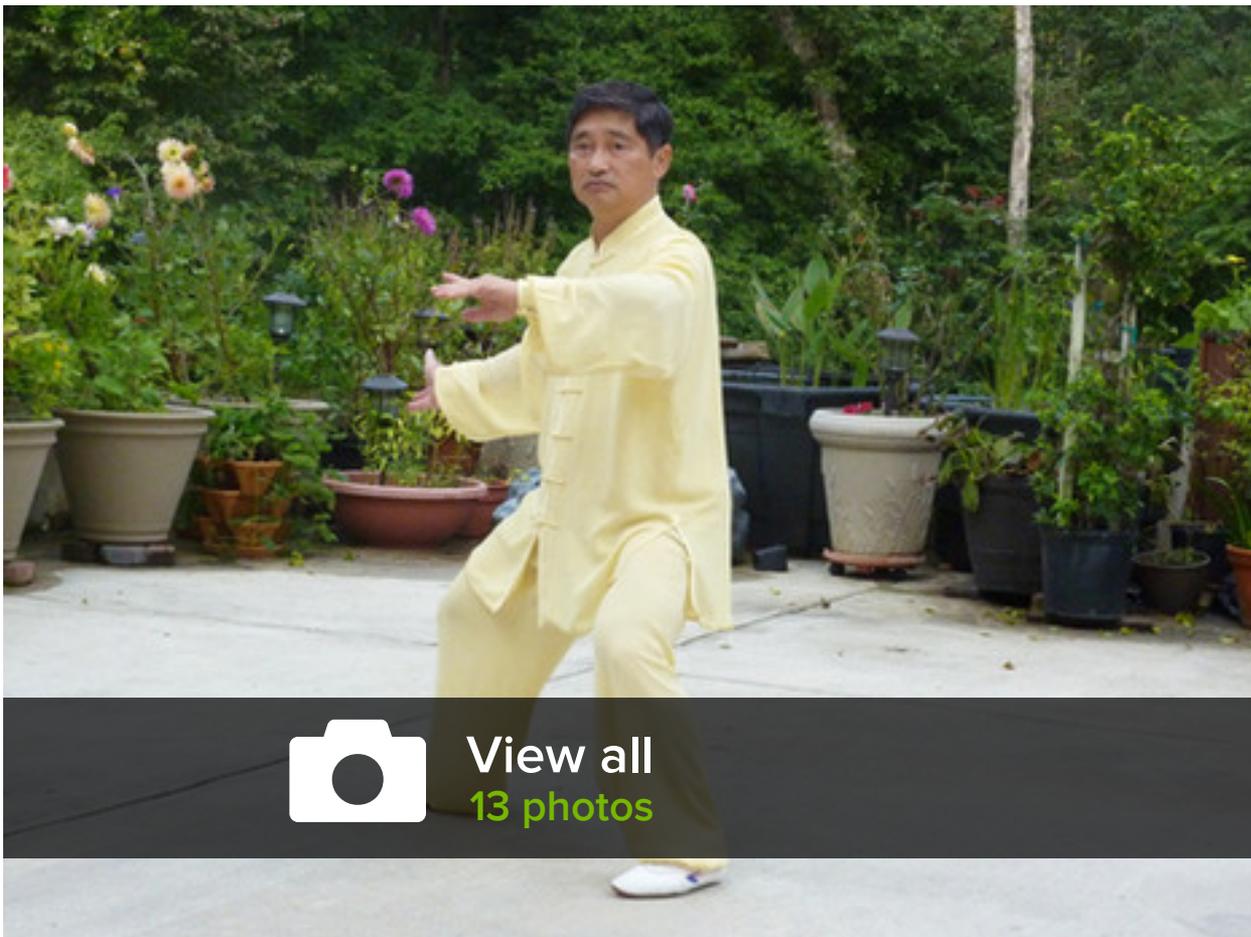


Recommended: “Taijiquan: Cultivating Inner Strength” by Master Ong

January 11, 2014

7:04 PM MST

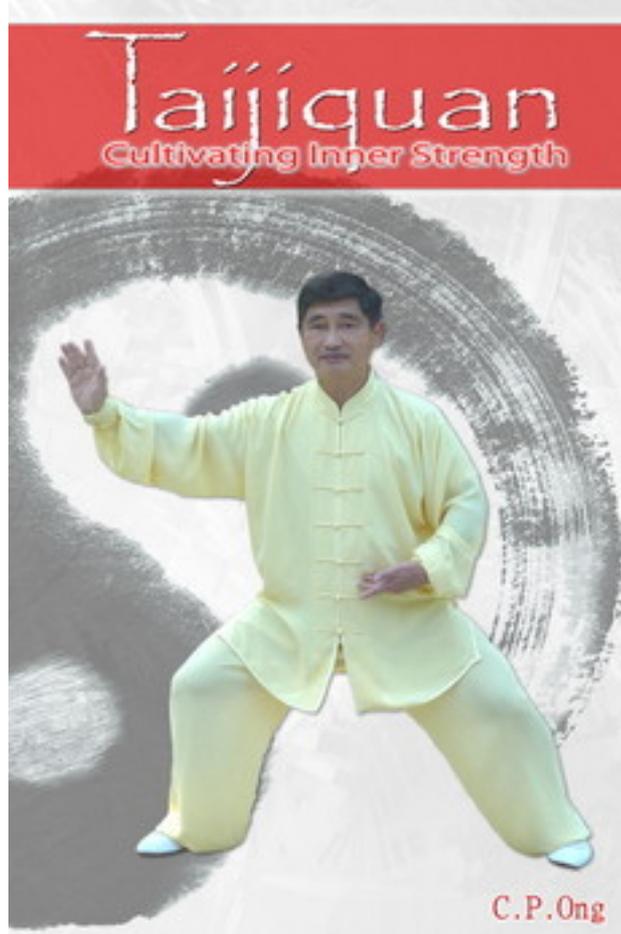


Master CP Ong demonstrates Silk Reeling
CP Ong

Taijiquan: Cultivating Inner Strength

Rating: ★★★★★

I have now written over four hundred articles on [Tai Chi](#) (Taiji) and [Qigong](#). A common question from friends and fans is when I am going to publish a book. I have contemplated this for a long time. One of the challenges is that many valuable books have already been published, what can I possibly write to contribute to this collective wisdom?



CP Ong

Tai Chi Quan (boxing), a form of Qigong, is recognized as the Chinese treasure to the world. It is a product of five thousand years of Chinese culture and embodies the essences of Chinese philosophy, medicine, and [martial arts](#). The creation and evolution of Tai Chi boxing consequently reflects Chinese history. Tai Chi is recognized as a healing art as well as a martial art. Serious practitioners attest that Tai Chi Quan changes their perspectives toward spirituality, life, nature, and relationships. Tai Chi transforms their attitude and value system. There are books discussing all these topics. But why and exactly how the antique Yin/Yang theory, [Baqua](#) (Eight Trigrams), [Wu Xing](#) (Five Elements), Taoism, Confucianism, Zen, theory of the meridian system, and war strategy (best represented by Sun Zi's [the Art of War](#)) worked into Tai Chi Quan and make it "Ultimate Grand Boxing"? How has modern Tai Chi survived the regime changes, industrial revolution, and technological breakthrough in the last four hundred years? Why are there many Tai Chi styles and how do they relate to each other? What is the secret of Tai Chi or what makes this cotton soft boxing powerful? I have a pile of