



Newsletter

of the
International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium
on Health, Education and Cultural Exchange

Issue 2 August 2008

Welcome to the second issue of the Newsletter of the International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium on Health, Education and Cultural Exchange. In this issue you will find the latest information and announcements on Symposium development along with information of interest on the Symposium venue, Vanderbilt University and the host city, Nashville Tennessee. Please visit www.taichisymposium.com for more detailed information on Symposium development. Thank you for your continued interest in this historical event which brings together Traditional Tai Chi Chuan and Western Science.

Because we have so many new requests for the newsletter, we feel it is important to include in each issue some items of interest that will assist Symposium attendees in planning their trip to Nashville. Consequently, you may see these items repeated in subsequent issues.

Questions about Cost & Registration?

We receive many questions about the cost and registration process for the Symposium. Content, schedule and cost decisions should be completed by the end of January 2009. Consequently, our on-line registration with the complete breakout of Symposium cost and schedule along with the 2009 cost and detailed registration information for the

Symposium Registration

Methods

On-line Mail In
By Phone By Fax

Expected Availability
First Week of February 09

Vanderbilt Residence Halls and Dining Facility will be posted to the website the first week of February 2009.

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE with Master's Interview

May 2008 – Master Chen Zhenglei (*Complete*)
August 2008 – Master Yang Zhenduo (*This Issue*)
November 2008 – Master Wu Wenhan
February 2009 – Master Ma Hailong
May 2009 – Master Sun Yongtian

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

Symposium dates: 5 - 10 July 2009

5 July 2009 – Check-in/Registration
6 July 2009 – Symposium Begins
6-10 July 2009 – Symposium Workshops, Academic Sessions, Special Events
10 July 2009 – Symposium Ends

WEBSITES

www.taichisymposium.com

Contact: info@taichisymposium.com

Nashville, Tennessee: www.visitmusiccity.com

Vanderbilt University: www.vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt Facility Map (with campus tours)
www.vanderbilt.edu/conferences/maps.html

Residence Halls on Campus

Hank Ingram House

www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd/main/Ingram.php

Memorial House

www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd/main/Memorial.php

Gillette House

www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd/main/Gillette.php

Main dining hall, campus market and café

<http://commons.vanderbilt.edu/commonscenter>

Vanderbilt/Nashville

www.vanderbilt.edu/nashville

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Symposium Sponsors

As an integral part of the International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium, our sponsorship program works to develop relationships with caring corporations, organizations, brands and individuals to provide financial and professional support to meet the goals of the Symposium.

In early September, a Sponsorship page will be launched on our website that will highlight the partnerships we create and provide guidance on becoming a sponsor and/or financial contributor. We will also have a means through which donations, scholarships and gifts can be made as well as to define donor benefits and methods of recognition.

Our list of Sponsors is growing. We owe tremendous gratitude not only to these partnerships, but also to all of the participants involved at every level. We'd like to thank the following Sponsors for their wonderful support to the Symposium.



Vanderbilt Center for Integrative Health

<http://www.vanderbilthealth.com/integrativehealth/>



<http://www.atoctaijiquan.com/index.htm>



<http://www.chentaiji.com/>

Meet Your Symposium Team

In this section, we will introduce key people behind the development of the Symposium. In this issue we highlight the two individuals who oversee the development of Symposium content, design and schedule.

Pat Rice, Winchester, Virginia



Pat Rice will be serving the Symposium in the capacity of Chair for Program Design and Scheduling.

Pat has been involved in internal health practices since 1972 and in Chinese martial arts and internal practices since 1975. She has studied extensively in the U.S. and abroad from well-known masters. She also has studied taijiquan, qigong, and other arts in China and in Europe. Pat has traveled to China ten times since 1985, as her involvement with Chinese arts has expanded.

In 1988, she was an athlete member of the U.S. Wushu Team and competed in taijiquan at the International Wushu Invitational Tournament in Hangzhou, China. It was during that event that she was introduced to Master Yang Zhenduo and arranged to study further with him in Taiyuan, Shanxi. She was the first to invite him and his grandson Yang Jun to the United States in 1990, through her business, A Taste of China.

Among tournament awards as an athlete, she placed first in Taijiquan, Women's Division, and first in Push-Hands, Women's Division, in the U.S. National Kung-Fu/Wushu Competitions, Houston, Texas in 1986 and 1987. She was a member of the 1989 U.S. Taijiquan Team and won 3rd place in Push-Hands, Women's Heavyweight Division, at the First Chung-hua Cup International Tai Chi Chuan Tournament, Taiwan.

