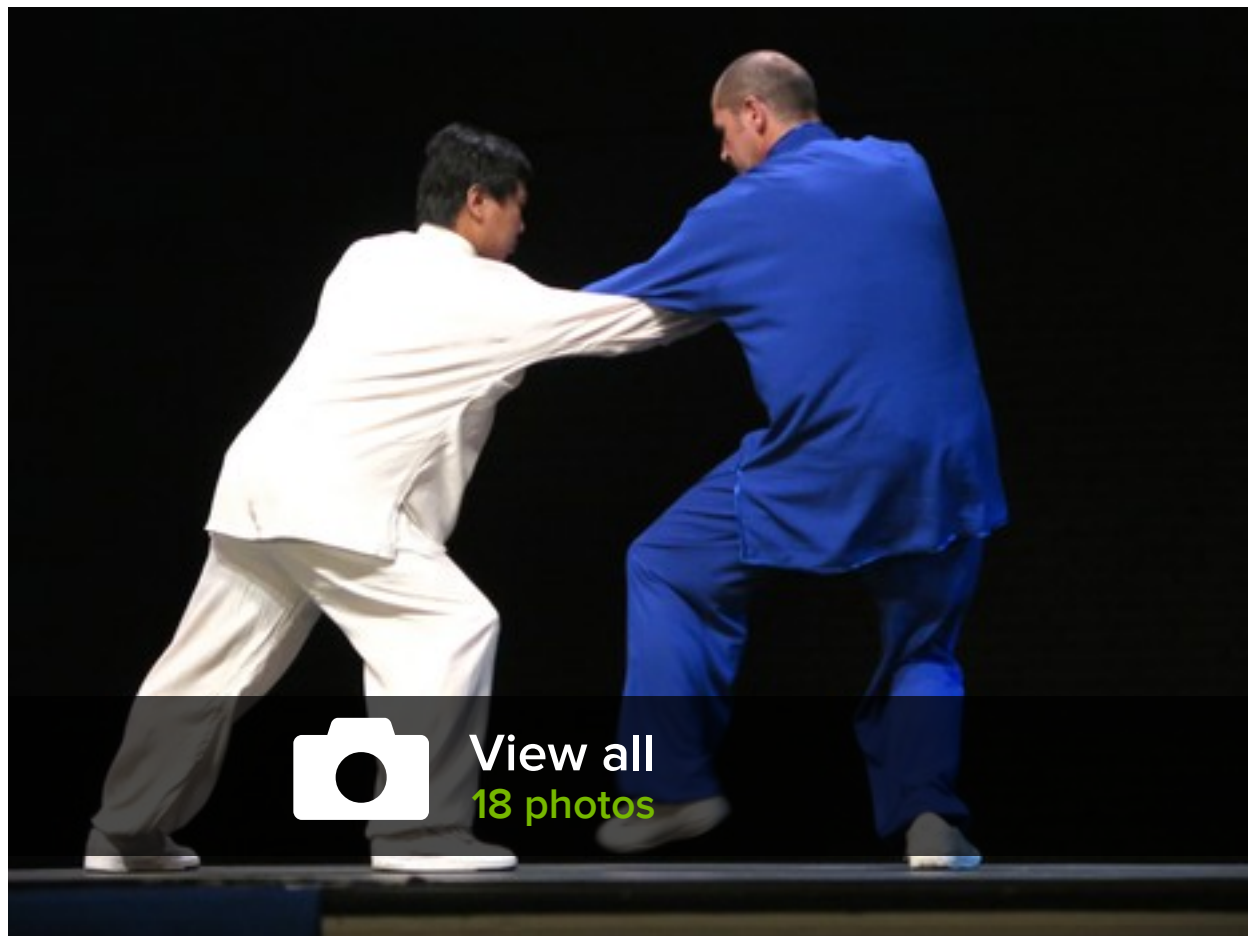


# Grandmaster Yang Jun on the Tai Chi transformation

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Grandmaster Yang Jun (in white) demonstrated Two-person Tai Chi.

*Li Ping*

Five years ago at the first International [Tai Chi](#) (Taiji) Symposium, Grandmaster Yang Jun demonstrated his leadership by uniting all five major Tai Chi families together. At the time he was still under the tutelage of his grandfather Grandmaster Yang Zhen duo on Tai Chi chuan. Now at age 46, he is one of the youngest grandmasters in the world of Tai Chi chuan.



