



## Tai Chi Chuan

To start off in very much the way I did, the first thing that left a lasting impression when learning Tai Chi Chuan from Dr. Tony Zayner was the quotes he would put on the front page of his handouts here I'm passing on some of these quotations so you too can reap their benefits.

*Tension is who you think you should be.*

*Relaxation is who you are*

*- Chinese proverb*

“A person who is **Not afraid** is not aggressive,  
A person who has **no sense of fear** of any kind is really free; a peaceful person.”

-Jiddu Krishnamurti

“**Dao is not a Supreme Being, but a “supreme state of being”.**”

**-Anonymous**

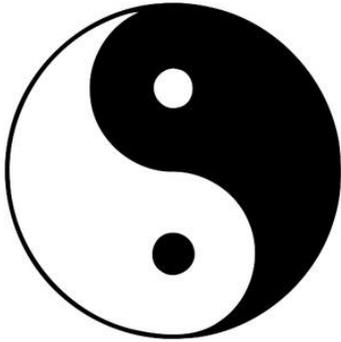
“**Tai Chi Chuan does not teach self-defense but self-disappearance and self-deference.**”

**-Dr. Shu Jong-yi**

# Tai Chi Chuan

## Introduction and History

The literal translation of Tai Chi Chuan is supreme ultimate fist. At face value the English translation doesn't begin to describe what this relates to. Some take it to mean that tai chi is the best martial art, others see it as a supreme way of using the fist, or that its principles form the greatest foundation for effective movement. Although both of these notions are close, I don't think either really articulates or grasps the overall meaning. To get closer to the mark lets dive into the context Chinese martial arts and tai chi.



Tai Chi/ji relates to the tai ji tu (symbol), most commonly known as the yin yang symbol. The contextual meaning of "supreme ultimate" is that of supreme polarity or the extremes of yin and yang, their supremeness. The Fist portion of the name relates to martial art or method. There are many Chinese martial arts that finish the name of their style with chuan. Ba Qua Chuan (eight trigram fist), Xin Yi Chuan (mind intent fist), Hung Ga Chuan (tiger crane fist), Ba Ji Chuang (eight extremities fist), Chang Chuan (long fist), pak mei chuan (white eyebrow fist) Tong Long Chuan (preying mantis fist) etc.

The name of various arts usually has to do with what the primary inspiration for the style was, i.e. Preying mantis fist was inspired by the movements of the preying mantis, etc. So Tai Chi Chuan is the 'martial art' or movements that gained its inspiration from the supreme ultimate symbol. In Chinese culture this is the notion of yin and yang. To better articulate this, we translate tai chi chuan as the way of great polarity. In our practice we focus on how to use Taoist notions of yin and yang to create the most healthy and balanced life that we can to help ourselves and others.

The history of Tai Chi Chuan, as a martial art, is not very old. It is actually younger than most other Chinese systems. That being said, it should also be noted that the history of its founding theories can be seen as some of the most ancient still in practice today. Those theories from the Yi Jing, other Taoist classics, and foundational Yin and Yang theory can be seen in the earliest inscriptions of Chinese language and ceremonial practices some 4,800 years ago. For the sake of this introduction we will stick to the martial history, and in our classes we'll expand on how we apply the theory to honestly practice Tai Chi Chuan for improved mental health, physical health and wellness.



Chinese legends say the martial art of Tai Chi Chuan was created by Chang San Feng (on right) (600-700 yrs ago) who was a Shaolin monk that converted into a Taoist after leaving the temple. His story is such that he mastered the Shaolin arts sooner than a majority of his fellow Shaolin monks. Then after leaving the temple and wandering about he began learning about the Taoist arts of meditation and decided to travel to the Wu Dang Mountains. This eventually led to him converting to a Taoist. One day when in meditation on the mountain he witnessed a crane and snake fighting, the soft fluid movements of the snake overcame the hard and swift strikes of the crane! After witnessing this battle for survival he applied these principles of softness to the best techniques of the shaolin martial arts, and condensed them into the art of Tai Chi Chuan.



