

# A Last Interview with Fu Zhongwen

The following interview with Fu Zhongwen took place two months before his death Sept. 24, 1994, in Shanghai at the age of 91. He was interviewed at the International Kung-fu tournament, where he had been invited by Huang Chien Liang and He Wei Qi. Present during the interview were his grandson, James Qing Quan Fu, who helped translate and explain his grandfather's ideas, and Kenneth W. Knecht, who also assisted with the translation.

## By Marvin Smalheiser

Fu Zhongwen, even at age 91, never tired of the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan (Taijiquan) and never tired of telling about the feats of his famous teacher, Yang Cheng-fu, who he became apprenticed to at an early age.

The practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan for Fu Zhongwen was a practice of loyalty to his teacher and the form that Yang Cheng-fu taught and the methods that he used.

Among the methods Yang emphasized was that the form should be done six to eight times in a row each day.

Only in this way, he said, can a student catch the feeling of real kung-fu and be able to develop martial skills. And he said this is the way that Yang Cheng-fu taught and that Fu and his son and grandson teach.

The form itself, he said, should take 20 minutes, give or take a minute or two. Too fast, Fu said, and it becomes sloppy and too slow it becomes "stopped." Practicing six to eight times scattered throughout the day is not the same thing and not as productive, he said. It has to be in continuous sequence.

Practicing once in the morning and once in the evening is good for health, he said, but it does not lead to martial skill.

Fu said that in the practice of the form, the first couple of times is a warm-up. From the fourth or fifth repetition, you improve your kung-fu.

"When students were practicing in this manner," he said, "Yang Cheng-fu would sit there and watch them."

He also said that Yang Cheng-fu, while teaching a class, would take pains to correct them so that they could get movements correct. "He would always watch and would never just walk away. In watching, he might have them repeat the posture over again until they learned it correctly. He was a very good

When teaching Fu, Yang Cheng-fu told him how he had to also practice by himself as well as in class. And he emphasized how important it is to follow T'ai Chi Ch'uan principles of practice.

Fu said, "Lots of people can say the principles easily but they can't do them easily. You have to practice with the principles to bring them together and combine the internal and external together."

His grandson, James, said that even now in Australia where he lives, students do it about five times in a row at a single session.

Fu said the fastest you can go with the 85 movements or the 108 would be 18 minutes and the slowest would be 22 minutes. "You don't want to go past that. The ideal is 20 minutes exactly. And you cannot do it with some movements fast and some movements slow. It has to be continuous motion. If you do it for 22 minutes but some parts you do fast and some parts you do slow, that is not following the T'ai Chi principles. It must be continuously flowing without stopping."

James Fu said that some people think that slower is good and some people tell him they do the form in one hour or 40 minutes for a set. "This is useless. This is not T'ai Chi anymore. This is just movements. The reason that we do T'ai Chi slow is because we want to do it faster. This is the principle."

He said, "You get different pay from different work. This is the same in the martial arts. The T'ai

Chi idea is to practice slow but the idea is not to do the movements but to use your mind to control your movements. It is not your movements doing the movements. It is using the inside to do the movement so every movement can be very final.

"If you are doing a movement fast, something can be wrong and not observed, he said. But if you are doing it slow, then you can see if you are doing



Fu Zhongwen and his grandson, James Qing Quan Fu, doing push hands.

teacher."

Fu liked to talk about his teacher and how he was a "very nice-tempered person. All of his students in Beijing were very nice people."

Fu had lived in the town of Yongnian, just inside the gate and could walk 10 minutes to the Yang home just outside the gate. Fu began studying T'ai Chi when he was nine years old.



something wrong and other people can see if you are doing something wrong.”

James Fu said his father, Fu Shengyuan, told him that doing T'ai Chi exercises is different from other exercise in that you use large muscles and small muscles. All the muscles, large and small, get exercised when the movements are done slowly, he said. When performed fast, only a few muscles get exercised. “That’s why beginners who have strong, even big legs experience shaking legs when they start T'ai Chi.”

“Too slow is stopped,” James Fu said. “If it is too slow, it is not T'ai Chi. T'ai Chi is supposed to be continuous. It is like water. Water has to be continuous.”

“Grandfather used to tell me regarding people doing T'ai Chi for one hour for a single set, ‘Your body is stopped. There is no jing any more. The jing is gone. If you do it for one hour, it is stopped.’”

