

T'AI CHI

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T'AI CHI

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**George Xu on
The Realities of
T'ai Chi Training**

**A Doctor, Teacher
Discuss T'ai Chi
Health Benefits**

**Key Points of
Body Alignment**

**Secret
Elements
of Mastery**



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The Teaching of Two Wu Style Masters

The following is a translation of a speech by Shiao Wei-Long at the first international Wu style T'ai Chi Ch'uan convention in Toronto, Canada, in October. The speech was translated by Ms. Shiou Muey-chuang of London, a student of Gary Wragg, who operates Wu's Tai Chi Chuan Academy in London. Shiao was the only speaker at the convention who was not a member of the Wu family. As the speech indicates, he is a long time practitioner.

Mr. Chairman, Si-Hings (brother students), Si-Jieh (sister students) fellow disciples, ladies and gentlemen. I feel very honored and happy to be able to attend the convention and to have the opportunity to speak here.

My name is Shiao Wei-Long. I started to learn T'ai Chi Ch'uan with my father when I was 6 years old.

Today, I am 69, so I have been learning T'ai Chi Ch'uan for over 60 years now.

Today, my health is good, my hair hasn't yet turned grey, and I don't need glasses to read newspapers. These are the results and benefits of practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

My father was a disciple of Si-Kung (his teacher's teacher) Wu Chien Chuan, while I am the disciple of Sifu Wu Kung Yi. This is the father and son of Shiao family which have kowtowed to the father and son of the Wu family, respectively. This is the sifu-disciple relationship of two generations.

My father invited Si-Kung Wu Chien Chuan to our house to teach the whole family T'ai Chi Ch'uan, including push hands, ta-lu, sabre, sword, etc. Therefore, from the age of 8 to 15 I learned from Si-kung.

In 1937, when Si-Kung set up the Chien Chuan Tai Chi Chuan Club in Shanghai, I was one of the first students there. In 1945, at the end of the China-Japan war, when I was 19, Sifu Wu Kung Yi returned to Shanghai and took me in as one of his first batch of disciples in Shanghai.

I then started to learn from sifu Wu Kung Yi. Sifu helped me to correct my ch'uan stances and asked me to learn his new ch'uan stances. Therefore, I am very familiar with the teaching methods of the two generations, the differences between the old and the

new forms. Today, there are very few people, indeed, who had been taught the ch'uan and push hands by Si-Kung Wu Chien Chuan.

Now let me speak a little on the way the Si-Kung Wu Chien Chuan did his teaching. I am sure everyone here would be pleased to hear them.

Every time when Si-Kung Chien Chuan came to our house to teach my father push hands, I always stood aside to watch. It seemed Si-Kung merely pressed with his hand and my father would get thrown out at least 10 paces away, falling onto the sofa.

It seemed so simple and easy, as if Si-Kung was playing with ball-throwing. Now my father was a healthy, strong, tall and powerful man and it was not easy for ordinary people to try and move him even one step.

Yet with Si-Kung, it was like a cat playing with a mouse. Father was completely overcome and out-manuevered by Si-Kung. No matter how hard my father tried to push hands, he could not avoid being thrown out.

Si-Kung on several occasions used the amazing "plucking the tidal wave" technique while pushing hands with my father and myself. We would feel as we were if sitting on a small boat, getting caught in a strong gale, feeling dizzy and unbalanced, moving to the left and right, falling forwards and backwards, extremely uncomfortable.

But the beauty is that Si-Kung always used just the right amount of jing, not too much, nor too little, though pushing you and yet still supporting you so you won't fall down, making it so that the more you tried to push him, the more difficult and hard it became. Yet one could not stop it.

Si-Kung would sometimes also press his hands on my chest and say, "Come over." I would then go over without any control, as if there were magnets on Si-Kung's hands. Sometimes Si-Kung kept his eyes shut while pushing hands with us, and the results were the same. He didn't need to see, it was all a matter of "jing listening." You never heard of this before, have you?

Si-Kung had often relaxed his hands and asked me to push him in any way I wished. I would put both both

hands on his chest or on his abdomen, pushing as hard as I could, but I could feel as if there was a volume of qi in Si-Kung's body against my palms. It just followed and moved with the direction of my push, neutralizing my force, yet his two feet never moved once.

It was as if his body was surrounded and protected by qi. Very mysterious! It would have been difficult to believe if I hadn't witnessed and personally experienced the above incidents.

Now let me spend a little time analyzing Si-Kung's old form and sifu's new form. In my opinion, the difference lies in that the old form is expansive, just like when we first learn to write as a child, we always learn to write in large print. It just seems easier.

One learns first to hold the brush, training the use of the wrist, establishing a good foundation using the large circles.

The new form is more compact, as if practicing the "small print" or the "free-style," with the emphasis on swiftness and practicality, using small circles.

Therefore, the large prints seem more beautiful, but it is not often used. For example, no one would use large print in letter writing, or writing in a diary or for essays. The small print would be more practical.

