard on the outside and porous on the inside. About 10% of our skeletal mass is remodeled each year, fully replacing our skeleton every 10 years and replacing it eight times in an average life.

Stressing the bones through beating and jumping stimulates them to remodel and brings conscious awareness to our bones as living tissue that makes a trillion blood cells a day that carry oxygen throughout the body.

In addition, tapping through the soft tissue will clear and activate energy channels and promote the circulation of Qi, preparing us for Qigong practice. Dropping the heels, sometimes called Dropping the Post, stimulates the kidney channel and has a tranquil effect on the heart-mind.

Shaking the body, sometimes called the Trembling Horse, disperses blocked Qi flow, shakes and stimulates the internal organs, and moves excess Qi away from them.

The stimulating effect to our Qi flow, opening of the joints, and controlled stressing of the bones in these practices is palpable, pleasurable, and healthful.



## Step Lightly and Speak Softly

The studio has always been a great place to meet people and make friends. We're delighted to report there has been a steady rise in membership since springtime.

Our practice hall was designed for T'ai Chi practice, but our wonderful space isn't without some drawbacks. We have what is called in acoustical parlance a "live" space. A live room, by definition, is a room in which sound has a long reverberation time; a dead room has a short reverberation time. Translation: sound is amplified and travels throughout the room easily. In addition, sound from other rooms that enters the practice hall is amplified too.

To manage decibels and distractions yet retain a friendly sociable environment, we advise being mindful of the following suggestions:

## Contact Us

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

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Emerald Lake Chaingbai,  
China



## The Master's Hand

T.T. Liang was a master of T'ai Chi Ch'uan and also a master calligrapher. There is a beautiful scroll with his calligraphy of one of the T'ai Chi classics in the practice hall by the altar. He often said that calligraphy was another form of T'ai Chi practice, utilizing the principles of yin and yang, relaxation, concentration of the mind, and the controlled release of energy through the hand and brush. He stopped his physical practice of the T'ai Chi Solo Form at age 93 and concentrated exclusively on calligraphy as his T'ai Chi practice until the end of his life at age 102.

Master Liang briefly taught a calligraphy class at the studio in 1993 and left Minnesota for the second and final time in 1996, leaving behind three years' worth of calligraphies. After he left Minnesota for his final home in New Jersey, the studio sold the best calligraphies left behind. Some were signed, chopped, and framed, some not.

There is a small box of some of Master Liang's practice pages that remain at the studio. These are the equivalent of his daily T'ai Chi practice, sometimes with calligraphy on both sides to conserve paper. They will be put out and sold on a first-come, first-served basis as part of our fall fundraiser. A suggested donation of \$15 per calligraphy (or another amount) can be placed in the envelopes provided and put in the pay box in the office. Although they are practice sheets, they have the energy of the master's hand at age 96.

- After the warm-ups and Qigong, there is a short pause to have water, sit down, or use the restrooms. Please keep this break short to preserve the continuity of the class; you are being counted by Sifu Paul and the tutors to place you in an appropriate learning group, and being out of the practice hall for a long period delays moving into the small-group learning sessions.
- During this short break, it's natural to converse with friends and classmates. This is often when the volume hits a high level, however. Please be mindful that 20 to 30 people forming seven or eight small groups all talking loudly makes it difficult to hear anything, reconvene the class, and retain the low alpha brain waves produced by the warm-ups and Qigong. Please speak freely, joyfully, but softly on the break.
- Once the small groups are formed, let this signal the time to return to a state of silent Solo Form flow.
- Once in your small learning group, become aware of your group as part of the whole. Tune in to the overall volume of the room and try and contribute to lowering it. The mellow hum of small groups learning T'ai Chi through questions, answers, anecdotes, stories, and laughter is a sweet and stimulating sound. The same groups in noisy competition with each other are stressful. Natural waves of sound that ebb and flow are to be expected; let's all try and ensure that they never crest very high.
- It's allowed to come in and observe a class that's in session to see what goes on in the class if you are considering trying it at a future time. Please let this be a time to observe and not to talk. It is very distracting to class participants when idle conversations occur during a class. If you want to talk with someone, please do it in another room.

- The office has become a gathering place to rest, hydrate, and talk to fellow members. With our increasing membership, it is often congested and loud, carrying noise into the practice hall and making it difficult to move into and out of the dressing rooms. We are in the process of adding a seating area and other amenities into our middle annex room, making it a community-information room. We also have some limited seating out in front of the studio. Please consider one of these other areas to talk and catch up with friends.

Building community through teaching and practicing the art, science, and spirit of T'ai Chi is part of our mission. Let's enjoy the practice, each other, and a little less volume.

## Studio Shirts

We have a fresh stock of studio shirts in short-sleeve and long-sleeve men's and women's styles. Check with Linda, Drew, or Paul if you would like one.



## Coming in January

**The Liu Ho Pa Fa Main Form** will be taught Thursday evening at 7:30–8:30 for those who have completed one or more cycles of the 12 Animals forms.

This is the original form of the Liu Ho Pa Fa System as created by Li Dong Feng. It is a deep and intricate journey through the six harmonies and eight methods, with many techniques, fighting strategies, and beautiful movement sequences. The form takes



about a year and a half to learn and takes discipline and practice to master. Talk to Sifu Paul if you are interested in joining the class.

**The Healing Tao Inner Smile** is a seated meditation practice and is the foundation practice of the Healing Tao system. We will learn to move neutral energy (yuan Qi) through five natural pathways in the body that develop a deep sense of unconditional self-acceptance.

We will learn one pathway per week, adding a new path to the one from the previous week until we can meditate through all pathways in one meditation session. Inner Smiling is a simple and practical way to connect to what the Chinese call “ling” or our inner heart essence, helping us to be more accepting and spontaneous in expressing our unique and natural soul pattern.

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.

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**Liu Ho Pa Fa**  
**Grandmaster Wu Yi**  
**Hui performs the**  
**Main Form**

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**Como moon.**  
**Photo by Mary Wynne**