books stacked up taller than me that will provide clues to these answers. Some are written in a language more than 2,000 years old. As I am digesting these books, I continue to acquire more books and references. I read [Book of Changes](#) (*I Ching* or *Yi Jing* that was estimated originated in the 2nd millennium BCE and written in an antiquated language) a few times but still have problems to comprehend it totally; therefore, I seek interpretations by current philosophers. It will be a lifetime journey of learning before I am equipped with the knowledge sufficient to write the book that I want to present to the global Tai Chi community.

Born in Malaysia, Master C. P. Ong of Maryland was educated in Australia and earned his Ph. D in mathematics from University of California, Berkeley. While in graduate school, he began studying

Guang Ping Yang Style Tai Chi from **Master Yun Chung Chiang**. He is also a student of **vipassana** (insight) **meditation** and has attended several intensive meditation retreats in Buddhist monasteries in Yangon, Myanmar. Ong's devotion to Tai Chi has spanned over four decades. Chen Style Tai Chi Grandmaster **Chen Zhenglei**, first came to the U.S. in 1996 and started teaching workshops in 1997. Master Ong participated in the first workshop. Fascinated by Chen Style Tai Chi and Chen Zhenglei's skill, Ong helped Chen expand the workshop circuit, and traveled with him to multiple cities promoting Tai Chi. Grandmaster **Chen Xiaowang** visited the U.S. later in 1997, and Ong attended his workshop. Ong aided Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang with workshops and accompanied him a few times. The following year, another 11th Generation Chen Style Lineage Holder Grandmaster **Zhu Tiancai** arrived from China. Ong assisted Zhu with workshops and also journeyed with him extensively for years.