When asked about bringing out jing in the form, Fu said, “It is hard to explain. When you have it, you know how to do it. Distinguishing between substantial and insubstantial is very important and so is body balance.” He said you have to sink and relax the elbow and the waist. The waist must be the axis of the motion bringing it out. It is a function of body mechanics.”

James Fu said that it is hard to explain where it comes from because it is really from T'ai Chi. Lots of people, he said, do T'ai Chi but they do not have jing. But the jing comes from T'ai Chi.

Fu Zhongwen said that a lot depends on how long people have practiced. “How long has a person done it? How many times a day? They must do it at least eight to 10 times a day continuously.”

James Fu said that if someone does the form eight to 10 times a day continuously for one year, they can feel something. They can then feel the jing.

Fu said that Yang Lu-ch'an learned for 18 years practicing like that to develop his high skills.

When asked if the style Yang learned was the Chen style, James Fu quoted one of his grandfather's favorite sayings, “T'ai Chi is only one.” James Fu said that what Yang Lu-ch'an learned in Chen Jiagou, the Chen family village, from Chen Changxing is the same form that the Yang family still practices. He said it was not the Chen style that Yang Lu-ch'an learned.

“It is called the Yang style because the Yang family popularized it. In his book, Yang Cheng-fu did not refer to

what level you are at. But as long as the principles are followed, as long as the shoulder is relaxed, elbows dropped, body weight in front, and relaxed, I can't say that you are wrong.”

“Yang Lu-ch'an did this style but Yang Cheng-fu organized it into an uniform way. My grandfather said that before the Communists took over the country, you never heard of the Chen style. It was only after 1949, when the government wanted to dig out old things, they dug out the Pao Tui form

and combined it with T'ai Chi. The Pao Tui came from Tumbei.”

He said because the Yang family has been promoting T'ai Chi Ch'uan, people call it the Yang style to differentiate it from the other styles that were derived from it. “But originally, we are just called T'ai Chi Ch'uan. And this is what we are doing, the original one.

There is not any other difference. “Originally, there was only one T'ai Chi Ch'uan form and Yang style is the original form. And then afterwards came the Wu style, Sun style and Hao style.

“Yang Cheng-fu, Yang Lu-ch'an and Yang Banhou never changed anything. They just did whatever they learned. And this is T'ai Chi.”

Fu Zhongwen said that many people changed the form, but that the form he and his family practice is exactly as it was taught by

Yang Cheng-fu. “Lots of

people changed the form. I am the only one that did not change the form. I still haven't studied everything. How can I change it? The ancients were so good, how can you change something that they developed with their high skills.”

The heart of T'ai Chi, James Fu said, is keeping the weight forward when transitioning to step forward with the other foot. He said you should not shift the weight back before stepping.

“A lot of people have nice movement but lose a lot of important points when doing the transitions and that weakens their kung-fu.”



Fu Zhongwen in Bend the Bow to Shoot the Tiger.

Yang family T'ai Chi Ch'uan, he called it T'ai Chi Ch'uan. In his book, he said that T'ai Chi Ch'uan is only one.”

James Fu said that Yang's sons also did the same form. “In T'ai Chi form, you can't make everyone exactly the same. That's impossible. Every human body is different. But it was not the purpose to change the movements. Because Yang Cheng-fu had a big body, he did it a little bit bigger. Because Yang Shouhou was a little bit smaller the movements were a little smaller. But it was not a small frame like the Wu style.”

He said, “You can do low movements or with arms wider or with small steps and arms smaller. It depends on



Fu Zhongwen said that in following the correct form you always have to have the feet substantial and insubstantial, never double-weighted. "When you do the Brush Knee posture, it is not the arm that blocks or pushes. You use the waist."

"The waist is the main thing. If you use the waist, then you can relax. You incorporate the entire body and the entire body will relax naturally. The waist is the controller. Relax the shoulder and the elbows. This comes from practice, not from talking."

In terms of self-defense, Fu and his grandson said that fa-jing is important, but should be practiced outside of the form. James Fu said: "When doing the form, you practice the forms. Lots of forms teach you how to use the movements and at the same time show you how to do self-defense techniques."

"The main thing in doing forms is to make your legs strong like a tree with roots. Push hands is more to relax and to develop relaxation of the upper body. Where the power comes from is from fa-jing (explosive force)."