She earned a diploma at the Wushu International Judges Course in Shanghai in 1988 and is certified by the China Wushu Association to judge in international tournaments. She has sponsored, directed, and judged at numerous tournaments at the national and international level, and has taught courses in tournament management and judges training. Between 1988 and 1995, she organized fourteen tournaments that focused solely on taijiquan and other internal styles. "The U.S.A. All-Taijiquan Championships," held in Winchester, Virginia, became the premier tournament event for internal stylists.

She has been an administrative member of several Chinese martial arts organizations, including being a member of the Executive Committee of the U.S.A. Wushu/Kungfu Federation, the Board of Directors of the former U.S. Wushu Federation, and Taijiquan Director of the U.S. Chinese Kuoshu Federation, and she was on the Taijiquan Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union. She served four years (1995-1999) as a member of the Technical Committee of the International Wushu Federation and attended three World Wushu Tournaments (Baltimore, Rome, Hong Kong) as an administrator.

She has published several articles on taijiquan, wushu, and self defense.

She is Director of "A Taste of China," and based on the role A Taste of China has played in the development and spread of Chinese martial arts, she was named in 1999 by *Inside Kung Fu* magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential Persons in martial arts in the U.S. in the past 100 years. She was inducted into *Inside Kung Fu's* 2001 Hall of Fame for "Outstanding Contribution to Martial Arts."

As an instructor, she has conducted workshops in the U.S. and abroad for more than 30 years. She has taught at Shenandoah University, Shenandoah University's College for Lifelong Learning, and Lord Fairfax Community College in Virginia. She has been Director and Instructor at her own school, the Shenandoah Taijiquan

Center/Yang Chang-fu Center in Winchester, Virginia since 1992.

She is the Advisor to the International Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Association. She has written for its newsletter and has assisted in structuring the ranking procedures for the Association.

Pat has a great enthusiasm for teaching and learning, and is dedicated to sharing the sense of well-being that can be obtained from the practices of taiji and qigong. She now enthusiastically turns her attention to helping organize and produce the 2009 Symposium.

Dr. Yang Yang, Champaign, Illinois



Dr Yang will be serving the Symposium in the capacity of Chair for Academic Development

Yang Yang was born in 1961 in Henan province near the Chen Village in China. At the age of 12, he began studying Taiji because of a congenital heart defect. He credits his practice of Chen Style Taiji with curing his heart

condition and allowing him to pass the physical exam required in China to enter the universities.

Master Yang studied for six years with three local teachers, Wu Xiubao, Yuan Shiming, and Zhang Xitang before going away to Shanghai to attend the university. During the next few years, he met and studied with Gu Liuxin, Chen Zhaokui and Feng Zhiqiang, all famous eighteenth generation masters.

Yang Yang's dedicated Taiji practice was rewarded in formal competitions. He won first place in the Shanghai University Kungfu Tournament for three straight years (1981-1983) and in 1983 was voted Best Overall Martial Artist. These accomplishments earned him a job as an instructor with the Shanghai Chen Style Research Association. In 1985, he went to law

school in Beijing, in large part so he could study on a regular basis with Master Feng. He formally became a disciple of Grandmaster Feng in 1988. Master Yang's Taiji studies now span 30 years.

With both Law and Engineering degrees earned in China, Master Yang practiced business law for several years before coming to the United States to study for a Master's Degree in Economics at Illinois State University. He is currently the Director of the Center for Taiji Studies in Champaign, Illinois, and in 2005 completed a Doctorate Degree in Kinesiology at the University of Illinois. His research focuses directly on the benefits and mechanisms of Taiji practice.

During his distinguished career, Dr Yang has written a book and several articles on Taiji and Qigong. He has also given presentations on Tai Chi and Qigong at hospitals, colleges and universities as well as many international level conferences and symposiums. To name a few:

- International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) Conference, San Antonio, TX
- Sixth Annual Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Symposium, University of Iowa
- Joint Combined Preventive Cardiology Conference, Mayo Clinic
- University of Chicago/Mayo Clinic Chicago Annual Conference on Complimentary and Alternative Medicine
- American Public Health Association's 135 annual meeting and exposition, Washington, DC
- National Rehabilitation Awareness Week, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department, Mayo Clinic
- World Qigong Congress/CAM EXPO, Los Angeles
- North American Research Conference on Complementary and Integrative Medicine in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Yang Yang's unique background comes from extensive study with several of the 18th generation masters of the Chen family style of Taijiquan and from formal training as a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Illinois. Yang's research focuses directly on the benefits of Taiji practice. As a master practitioner and scientific researcher, he is uniquely situated to clarify and/or de-mystify what are often obscure points of theory and practice, and to bring the full benefits of Taijiquan to the widest possible audience.

