

# Taijiquan

## JOURNAL

### Summer 2007 Newsletter

## The Art of Taijiquan: Where are We Today?

**Last summer, an amazing taijiquan gathering** was held in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Besides the fact that it was held in a small, town in the central Canadian woods far from the coasts on the north shore of Lake Superior, the event brought together over a half-dozen Chinese masters of taijiquan who were heads of their lineages.

One of the things that struck me most was the atmosphere of cooperation between people of different backgrounds, nationalities, taijiquan styles, generations, and even between martial arts styles. From the Anglo, French, and Native welcoming ceremonies to the Chinese toasts and singing “competition” between the masters, to the children from the local karate and judo schools presenting flowers to the taijiquan masters at the closing ceremonies, it was a unique event.

At this event, and others I’ve attended over the last few years, many discussions have arisen about the future of taijiquan.

**The successes:** Taijiquan is found in more places; it’s no longer something odd and hard to find. Along with taijiquan’s spread, there are more teachers. Research on taijiquan has expanded, which has helped bolster its reputation among health-care providers. Increased numbers of translations of taijiquan material into many languages and a growing number of historical and philosophical studies give taijiquan a solid foundation. Boundaries between lineages and styles have been crossed to share the treasurehouses of information. The effect of the internet cannot be overlooked in terms of creating dialogue, sharing information, and promoting classes. And last, but not least, taijiquan will gain great visibility with the upcoming 2008 Olympics in Beijing and the 2010 Expo in Shanghai.



Welcoming ceremony at Fort William: Wu Wenhan, Yang Zhengduo, Chen Zhenglei, Sun Yongtian, Zeng Nailiang, Wu Kwong Yu, (hidden) Ma Hailong.

**The worries:** Quality of teachers is always a concern, as the field grows. The more popular taijiquan becomes, the more likely it will become victim to commercialization. Popularization can lead to dilution. Or, it can bring about over-regulation. Standardization, such as has happened in the field of Chinese medicine, or certification requirements, whether implemented by a lineage or an association or a government body can lead to loss of depth of knowledge and narrowing of the scope of the field as people become focused on passing exams, winning tournaments, or meeting other external criteria. Creation of franchises is equally a very mixed blessing. Boundary-crossing between styles and lineages can lead to hyper-specialized independent styles—or amalgamated styles that lose the original essence.

The internet, despite its benefits is rife with not-so-friendly “verbal push-hands” on bulletin boards, spreading of inaccuracies, and bootlegged materials.

Finally, increased competition for people’s time and attention remains one of the biggest challenges for taijiquan’s growth, as well as competition with yoga, pilates, and others for students.

**The solutions:** More cooperation to build a presence for taijiquan, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Careful training of teachers. Teaching

*Editor’s Note continued on p. 2*

**MORE NEWSLETTER  
PAGES TO COME  
SHORTLY**

**Check back soon!**

*Editors Note  
continued from p. 1*

of children, following the lead of karate. We can and should plant a taiji seed in their minds when they're young, and teach them these valuable life lessons before they're jaded teens, stressed-out adults, or seniors with compromised agility and balance. We should dispense with the notions that taijiquan "is for old people" and that "kids don't have long enough attention span."

There is much work to be done. Let's get to it.

—Barbara Davis

**Vist our new blog for updates on current  
news about the world of taijiquan!**

**<http://www.taijiquanjournal.blogspot.com>**

## Q&A

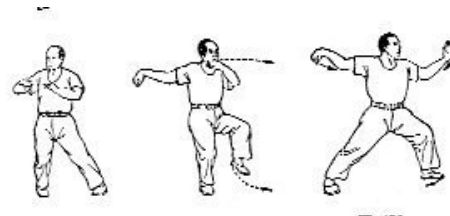
**Q:** Relaxation seems ever-elusive. I work too much, too many responsibilities, and life just seems overwhelming. I can't even tell if taiji is helping me. What should I do?

**A:** Welcome to the real world—in which relaxation is sometimes beyond our reach. For taiji to work for you, you'll need three key ingredients:

- Awareness—The first step is to develop awareness. This means a sensitivity to when you're not relaxed, and then gradually, in contrast, you'll be able to see the difference and pursue the path of being more consistently relaxed.
- "Keeping the faith" is needed—you can call it perseverance—because as with anything, it's tempting to let it go once the initial excitement's worn off. That's when you need to be more diligent, because at that point, advancement is not as visible. If you keep the faith and truly work at taiji—by paying attention when you're practicing (which ideally is all the time), you will turn around one day and realize how far you've come.
- Practice—this is the final element of the equation, treasure your taiji time as your "fifteen minutes at the spa" that you get consistently every day, your special time for yourself. Keep the world at bay for at least that amount of time.

Since it's summertime, maybe you can think of daily taiji practice as being like putting on a sunscreen—only it blocks out stress instead of UV rays!

*Cheryl Powers is associate director of Great River T'ai Chi in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*



# I ♥ T'ai Chi

[www.taijiquanjournal.com](http://www.taijiquanjournal.com)

**Get your very own "I (Heart) T'ai Chi" bumpersticker!**

**For your car, for your bulletin board. Perfect for student gifts.**

Vinyl, two-color; \$3 each, plus \$.50 each postage & handling (Int'l orders add \$1). **SPECIAL:** Order a dozen, get one free! Send your order to Taijiquan Journal, PO Box 80538, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

**TAIJIQUAN JOURNAL**

**SUMMER SPECIAL**

**All 18 issues of *Taijiquan Journal* for only \$99  
+ \$10 s/h**

**Offer good until September 7, 2007**

**International orders—please contact us for shipping rate. All orders must be paid with US funds drawn on a US bank, or by money order.**

**[www.taijiquanjournal.com](http://www.taijiquanjournal.com)**

##

**Search for Simplicity**

Great River T'ai Chi Ch'uan  
Minneapolis, MN

[www.taijiquanjournal.com/greatrivertaichi](http://www.taijiquanjournal.com/greatrivertaichi)

### ***Taijiquan Journal Newsletter***

Published by Taijiquan Journal

Editor: Barbara Davis

Contributing editor: Cheryl Powers

©2007 Taijiquan Journal

No part of *Taijiquan Journal Newsletter* may be reproduced in any form without permission. Readers are welcome to make one copy for their own use.

Taijiquan Journal

P.O. Box 80538

Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA

612-822-5760

[www.taijiquanjournal.com](http://www.taijiquanjournal.com), [www.taijiquanjournal.blogspot.com](http://www.taijiquanjournal.blogspot.com)

*Taijiquan*  
JOURNAL

PO Box 80538

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

[www.taijiquanjournal.com](http://www.taijiquanjournal.com)



# **2007 National Qigong Association Conference "Dancing In Stillness" August 17-20**

**Chaska, Minnesota**

**This is a chance to explore qigong and t'ai chi-related topics with some of the world's leading taiji and qigong experts, including qigong master Chunyi Lin.**

**A sampling of some workshops:**

- **Zhongxian Wu - Chinese Shamanic Tiger Qigong**
- **Cari Shurman - Bringing Tai Chi and Qigong to the Schools**
- **David Haines - 20 Minute Body/Mind Routine: Tai Chi & Qigong for Busy People**
- **Jianye Jiang - Qigong for Diabetes and High Blood Pressure**
- **Lawrence Galante - Basic Principles of Push Hands**

**[www.nqa.org](http://www.nqa.org)**

**1-888-815-1893**

**email: [info@nqa.org](mailto:info@nqa.org)**