When asked about practicing fa-jing, James Fu said that "Every movement can be used to practice fa-jing. And while fa-jing is hard, it is still relaxed and the elbow has to be unlocked."

For fa-jing practice, a person can take single movements outside of form practice to develop explosive strength. Fu made a movement with his right arm, to show his own explosive

strength. He said that practice with the spear also helps develop fa-jing.

Fu said that when Yang Cheng-fu did push hands with people, you couldn't see the movement come out. He just sent people flying away. "This is because he had a lot of jing in his dantian."

Fu Zhongwen told of a time when Yang Cheng-fu was in Shanghai sitting on a bed. He touched one hand of Yang Cheng-fu, who turned his wrist and threw Fu two meters back with his peng energy, bringing it up from the dantian. "He just used his internal energy without moving while sitting on the edge of the bed."

James Fu said that during practice a person should not think of their dantian, the area just below the navel. "If you think there, you can never get there. But you have to control your body balance. It is very important when doing the movements."

Fu Zhongwen's own push skills were considerable, especially when he was between 50 and 60 years old.

When in 1980 there was a meeting of Chinese wushu masters everyone was talking about how good they were, James Fu said. "Grandfather said, 'Stop,' and took a stance. 'I am now here. Anyone can use any martial art,

you do not have to use push hands. Just push me over one step and I will be your student.' No one could do it."

"Later they invited him to do push hands with his student in Shanghai. Then people saw how good he could really push. He threw people out two or three meters. They didn't just stumble back. When he pushes, they go up and down for a distance of two or three meters."

Another time, he said, about 1960 he had a student whose father also learned from Fu. "He came every morning for practice, but then for a long time he didn't come to class. One day he returned after studying other martial arts and wanted to beat my grandfather. At this time, my grandfather still smoked and had a cigarette in one hand while pushing."



Parting the Wild Horse's Mane.

"He twice tried very hard to push him while people were standing around in a circle watching. The third time he tried, grandfather used his one hand to push him straight up two meters high, more than six feet. When he came down, grandfather caught him and they both had a cigarette together."

James Fu said his grandfather had a brother much taller who was also very good at push hands. The brother learned first from Yang Cheng-fu's older brother. "When grandfather practiced



Single Whip



White Crane Spreads Its Wings.



push hands with his brother, he can push him out two meters, but because his brother had a kind for spring jing, he can jump right back."

Yang Cheng-fu, he said, had his energy so integrated in his body that people trying to push hands with him just pushed themselves out.

When Yang Cheng-fu was in Wuhan, a student in the class wanted to push hands with him and came on very strong. Yang didn't do anything and just placed his hand a little bit on the man's stomach. The man vomited and was finished.

James Fu said, "Some people come to learn and really want to learn. Some people want to challenge and pick up a bone from an egg."

He said another time when Yang Cheng-fu initially went to the city of Wuhan, a large landlord named Liu invited him to his house. When Yang arrived, there was a line of people half a kilometer long waiting for him to come in. Some were beating drums in his honor.

Inside there was a kung-fu man who challenged Yang three times. Each time Yang declined, saying, "It is not worth it. We should have friendship. There is no reason we should have to fight." But after the third time, the man told the landlord that Yang Cheng-fu was useless and afraid of him.



So Yang said he would fight him with a straight sword. The next day, the two went out to the courtyard for the challenge in front of the people. The challenger used a real sword, while Yang used a wooden sword. The man tried to pierce Yang and Yang with the flick of the wrist cut the man's wrist, knocking his sword away and disabling him.

Yang said, "I told you not to do this and now you lose." The man couldn't say anything and could not use his arm any more. The internal energy from the wooden sword went through the arm like a laser.

Fu Zhongwen said that when Yang Lu-ch'an went to Beijing, the brother of the Emperor heard about him and invited him to teach at the palace because he knew he was very good.

The Emperor's brother very much liked martial arts, he said. There were many challengers but none could defeat Yang. "With just a touch, he could defeat them and became known as Yang the Invincible."

Fu said that one time, Yang Lu-ch'an was invited to a rich man's house, a man called Zhang, for a banquet. Zhang had within his household three burly martial artists that taught his children and served as guards. "Before the banquet, one of the martial artists asked Yang, 'Master Yang, what martial art are you doing?' Yang responded, 'I do soft, sticky fist.' At that time, it was not called T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

"Yang Lu-ch'an was a small, skinny man from the country and didn't look like much. The martial artist continued to ask, 'Can you fight with this martial art,' Yang said, 'Of course.' The dialogue continued and Yang finally asked, 'Do you look down upon me? There are only three kinds of people I can't defeat: the brass man, the rock man, and the iron man. Anyone with a human body I can defeat.'