*Violet Li*

Born in 1968, Grandmaster Yang Un is the 6th generation descendant of the creator of Yang Style Tai Chi chuan and the future bearer of the Yang Family heritage. During the recent 2014 International Tai Chi Symposium held in Louisville, KY, Grandmaster Yang was the last keynote speaker. With confidence and pride, he agilely skipped up a few steps to the stage in his polo shirt and blue jeans. He delivered a solid speech in English without a translator.

He spoke about his ancestor Grandmaster Yang Luchan studied Tai Chi from the 14th generation Chen family Grandmaster Chen Changxin. Having completed his training, Yang Luchan returned to Beijing and taught many the art of Tai Chi chuan and one of his students was Grandmaster Wu Yuxian, who later also went to study Chen Tai Chi directly from a Chen family member and created Wu/Hao Tai Chi style. The Wu style and the Sun Style were directly and indirectly influenced by the Chen Style as well as the Yang Style. In other word, all Tai Chi styles can be threaded together and belong to one large Tai Chi family.

Over time Tai Chi styles and forms have evolved. This is true even within the Yang style. But through his grandfather Yang Zhenduo and others' effort, 90 percent of Yang Tai Chi practiced today is large frame with extended postures and clear, clean simple movements that the 3rd generation Grandmaster Yang Chengfu modified.

The Yang Tai Chi consists of bare hand forms and weapons. There are one-person versus two-person bare hand forms. Sabre and sword are short weapons while staff/spear is the long one. Yang Jun mentioned that his ancestor Yang Jianhou used to flip a small Tai Chi ball as a weapon but it is no longer in practice.

Tai Chi chuan is based on the Yin and Yang theory. For Yang Style Tai Chi chuan's one-person practice, there are still forms and moving routines. According to Yang Jun, Tai Chi chuan is influenced by the clear and quiet mind philosophies of Taoism and Buddhism. There is sitting, standing, and lying down meditation taught by the Yang system. Yang Jun stated that Yang Tai Chi routines can be practiced in sequence or by single movement and much of the hard energy (or *Jin*) or explosiveness comes from the single movement drill. There are a few forms for one-person moving routines.

The objective of two-person practice is to seek balance through understanding one's own energy and opponent's energy during a continuous Yin and Yang transformation and it includes Push Hands and two-person practice. First you practice fixed-step Push Hands and then moving-step Push Hands. Altogether, there are five different types of Push Hands. The two-person practice is a recent development, which has gained popularity among practitioners. Yang Jun stated that he would continue to promote and develop it further. He demonstrated a two-person routine with his disciple at the Grand Showcase during the Tai Chi Symposium.

Yang said that the Tai Chi chuan learning process should start from quiet forms, then single-person routines, Push Hands, and finally weapons. Sword also should be learned before *Dao* or sabre. Staff is a good tool to build energy and to train coordination among the upper, middle, and lower body.

Grandmaster Yang Jun illuminated the three steps of learning Tai Chi:

1. Your body fully understands each and every movement of Tai Chi chuan so you can execute it correctly. You can obtain this stage by practicing by yourself.

2. You fully understand energies:

- Yin and Yang or emptiness and fullness, especially the transition from emptiness to fullness or vice versa.
- Soft and hard
- Storing energy versus releasing energy and transformation from stored energy to release energy.
- Most of the training will come from Push Hands practice.

3. Your mind clearly understands Tai Chi chuan and you can practice it without thinking or reaching a stage called *Shen Ming*. Yang Jun emphasized that to reach this step or stage, one must understand the philosophy of Yin and Yang. He further expounded upon the three Yin/Yang relationships.

- There is Yin and there is Yang in universe so there is Yin and there is Yang in Tai Chi chuan movements. In general, Yin is close posture or position while Yang is open posture and position. In Push Hands, one person is Yin while the other is Yang. Through the stickiness between the two persons, a balanced Tai Chi state is reached.
- There is Yin in Yang while there is Yang in Yin. A Tai Chi practitioner needs to be mindful that he cannot go extreme.
- Yang emerges when Yin reaches its fullness; Yin emerges when Yang reaches its fullness. If it is not true with your practice, very likely, your energy is stuck and it is a double-weighted situation.

Grandmaster Yang intimated that Tai Chi chuan starts with the form practice when practitioners pay close attention to shapes but it ends at a *Shen Ming* stage when there is no shape.

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