Though legends point to Chang San Feng, historical accounts point to the Chen family of Chen village... The first person in this line is Chen Wang ting (on left) (300-400 yrs ago), a warrior, a scholar, and a ninth-generation ancestor of the Chen family is said to have invented Tai Chi Chuan after a lifetime of researching, developing, and experiencing martial arts. Chen Wang ting served the Ming Dynasty in its war against the succeeding Qing Dynasty. Because of the political

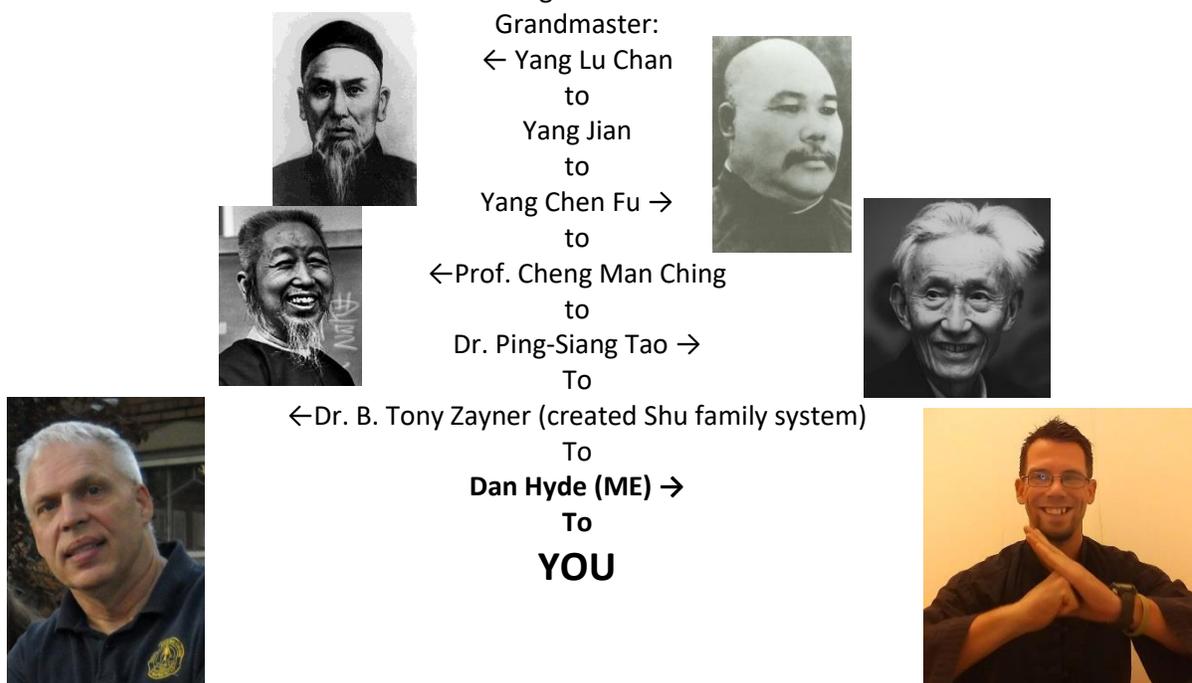
turbulence, natural disasters, and human calamities during his time, Chen Wang ting decided to retire from public life to a small village located in Henan, China, with the name Chenjiagou, literally, Chen Family Ditch. There he created a martial arts system based on his family martial arts inheritance, his own war experiences, and his knowledge of various contemporary martial arts styles. In his creation of Tai Chi Chuan, Chen Wangting combined the study of Yi Jing, (i.e., "Scriptures of Changes"), Chinese medicine, theories of Yin Yang (i.e., the two opposing yet reciprocal energies generated from Tai Chi, expressed in Tai Chi Chuan as the hardness vs. the softness, the substantial vs. the insubstantial, etc.), the five elements (i.e., metal, wood, water, fire, earth), the study and theory of Jing Luo (meridian theory) methods of Dao Yin (i.e., deep stretching) and Tu Na (i.e., deep breathing exercises). All these things he shaped into the martial art of Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan.

Chen style Tai Chi Chuan was the foundational style of Tai Chi Chuan it has slow and fast movements, it is very much a martial form. The style we practice has roots in a modified version of Chen style. This is Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan that was created by Yang Lu Chan (1789-1872). Yang Lu Chan created this style after he learned the Chen style from the 14th generation of the Chen Family, [Chen Chang-hsing](#). Yang Lu Chan adapted the form to his preferences and modified the hard Chen style to be softer in nature. Down the line Yang Cheng fu was commissioned by the Chinese government to soften the style even more to help make it easier for the Chinese community to “strengthen themselves against foreign invaders.” Coming to improve their health. This style was further modified and condensed by Cheng Man Ching, under Yang Cheng Fu’s approval.