"After they had tea and talked, Yang Lu-ch'an invited



Brush Knee, Push.

them into the yard to do something. The three men saw he was a small guy and a farmer. They made comments such as, 'I don't think you can do anything. If I make one punch I will throw you away or one kick and you are finished.'

"Everyone went out and the men continued talking to each other saying that Yang was 'useless.' But when the first man went over to him, when he hit Yang, the man flew away for three meters and no one saw Yang do any movement.

"The man didn't know what happened. The second man said, 'I'm going





to get this guy,' and told the first man he was no good.

"But he did the same thing and Yang just threw him out straight away. After the second challenge, Yang became angry and turned his back to walk out. He thought the people there just looked down on him and had not really invited him for the banquet. When he tried to go, some government people there made Zhang apologize to Yang and the government officials for trying to have fun at Yang's expense."

Fu and his grandson described some of the essentials for practicing the Yang style and emphasized, for instance, that the wrist has to be slightly cocked rather than kept straight.

James Fu said, "It is like the garden water hose. My grandfather told me about this in Shanghai 10 years ago while talking with a group visiting the Jade Buddha Temple during lunch.

"He said it is like a garden hose when you are watering the garden. 'If you don't press the hose in any way, the water flows normally. If you press the hose or bend it slightly, the water will go farther. And if you press the hose too hard, the water will stop.'

So what we are doing in T'ai Chi is to flex the wrist a little bit to increase the pressure. If you flex the wrist too much, then the blood will stop circulating. Bend it a little bit but still keep the wrist and hand relaxed."

He said to push with a flexed wrist the side of the hand must be used, other-

wise the hand can be injured. "You want to have a little bit of pressure on the wrist and palm to feel the blood circulation."

Fu said that developing root is like building a house. "You can't just pound the foundation a few times. You have to do it until the foundation is deep and firm. You also have to sink the kua and relax the hips and sink them down. You have to feel you are sinking down. You want to lift the groin up. The groin can't be lowered."

James Fu said that when people do a movement it is easy for them to rise up during transitions because they do not sink down enough. The body should never lift up between movements. The mingmen, he said, should never be too straight, nor too far in or out.

Fu said that the chest should not be hollowed too much and the back should not lean too much. "The neck should be level, flat and upright with the eyes looking straight. Don't look down at the feet but forward in the direction of the movement."

James Fu said that when he was being taught by his grandfather, "He never asked me to go very low. He had me do it high first and then slowly, slowly I went lower. If you do it this way, you knees will not go over your toes and there is less danger of injury to the knees."

He said it can be okay to go over the toes when doing a connecting movement but when you stop your movement, you should never have the knee over the toes.

James Fu said that his teaching in Australia, where he now lives with his father, includes the Yang style basics, which is doing the form. "It is not like the long fist where you do a lot of kicking routines.

"We do a little bit of stretching but that is not the purpose. There are some breathing exercises but it is more like meditation.

"You use your mind to relax using your intent. This is



Fan Through the Back.

done before T'ai Chi and after T'ai Chi, standing or sitting. This is the old way. And when we practice you still have to use the mind."

He said natural breathing is used during practice. "When we talk about qi (ch'i), it is not the breath that we breathe, it is the internal qi that is being moved. The breath is not concentrated on during the form, he said. The breath is just natural.

"If you concentrate on the qi, you can't concentrate on the movements. You have to concentrate on your energy and your spirit."•





# A Memorable Encounter with Fu Zhongwen

By Ted W. Knecht

This article has been written to commemorate late grandmaster Fu Zhongwen, who past away on September 24, 1994, in Shanghai, China. I only knew grandmaster Fu for a very short time, but his impression will stay with me for my entire life. I had the rare opportunity to meet Fu on the first day of arrival at Huang Chien Liang's 1994 annual Kuoshu Tournament held this year in near Baltimore, MD.

I was in the main lobby when Fu and his grandson, Fu Qing Quan, walked in from taking a stroll outside. Fu was full of spirit and greeted everyone very cordially, shaking their hand. I introduced myself first to his grandson.

