



# Wudang

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

5/19



## From Sifu Paul

Greetings everyone,

May is finally here, that beautiful time of the year with longer, sunnier days, a little chill left in the evening air, and beautiful budding and flowering plant life. Our upcoming schedule of classes is budding with new and interesting entries, so be sure to check them out. We answer a question about T'ai Chi weapons practice and more. Enjoy the season of spring.

## Question of the Month: Why Study T'ai Chi Weapons?

**Q:** Some T'ai Chi schools teach only the Solo Form, others include Pushing Hands, and at Twin Cities T'ai Chi, you also teach weapons. What's the value of practicing T'ai Chi weapons?

**A:** The T'ai Chi Solo Form is the crown jewel of the practice known as T'ai Chi Ch'uan. It integrates martial movement and principles with the mindfulness of meditation and the breathing and slowness of Qigong. In its history as a martial art, T'ai Chi adapted both traditional military weapons (sword, broadsword, spear) and weapons that were commonly used by civilians (staff, cane, fan). Double Sword, Double Broadsword, and Two- and Three-Section Staff were also taught in some schools.

Around 300 AD, gunpowder was invented in China. It was used in fireworks displays for celebrations and ceremonies initially, but over the next several hundred years, military uses were discovered and developed, at first in primitive cannons and blasting materials and eventually in firearms. As gunpowder left



China and traveled to the Middle East and Europe, more sophisticated weaponry utilizing gunpowder and other explosive materials eventually replaced human-powered weapons.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan's use of traditional weapons was initially connected to its martial origins and was used as an extension of the empty-hand techniques. A weapon's shape, weight, length, and material dictated how it was used and connected to the body. This is still true in contemporary usage, as each weapon develops certain projections of energy based on how it is used. Think of a simple hammer or an axe to see clearly how the tool becomes an extension of the hand and a channel for the body's energy.

The T'ai Chi Solo Form produces a wide range of health benefits, from improving balance and reducing stress to increasing blood oxygen levels. The Solo Form by itself does not provide upper-body development

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Why study T'ai Chi weapons?

## Our Current Weapons Forms



1. T'ai Chi Single Straight Sword. The straight double-edged sword is most closely aligned with the Solo Form. The footwork and leg and waist movements follow the general mechanics of the Solo Form. The blade follows the body, and the eye follows the tip of the sword, providing a point of concentration and transmission of energy. The graceful choreography of the Sword Form and the rhythmic counterpoint of the free hand create a practice that is both meditative and energizing.
2. T'ai Chi Single Broadsword/Saber. The broadsword has a single-edged blade, with the dull edge safe to be pushed with the free hand. This pushing action is accompanied by dynamic footwork, making the Dao or knife a perfect complement to Pushing Hands practice and upper-body development.
3. T'ai Chi Cane. The cane uses movements derived from both the Sword and Broadsword forms. It provides a varied range of movement with practical applications and is a perfect introductory weapon that only requires a simple stick to get started.
4. T'ai Chi Fan. The Fan is the most un-weapon-like of all the T'ai Chi weapons. Most practitioners choose to practice the fan for its grace, color, and beauty. The quick snapping movements that open the fan develop the timing and release of energy for short power. Using a heavier metal fan will build strength in the hands.
5. T'ai Chi Double Broadsword. The Double Broadsword Form develops the right and left sides of the body simultaneously, teaches intricate flower patterns with the broadswords that coordinate the hands and feet, stretches and strengthens the shoulders, and is fun to perform (and to watch). This form has not been taught at the studio for quite a while. We will begin a Double Broadsword session in June. Come and learn this dynamic weapons form!

and strength training. T'ai Chi weapons are used to supplement this deficiency as well as to enhance many of the attributes developed in the Solo Form, such as balance; eye, hand, and foot coordination; mental focus and memory; and the development and projection of energy and power through the weapon. The practice of weapons brings T'ai Chi principles into a new context, and the body must adapt accordingly. In addition, many of the weapons have two-person practices that develop one's sensitivity and timing in working with a

partner. T'ai Chi weapons are also a lot of fun to practice.