Also, Sifu Kung Yi taught us that while practicing the ch'uan, we must emphasize the sequential coordination of the joints. Therefore, he had deleted those that seemed unnecessary, cutting out and amending the old form and developed this into the new form.

If you pay attention to the "Snake Creeps Down," in the new form, one does not have to bend so low. This is to demonstrate that it is sufficient to just pull the opponent over and then immediately following with the next technique.

This way it would be more compact, direct and faster. If, like the "Snake Creeps Down" in the old form, when one pulls the opponent over and yet still has to bend down very low, that just seems excessive.

Again in the new form, sifu Kung Yi had in books and photographs

170 Wu Stylists Attend Convention in Toronto



More than 170 Wu Stylists attended the Wu style international convention in Toronto, Canada, in October. Photos of some of the masters are shown here. At left is Wu Tah Sin with Wu style sabre. At right is Wu Yan Hsia performing T'ai Chi 24 Form Spear.

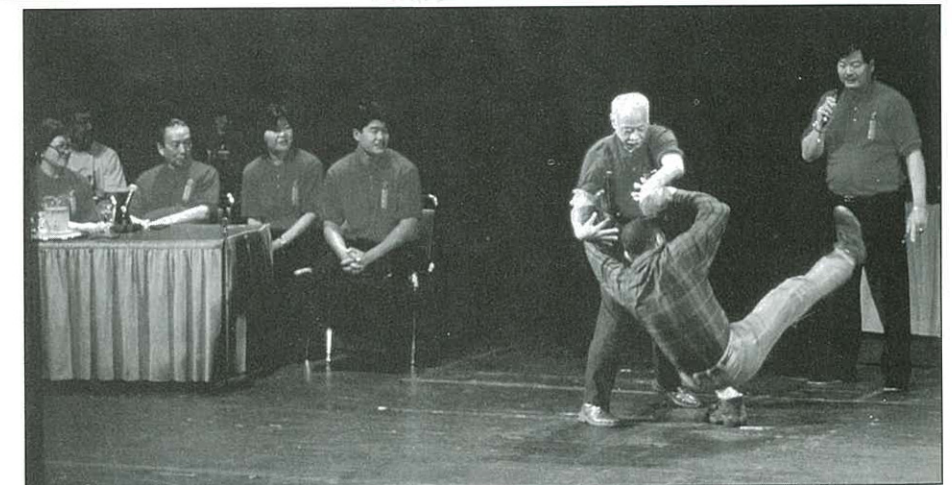


demonstrated the Cloud Hands form section by section, fully expressing the sequential coordination of the joints. This expression could not be seen in the old form.

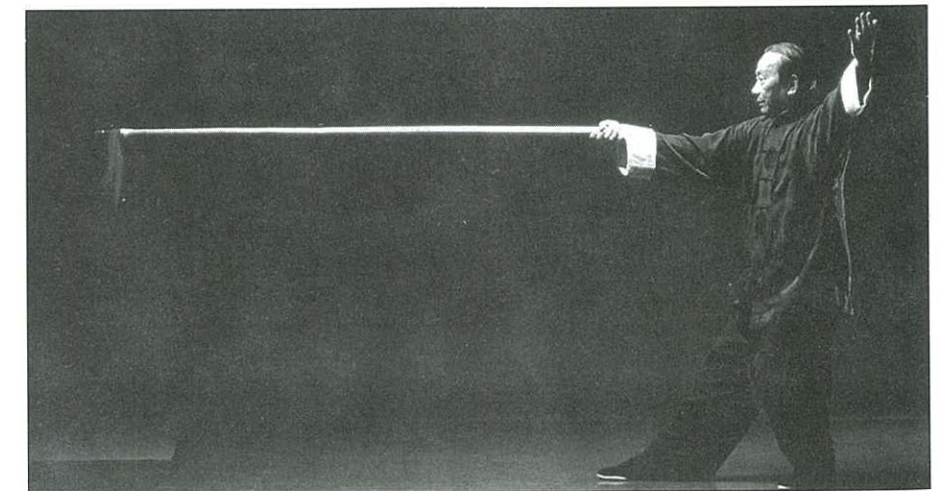
Therefore, my opinion is that if one is only interested in the health aspect, either the old or the new form would be equally good. If one is interested in the whole system, including the martial aspect, then the new form is more direct and faster. But the old form also has its unique points, that is, using the searching, lingering, deep and wide jing. To do it well is very difficult.

It is time for me to stop now. I hope everyone would continue with their support for the development and expansion of the Wu family T'ai Chi Ch'uan and also to carry on with the effort in their training. Lastly, I would like to wish everyone good health and happiness.

P.S.: In 1954, my eldest Si-Hing and myself accompanied Sifu to Macao to attend the "Wu-Cheng" fight. In the photograph where sifu and Cheng stood side by side, with Cheng's face and clothing covered with his own blood, the person with a round face sitting in the first row by the ringside was me. •



Wu Tah Sin demonstrates Eight Elements (Li)



Kwok Hsiao Jong does Wu style Tai Chi 13 Form spear.