After Qing Quan heard that I could speak the Chinese language, he immediately took me over to his grandfather. Fu was very gracious and invited me to his room for further talk and instruction in the Yang style.

As we walked up to his room, I told him I was a student of Dr. Mei Ying

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Strike the Tiger, left.

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**He told me that with the strict practice of the Taijiquan routine, one can obtain optimal health and longevity. He said longevity is not how long one lives but how well one lives. He used himself as an example of how Taiji can benefit health. He said his hearing, eyesight, mental functions and physical body were that of a much younger person.**

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Sheng. He was very pleased and became even more friendly towards me. While in his room, Qing Quan made tea for us to drink. Even though Fu was 91 years of age, he was extremely energetic and filled with spirit (shen).

He openly admitted that his true age was 91, not in the late 80's as some publications seem to indicate. Without hesitation, he began talking about the history of Yang style Taijiquan (T'ai Chi Ch'uan) and his teacher, Yang Cheng-fu. He spoke in great detail of the Yang family and demonstrated movements as he spoke.

Even at his age, he was still able to fa-jing with a sound of a cracking whip. Just by watching his movements, I had chills running up my back. Just two years ago, Fu injured his spine and was paralyzed on the right side of his body. He told me he never saw a doctor in his entire life and was able to treat his paralysis through the practice of Taijiquan. After only one year of the paralysis, he traveled by himself throughout Europe, teaching Taijiquan.

He told me that with the strict practice of the Taijiquan routine, one can obtain optimal health and longevity. He

said longevity is not how long one lives but how well one lives. He used himself as an example of how Taiji can benefit health. He said his hearing, eyesight, mental functions and physical body were that of a much younger person. Qing Quan told me that his grandfather practiced the form every day without stop.

Fu spoke of a story about a Japanese martial artist who wanted grandmaster Fu to teach him Taijiquan. The martial artist stated that he wanted to only use two or three months of study to master the movements of the routine. After Fu heard this, he could only shake his head. He felt that the Japanese martial artist was lacking the true knowledge of what Taijiquan really is.

Moreover, this type of thinking, in which Taijiquan can be hurried, is very common both in China and abroad. Fu considered that the practice and study of Taijiquan must proceed over time with a set process of learning. Grandmaster Fu stated that he has been learning Taijiquan since he was only nine years old.

Fu said that learning Taijiquan is not an easy matter because it is an art form of high standards. He went on to say that there are several important keys to learning proper Taijiquan.

The first would be that the practitioner truly likes the art; second is to have a good teacher who understands and can



Double Punch



teach the essence of Taijiquan; third is to have sufficient space to practice; fourth is to have enough time for practice; fifth is to be able to endure and enjoy the pain of training; and sixth is to have patience.

These conditions are aimed at improving the level in one's martial arts ability in Taijiquan. In general, however, if one only practices for health and fitness, then some of these conditions are not as important.

Fu Zhongwen repeatedly stated that learning Taijiquan is not an easy task. There are many requirements and essentials of Taijiquan that cannot be learned nor put into practice right after hearing it from the teacher.

There is no way to master a principle in a short period of time; however, one must know the correct training procedures. If one does not know the correct procedures for training, this will consequently hurt one's training.

He stated that if the method is incorrect, the more one practices, the farther one moves away from real Taijiquan. To explain the practice of Taijiquan in order to reach a firm foundation in the style is a very difficult problem.

He again used himself as an example by saying that if he performed five rounds of Taijiquan and was able to conform to all of the principles of Taiji two out of the five times, he felt happy. To practice Taijiquan and apply the principles is extremely difficult. Fu said he still has this feeling even after practicing

for more than 80 years.

Fu often told his students that when one practices Taijiquan, one must not be afraid to work hard. If one is afraid to work hard, then Taijiquan should not have been selected as their subject of study. For example, when he saw students training without low enough stances, he would tell them that the masters in the past would perform Taijiquan with their upper and lower legs at 90 degree angles. When one trains in this manner, much energy is used and one must work hard to obtain this level.

Fu stated that most of the masters in the past were illiterate. However, they received the true transmissions of the art and practiced without fear of pain and tiredness.

They did not need to write anything down because they were willing to train. There were others who talked or wrote about Taijiquan, but never practiced true kung-fu. Even though these people obtained the correct methods, it was of no use without practice and hardship.