## Contact Us

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

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## Community Building at TCTCC

This past year, studio members and instructors Kim Husband and Dan Frederick were busy promoting T'ai Chi, Qigong, and our studio. She brought Twin Cities T'ai Chi to a variety of conventions, retreats, and wellness events, conducting classes and workshops in the T'ai Chi Solo Form, Qigong, and the Fan Form. Thank you, Kim and Dan! Below are listed some of the events and venues at which she offered classes open to the public.

- White Tiger Martial Arts Center, May 2018
- CONvergence, July 2018
- 2D Con, August 2018
- Two Girl Scout events, September 2018
- DeCONgestant, September 2018
- Anime Fusion Convention, October 2018
- CONsole Room, January 2019 (as Featured Guest)
- MarsCon, March 2019
- JW Marriott Hotel employee wellness event, March 2019
- Paganicon, March 2019
- Girl Scout leaders' retreat, April 2019
- MiniCon April 2019

Possible upcoming events at which we are looking into presenting short demonstrations:

### 2019 Dragon Festival

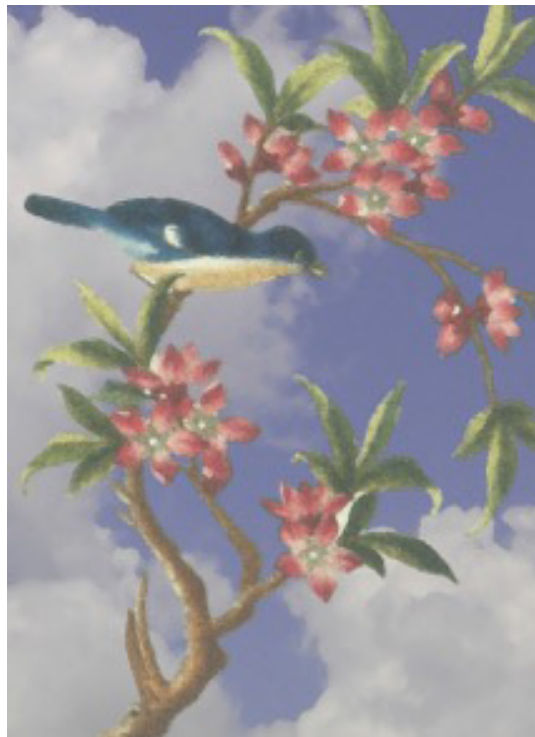
July 13 & 14, 2019, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Lake Phalen and Lake Phalen Park, Saint Paul

## The Creative Enterprise Zone Mural & Art Festival

September 7–14, 2019

We are waiting for more information on these events, but please consider joining us to demonstrate T'ai Chi and some of our other forms, styles, and practices. We will post further details as we know more.



## Upcoming Classes and Schedule Changes

**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.

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About 50 convention-goers attended a T'ai Chi session at Paganicon in March.

### 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).

*The sun shines not on us, but in us.  
The rivers flow not past, but through  
us, thrilling, tingling, vibrating every  
fiber and cell of the substance of our  
bodies, making them glide and sing.*  
—John Muir

### Going, Going...

We have a few sweatshirts left for sale in a variety of sizes in each of the three styles that were offered: crew neck sweatshirts, medium-weight hooded sweatshirts, and heavy-weight hooded sweatshirts with a ¼ zippered front. We will not be ordering these items again for a while, so get them now while you can. They make great gifts and promote the studio at the same time. Our remaining stock is listed below and at the studio.

#### Heavyweight Hooded with ¼ zippered front

Grey	Black
1 Small	1 Medium
2 Medium	1 Large
1 Large	1 XL
1 XL	

#### Middle-weight Hooded

Grey	Black
1 XL	1 Medium
1 Large	
1 XL	
1 XXL	

#### Crew Neck

Grey	Black
2 XL	3 Large

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