

SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

The fearless Tai Chi master Chen Ziqiang

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To the western [Tai Chi](#) community, Master Chen Ziqiang is relatively new. However, in the past few years, his fan base has grown as his footprint has spread on both sides of the Atlantic. Recently he just finished a 3-month tour to the U.S. and Europe and his students are already missing him.



Master Chen and Seattle workshop students
Embrace the Moon



Davidine Siaw-Voon Sim

Born in Chen Village (Henan Province, China), the birthplace of modern Tai Chi, Master Chen Ziqiang is the oldest son of Grandmaster [Chen Xiaoxin](#) and a nephew of Grandmaster [Chen Xiaowang](#). Naturally he started Tai Chi training at the very young age of four. He is fluent in all Chen Style forms and weapons. His preferences are Tai Chi [Push Hands](#) and [San Shou](#) (a full body contact sport, including kicking, punching, and grabbing). He participated in large formal Tai Chi tournaments since he was 19-years old. Right away, he became a Push Hands champion and was certified as a “Level One Warrior” in 1997. He has won championships in local, national, and international competitions. For most of tournaments, he competed in a category which was for heavier weight classes, but he still won. Last year, he participated in the nationally acclaimed TV [martial arts](#) competition show, *Wushu Masters*, hosted by [China Central TV](#). He defeated 16 top contestants from around China and won the Chen Style San Shou title. You can use the [link](#) to watch the final championship games. He was the oldest, shortest, and least muscular. But he was extremely fast and deeply rooted. His Fa Jing was explosive and was delivered instantaneously upon contact. He skillfully utilized the principle four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds and Tai Chi Ba Fa (i.e. *Zhou* or elbowing, *Kao* or bumping with the shoulder). The video clip includes four games and Master Chen (in a red/white top) competed in the first game (the semi final) and the fourth one (the championship game).

Grandmaster Chen Xiaoxin owns the famous [Chenjiagou Tai Chi Academy](#) in Chen Village. Master Chen Ziqiang has been teaching there since 1998. He is the vice principle and head coach now. Aside from teaching, he has produced a series of teaching DVDs and books on Tai Chi principles, forms, weapons, Tai Chi ball, and Push Hands.

In 2006, Master Chen came to San Francisco and established the first satellite school of [Chenjiagou](#)

Tai Chi Academy there. In 2007, he was invited to teach in Europe. Word about his mastery traveled fast and far. More and more cities in Europe invited him to teach. Last year was the first time he toured the U.S. and taught workshops. In early April this year, he came and visited Seattle, San Diego, Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, and other cities before going to Europe. Most of the workshops were Push Hands focused.

At 5'5" (165 centimeters) and 132 pounds (60 kilograms), Master Chen seems extremely small in front of his western students. Greg Pomerantz, who helped to organize the workshop in New York, said that Master Chen had no fear, he sparred with anyone, and he always won. Sometimes, Master Chen allowed a student to bear hug him or choke him first. But he was able to change the disadvantage situation into a winning result. To Greg, it is also a good metaphor to illustrate that the winning is not always certain.

In his Push Hands workshops, Master Chen normally demonstrated the various Push Hands patterns, explained Tai Chi principles and their martial art applications, and taught **Chin Na** techniques. Greg practiced **Wing Chun** for nine years before he began Tai Chi study with Master **Ren Guangyi** four years ago. He thinks Push Hands is a close contact sport, which is very important for his Tai Chi education.

Even though Master Chen is known for his ability to hurt opponents during a competition, he is extremely gentle with his students. Greg filmed Master Chen's classes in New York. You can see in some of the 14 video clips at Greg's [site](#), Master Chen carefully guided his students as they were falling down so they did not get hurt, which requires superb skill.

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SUGGESTED LINKS

- **An overdue Tai Chi Push Hands champion**
- **Master Chen Huixian on Push Hands**
- **The Eternal Spring Tai Chi Program at Bryant Park, New York**



Violet Li

Tai Chi Examiner