Fu spoke of those who were not willing to spend time training but who were only willing to speak and write about the art. He said that some of these people adversely affected the growth of Taijiquan. Some of these people actually changed the movements of the original style. In fact, he said, some of the changed movements do not conform to Taiji principles.

Fu said that he could have created his own style of Taijiquan called Fu style Taijiquan, but he considered that his abilities in the art was in no comparison to the masters of the past. The framework of Yang style Taijiquan conforms to scientific principles, therefore to change the style would have been unthinkable to him. Grandmaster Fu explained that he never changed any of the movements that were taught to him by Yang Cheng-fu.

Fu said that he hopes that practitioners here in the US will begin to see what authentic Taijiquan truly is. He stated that if one has doubts to the authenticity of a so-called Yang style, one only needs to look at the photographs of Yang Cheng-fu taken



A saber technique.

in 1927. These photographs represent the true postures of Yang style Taijiquan. These photographs have been made public and are available in various publications.

In the following days of the tournament, Fu was kind enough to be interviewed by T'AI CHI Magazine and to demonstrate various open-hand and weapon postures from the Yang routines. He also offered a special workshop in which he and his grandson taught push hands and forms corrections. He also demonstrated some applications with his grandson with the energy of a person half his age. This truly was a precious moment for those who witnessed the event.

The last time I had a chance to visit with Fu was during and after eating dinner with him, Cai Hong Xiang, He Wei Qi, Nick Gracenin, and some students. Before retiring to his room, Fu came over to me to invite my teacher, my wife, and myself to next year's Yongsan Friendship Conference to be held during the first week of May in Hebei Province. We shook hands and made our farewells by saying we would meet next year in Yongsan.

Little did I know this would be our last visit. Without a doubt, Fu will be one of the most important and influential people I will meet in my life. I feel very fortunate to have had a chance to visit and study with him for that short time in Baltimore. •



Huang Chien Liang, left, with Fu Zhongwen.



# Trip to U.S. Fulfilled a Dream for Fu Zhongwen

Fu Zhongwen's visit to the United States last summer fulfilled a dream he had for long time and was very exciting for him.

Fu was brought to the U.S. for the 1994 International Kuoshu tournament by Huang Chien Liang, sponsor of the tournament, and He Wei Qi, one of Fu's favorite students.

It was the first time in decades that Fu was able to experience true fighting at the tournament. It was reported that he was so excited by the full contact bouts that, even though he was 91 years old, he roamed the hotel halls until 2 a.m., searching for a push hands opponent.

Fu had fought often during his youth, accepting challenges for Yang Cheng-fu and was his favorite student and disciple. Fu had begun his studies with Yang Cheng-fu at the age of nine in Yongnian.

His home was only a 10-minute walk from the Yang family home. He moved to Shanghai when he was 17 and when his teacher moved to Shanghai, he helped him find a home and arrangements were made for Fu to live with his teacher, which greatly accelerated his T'ai Chi Ch'uan skills.

Fu learned his push hands skills under the guidance of Yang Cheng-fu, and became Yang's chief instructor, traveling with him to Nanjing, Wuhan, and

Guangzhou. Martial challenges to Yang were delegated to Fu, who defeated all opponents.

Later Fu married one of Yang Cheng-fu's nieces and when Yang died in 1936, Fu was responsible for transporting Yang's body back to Yongnian county and conducting the burial.

A staunch traditionalist, Fu refused to alter the original Yang style and he was recognized for the authenticity of his T'ai Chi.

On Oct. 1, 1944, Fu founded the Yongnian T'ai Chi Ch'uan Society with the stated goal of furthering the practice of Yang style. It's mission was to make T'ai Chi instruction available to the general public.

The goal was the strengthening of the Chinese people through practice of T'ai Chi.

The association promoted the spread of authentic Yang style and Fu continued his teacher's legacy. Through the association, instructors have spread out across China to teach the authentic Yang style.

There were three reasons that Fu Zhongwen chose the name "Yongnian" for his association.

The first was that Yongnian was the name of the county where Yang Lu-ch'an, founder of the Yang style, lived. Three generations of Yang style practitioners, including Fu, came from Yongnian county.



A sword posture.

There is a Chinese saying that one should "never forget where your first drink of water came from."