As both a traditionally trained, life-long practitioner of Taijiquan (Tai Chi Chuan) and Qigong (Ch'i Kung) and a Ph.D. researcher, Dr Yang is well qualified to explore the mechanisms and benefits of traditional Taiji/Qigong practice and to explain the principles of practice to a Western audience. He is dedicated to the practice, study, and dissemination of these traditional Chinese arts. While a doctoral candidate he established the Center for Taiji Studies (CTS) in Champaign, IL.

In support of Symposium academic development, Dr. Yang has assembled a strong team with well respected members from several prestigious Universities and Medical Centers. To date the academic development team includes members from Beth-Israel Hospital, D'Youville College, Harvard Medical School, Mayo Clinic, University of California at Irvin, University of Illinois and Vanderbilt Medical School.

Dr Yang is uniquely qualified to bring together the marriage of Traditional Tai Chi Chuan training and Western Science.

Master Yang Zhenduo Master Teacher An Appreciation

By Dave Barrett
Published summer 2003

*"For myself, I want you to
become better than me.
Practice harder!"*

I first met Yang Laoshi ten years ago. In July 1993, I flew from Oregon to Washington, D.C. and then drove forty miles north to Frederick, a town in rural Maryland. Arriving at Hood College I was surprised to be among a group of eighty or so, many of who were Tai Chi teachers and long time players. We were from four European countries, Argentina, Canada, the Bahamas, and all parts of the U.S. Over the next eleven days I was plunged into an intensive period of study and practice that revolutionized my approach to Tai Chi.

The setting was ideal. We had five hours of classes daily and then many would practice after dinner on the large quadrangle lawn in front of the dormitories. There was little else to do in Frederick and since we were working through the hand, saber and sword forms in ten days, we practiced late into each evening. An extraordinary atmosphere was developing. As we were pushed to the limit by the hot weather and challenging curriculum an esprit de corps was emerging: serious yet playful, exhausted yet motivated to practice "one more time".

The catalyst for all of this was of course Master Yang Zhen Duo. On the first day the gym was full: six across and twelve rows deep. In what became a familiar occurrence, the applause rang through the old gymnasium as Master Yang Zhenduo and Yang Jun entered, taking their place and giving the opening class salute. If I had to sum up my first impression of Yang Laoshi in one word it would be: impeccable. Speaking clearly with great energy he delivered a lecture on the Ten Principles that was comprehensive and insightful. I quickly realized I was in the presence of a Master Teacher, one whose charisma was rooted in a mastery of the material and a passion for sharing it.

My first teacher, Dr. Yuet Sun Chan, had a similar luster. Working with him for eleven years until his passing in 1988, I had developed a habit of taking notes during class, documenting not only specific points but the flow of information as the classes progressed. In fact, Dr. Chan was the reason I had traveled so far to study with Yang Laoshi. He told me many times that he was an amateur compared to the high level instructors in China, and wished that one day I would be able to work with such a teacher.

I took out my pen that first day and started writing down everything: specific points, general instructions, encouragement and training advice. I have not stopped writing for ten years. Each summer I traveled to wherever Yang Laoshi was



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teaching to continue my training. I have five full notebooks and counting, and as I've been going through them I'm amazed at how consistent he has been. His vision of the form and how he teaches it has been an unwavering inspiration.

In many ways Yang Laoshi's teaching resembles his performance of the forms: clean, clear, precise, elegantly organized and powerfully expressed. He said early on that first day, "I'm teaching, but let's treat it as studying together." Classes always begin with the phrase, "Now we will review." As



he watches the group performance, he is analyzing every student looking for those who will be benefited by specific corrections. After the run through he has the corrections point-by-point, person-by-person. He has the uncanny ability to look at a group of eighty performers and make you feel like he is watching you the whole time. On that first day he offered forty-five minutes of corrections on the Opening through Single Whip and then said, "Other than those things it doesn't look too bad!"