Due to his advanced Tai Chi skill and knowledge, Ong was inducted as the first American disciple of Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei in 2000. Master Ong is eager to learn; he continues to pursue his understanding of Tai Chi by visiting Tai Chi birthplace Chen Village a few times and working with other Chen Style Tai Chi masters like **Chen Yu** and **Zhang Zijun**. In the martial arts circle, a discipleship has been regarded as a sacred relationship between a teacher and a student. Disciples have only one master just like they have one birth father. Ong is an exception. Due to his close relationships with the masters, he later became a disciple of Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang with the blessing of other masters.

Master Ong used to be a college professor of mathematics. He is always meticulous about teaching. A couple of years ago I visited him in D.C. while he was teaching Silk-Reeling (*Chans*). He divided a single-hand-reeling movement into four parts and went through each part in great detail and clarity. His new book **Taijiquan: Cultivating Inner Strength** was written with the same rigor. He writes about the cultural background of Tai Chi Quan and leads the readers through the thousand years of Chinese history in a story-telling fashion. Readers can vividly witness how philosophers, generals, emperors, thinkers, monks, warriors, and doctors influenced and shaped the characteristics of the Chinese. People who have no desire to learn Tai Chi will also find his book interesting, especially if they want to understand Chinese philosophy and history. But it is not Ong's intent to teach people Tai Chi by educating them about Chinese philosophy as asserts that Tai Chi Quan is an participatory art. He continues to talk about how and when Tai Chi Quan was created. He reveals the secret of Tai Chi or Neijin (internal strength or energy) by closely examining the Tai Chi principles from Tai Chi classics and body kinetics.

Master Ong does an exceptional job in explaining Tai Chi principles: "Bu Diu Bu Ding" (neither lax nor resisting), "Fang Song" (relax), "Han Xiong Ta Yao" (tuck the chest and settle the waist), "Jie Jie Guan Chuan" (energy threading through all the joints), "Ling Kong Jin" (empty-space force), "Nei San He" (internal three unities), "Wai San He" (external three unities), "Qi Chen Dan Tian" (sink Qi to the Dan Tian), "Song Yao Yuan Dang" (relax the waist and round the crotch), "She Ji Cong Ren" (give up self to follow the opponent), "Shisan Shi" (thirteen postures), "Xiong Yao Zhe Die" (folding motion of the chest

and waist), “Zhan Nian Lian Sui” (stick, connect, adhere, and follow), “Yin Jin Luo Kong” (leading force to emptiness), “Yi Rou Ke Gang” (the soft to overcome the hard), and other fundamentals. He expounds the methods of how to as well as why they work from a kinetic viewpoint. Ingeniously, he is able to tie Tai Chi principles back to Chinese philosophy of Yin/Yang, Bagua, Wu Xing, and other elements.

According to Master Ong, Chansi or Silk-Reeling is the foundation of Chen Style Tai Chi. He elucidates its orientations, versatility, relationship with “Dang Yao Jin” (waist-groin energy), “Fa Jin” (release the internal explosive power), “Dong Jin” (comprehension of the hard and soft energy), “Dan Tian nei zhuan” (Dan Tian rotation), and other major Tai Chi principles. Through the practice of Chansi, one can cultivate Neijin. It does not matter which Tai Chi style you practice, adding Chansi to your regular practice can enhance the internal strength or build up true Tai Chi skill. In the last chapter of the book, Master Ong shares two sets (fixed step and moving step) of Chansi exercises that he learned from three Grandmasters with readers.

Even though Master Ong published the book that I dream about writing, I am extremely pleased to be a reader and/or student of his teachings.

Subscribe to this column to get reviews, recaps, and latest news regarding Tai Chi, Qigong, health and martial arts sent directly to your inbox. If you enjoyed this article **please click the social media links above and to the left to share it with your friends**. You can also **subscribe to [my page on Facebook here](#)**. You can also **follow me on [Twitter](#)** or my own website www.violetli.com.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- **Help Autistic children with Tai Chi and Kung Fu**
- **From Russia with true Tai Chi power (Photos)**
- **The Hong Kong model of the WTCQD celebration**
- **Must watch: Urban Dragons**



Violet Li

Tai Chi Examiner