The second reason was that Yongnian means, "always developing, never stopping." This phrase was in accordance with always strengthening your health and developing yourself. During the time of the Yongnian association's formation, the morale of the Chinese people was very low because of the civil war and occupation by Japan. Fu hoped to strengthen the individual, and so the country.

The third reason was that the characters for Yongnian can also be read as "long life."

First formed in Shanghai, the association grew to 6,000 people in 10 years and today, the number of practitioners is uncountable.

There are associations throughout the world. In the U.S., Fu's senior disciple, He Wei Qi, Richmond, VA, is president of both the U.S. and Pan-American Yongnian T'ai Chi Ch'uan association.

The 50th anniversary of the association was held in Shanghai, May 2 of this year and martial arts teachers and officials from throughout China and the U.S. were present. Fu received many gifts and was widely praised for his role as founder of the original Yongnian association. •

*This story was based on information supplied by Jonathan Pett Miller.*



From left, He Wei Qi, Fu Zhongwen, and Huang Chien Liang.



# FU SHENG YUAN YANG STYLE TAIJI

by Warwick Hill

Sunday the 12th of October Onslow College Recreation Centre, Election day, and the winds of Political change are blowing as is the elemental wind. So hard in fact as to threaten to take the roof off the building. Inside, 70 people were not caring about the weather as they watched spellbound a performance by Master Fu Sheng Yuan and listen as he explains some of the intricacies of Yang Style Tai Ji. Fu Sheng Yuan is the grand nephew from the third generation of the founder of Yang Style Taiji, a descendant of Yang Lu Chan, brought to Wellington by the area branch of the New Zealand Chinese Martial Arts and International Wushu Council (NZ CMA-IWA). Together with his New Zealand student Marcus Zhao, Master Fu spent over 2 hours with students and teachers of Chinese Martial Arts from organisations both local and as far away as Wanganui.

Master Fu has travelled in the last year starting in Shanghai in May with a Wushu Festival then through Germany, USA, France, England, Thailand, Singapore and Australia. He now resides in Perth Australia where he heads the Yongnian Taijiquan Association teaching authentic Yang Family Taiji.

Yongnian Taiji is named after the country in China where the Yang family originate. Yongnian translated means 'longlife' and is the birth place of Fu



Master Fu demonstrating the Sabre Set

Sheng Yuan, Yang Lu Chan and all the family members in between.

When he was nine years old Fu Sheng Yuan was taken by his father, Fu Zhong Wen, to Shanghai and began his training in Taiji. Fu Zhong Wen was a cousin of Yang Sheng Fu and received his training directly from him.

After a brief introduction Marcus Zhao commenced the programme with a demonstration of a segment of the Yang Form. This was followed by Master Fu with the first part of the Yang Family Form. Master Fu then treated those present with a rarely seen Chinese sabre form. The Chinese sabre looks remarkably like the Japanese Katana. Master Fu commented that the Japanese copied their sword from the Chinese weapon and he has now inherited Yang Cheng Fu's sabre.

After these demonstrations Master Fu began teaching Push Hands.. Everybody was encouraged to join in, even those from arts that do not have Push Hands in their curriculum. Using two types, single Push Hands and a version of double hands, Master Fu manages even with his limited English, to impart much with these two simple exercises. Most people spoken to afterwards were very impressed with Master Fu's teaching and obvious skills and the way both he and Marcus Zhao were available to discuss, demonstrate and join in with students on

the exercises.

Another exercise where two people stand facing each other in an upright straddle stance and place their palms against each other then try with a sudden push to upset the others balance had laughter drowning out the raging wind and rain. This apparently simple exercise taught much about the centre of balance.

As the day drew all too soon to an end, Master Fu showed some interesting applications for some of the moves in Taiji. it is not often expressed as a true fighting Martial Art, but in the hands of a Master the seemingly simple movements of Taiji have a wealth of technical application.

For most the day ended with a round of Thankyous and some photo opportunities. Peter Yu introduced the crowd to some of the Instructors and organisations represented and it was indeed good to see so many different styles and clubs coming together to share in training. Master Fu, Marcus Zhao, NZ CMA-IWC, the students and teachers of the area I would like to thank the Yongnian Taijiquan Association of New Zealand for the opportunity to train with Master Fu Sheng Yuan.

**The NZ CMA-IWC is newly formed and hopes to bring more chances for the people to experience Chinese Martial Arts in the future. Stay tuned.**



Master Fu and Marcus Zhao