His is unfailingly supportive and positive in the correcting process, "Try it this way. How does it feel?" Very rarely will he demonstrate the forms other than impeccably, as they should look. He brings certain students to the floor in front of the class and has them model a less than perfect sequence.



Then gently and cheerfully, he will adjust an elbow here, drop a shoulder there, reset a torso angle and knee position pointing out to the class, "This looks a lot better, this looks good!" If you have ever been on the

floor with the Master, you will never forget that particular correction. Likewise, if you are on the floor and fail to make the correction you won't soon forget the stern look and flash of impatience that creases his otherwise friendly face.

Over decades of teaching, Yang Laoshi has honed his presentation of the forms to a fine point. "When practicing we concentrate on torso positions, hand techniques and footwork." As he introduces sequences he generally divides the sequence into four counts and uses a stop motion



method to show each of the finer points of torso motion, body weight shifting, footwork placement and hand technique. Then he will reassemble the motion in continuous sequence using a short narrative to describe the important elements of each sequence as he moves. Then the group is lead through the sequence using the same verbal cues. This innovative method allows a large group to move together, providing those in the back of the group crucial cues that they would otherwise be unable to see. I have used his technique to great advantage, especially teaching seniors, who like to be reminded and guided through difficult to remember motions.

Yang Laoshi's appetite for repetitions is legendary. He will have the class do it until they get it right however long it takes. That summer in 1993 we worked and worked and then worked again on difficult motions. In particular I recall during the sword form class we were unable to get the jumping sequence "clever cat catches the rat with agility" right. We were neither clever nor agile. I lost count at fifteen the



number of times he ran us through it, leading each repetition himself saying, "If I can do it, you can do it" The temperature and humidity in the gym were both hovering in the high eighties and here is this man twice our age jumping each time with perfect poise, timing and execution. He'd turn and smile and say, "One more time". Indeed, this has become a catch phrase for his long time students and is just about the only English phrase the Master can speak. He returned from a Seminar in France one year and said proudly, 'Encore une fois!'

This is the first summer in over ten years that Yang Laoshi gets to stay home. It has been an extraordinary decade of accomplishment for this master teacher. Some years he and Yang Jun would be on the road for three months at a time presenting as many as eight full week seminars in Sweden France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, England, the U. S, Canada, and Brazil. Through all of this hard travel, Yang Laoshi has worked even harder to share his knowledge and help people the world over to deepen their practice of Tai Chi and improve their lives. Now that he is no longer teaching as frequently it is up to us to embrace his lessons, studying and practicing according to his suggestions, hearing the echoes of his voice and envisioning the beauty and grandeur of his forms.

"I can guide you through the Principles but you need to find out for yourself. Practice everyday. Skill level depends on diligence. Study seriously based on my requirements. Spend time. Use your mind. Gradually, it takes time: study more, practice more, understand more. It is a continuous cycle. From skill to skill progress gradually."



Dave Barrett is the Editor of The Journal of the International Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan Association

Nashville Highlights

The General Jackson Showboat



For a distinctly different Nashville experience, consider a cruise along the Cumberland River aboard the General Jackson Showboat.

The General Jackson is a historic 300 foot paddlewheel riverboat with four massive decks. It's best known for its fabulous live shows that are performed in the beautiful two-story Victorian Theater located in the center of the boat. During the primary season March 14 - November 9, Midday Cruises offer the amazing Peking Acrobats show and lunch. The General Jackson Dinner Cruise is one of the most popular activities in Nashville offering an elegant dinner and a production show featuring all genres of music. It's an experience you'll only find in Music City!

July 4th aboard the General Jackson

The General Jackson Showboat celebrates a patriotic Fourth of July Cruise with great music, food and fun!

More information available at: (ctrl-click)

<http://www.generaljackson.com/site/>

On-line Vacation Guide



With a multitude of outstanding attractions, events, tours, shopping, restaurants and live entertainment, it's hard to know where to start to find information on all that Nashville has to offer. The Convention and Visitors Bureau offers a Vacation Guide that provides planning information on attractions, shopping, sports & recreation, events, tours & transportation, lodging, dining and nightlife and entertainment. The 2008 version is currently available and will be updated to the 2009 version in the late fall.

To view the Nashville on-line Vacation Guide, **Click** on the icon above

**Remember....
July 4th in Nashville ROCKS!**

**Kick-off your Symposium
experience by attending the free
Music City July 4th celebration.**

See the 2008 celebration (ctrl-click)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KubLNHpykmQ&NR=1>