Cheng Man Ching was a man who’s infamous in China and the world! In China he’s known to be a master of the five excellences, these consist of painting, calligraphy, tea ceremony, medicine, and martial arts. With this knowledge and vast background he further softened the practice of Tai Chi and condensed the form to make it more palatable to learn. Cheng Man Ching is infamous for spreading the healing art of Tai Chi Chuan all around the world. His principle was to teach with utmost kindness. Under Cheng Man Ching’s guidance Dr. Tao further softened the practice to bring it even closer to Taoist principles of humility, gentle strength, and healing. My teacher Dr. Tony Zayner then expanding on Taoist principle and healing techniques created the Shu family system of martial art and healthy living. This history and lineage of Yang style is what we fall under, now known as the Shu family applications.

Our Yang style Tai Chi Chuan is soft, internally powerful, and brings vibrant health holding relaxation at the forefront!

Our lineage is as follows:



# Tai Chi Chuan class structure:

**Tai Chi Chuan Class Rank:** The practice of Tai Chi Chuan is learning how to apply yin and yang to all aspects of your life. To help you gradually apply this philosophy to your body and mind we clarify the practice in different stages or ranks.

- **Beginner-**

The beginner rank is one where you're fresh on the floor and you have a clean slate to work with. This rank is primarily focused on retraining the body. To feel physically the separation between tension, relaxation, stress and calmness. In this rank you will begin to learn about Tai Chi principles of movement and how to incorporate them into the body. In the Tai Chi form practice you will progress 1/3 of the way into the form and pause there until you begin to feel and show a working of the principles in your body.

- **Intermediate-**

Intermediate rank is about expanding on the knowledge of the principles' health benefits and incorporating them into movement with the form practice. In the form practice you will learn the remaining 2/3s of the form and deepen the practice of Tai Chi principles in your body. At the end of this stage you should be able to maintain a relaxed pliability in your form practice and NOT exhibit any use of aggressive force when practicing the form.

- **Advanced 1-**

The first stage of advanced practice is learning the yielding applications of the form, as well as coming to use Tai Chi principles in your day to day life, in movement and lifestyle. Here we begin to look deeper into Tai Chi Chuan's classical literature for a more in depth understanding of the yielding practice as it pertains to the body.

- **Advanced 2-**

The second stage is deepening the practice of yielding to accomplish different attributes and establish overall movement concepts to dealing with various situations. At this level we begin working on free flow applications and an even deeper understanding of other martial Tai Chi Chuan classics. At this stage to we begin to work on understanding a physical, psychological and emotional level of balance. In the end of this rank you'll also be introduced to push hands practice and learn various skills of yielding within it.

- **Advanced 3-**

The third stage is expanding on what it means to balance the body physically, psychologically, and emotionally. Here we expand on yielding applications and aggressive applications inside and outside of push hands. When to apply each and how necessary each one is for the other. In this stage there is also a heavy study of physiology and anatomical sciences to have not only a conceptual understanding but scientific understanding of how Tai Chi Chuan works and accomplishes changes in the body.

- **Instructor beginner-**

In instructor classes we work on teaching skills and expanding on various aspects of the practice. A mutually benefiting practice where higher level instructors and lower level instructors will discuss teaching practices for various levels. This first portion will be on teaching principle based movement.

- **Instructor Intermediate-**

The second level of instructor training is on expanding that principle based movement into use under pressure. Drills and brainstorming ideas to help the art grow and stay challenging within ourselves and for our students.

- **Instructor Advanced**

This third level of instructor training is about lifestyle, meditation, and living a life of principle. A focus will be put on every aspect of life from exercise and diet to emotional challenges. Expanding and growing off of our peers we will seek to build an environment that is mutually beneficial for all instructors to better the art across the board and help us all achieve the highest level of health and skill possible.

- **Head Instructor**

Head instructor level requires not only the highest level of instructorship achieved in Tai Chi Chuan but also the Chi Kung practices.