

Yin-Yang in  
Tai-Chi Chuan and

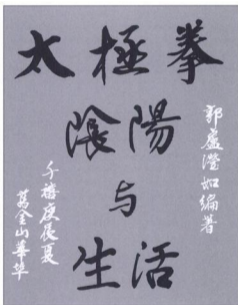
Daily Life



太極拳  
陰陽與生活

Simmons  
Kuo

YIN-YANG  
IN TAI-CHI CHUAN  
AND DAILY LIFE



SIMMONE KUO



NORTH ATLANTIC BOOKS  
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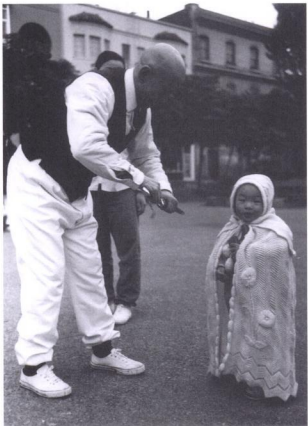
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*This book is dedicated to my parents, especially to my mother,  
who has shown me a model of perseverance, integrity, and arduous work.  
I would also like to thank my father, who refused to sell me during times of economic trouble.*



*Simone Kuo and her mother, Hung-Lan (Buddhist name meaning "Orchid of Perseverance"), A-Hsiang W. Lu (given name)*



*Tai-Chi Chuan is passed on to the new generation.*

# *Author's Introduction to* **Yin-Yang in Tai-Chi Chuan and Daily Life**

SIMMONE KUO

For more than thirty years now, I have been practicing and teaching Tai-Chi Chuan. A vital part of my study has been ongoing research into the Yin-Yang philosophy, which is at the foundation of all traditional Chinese culture. Along with medical practice, agriculture, and statesmanship, the development of Chinese martial arts was shaped by the application of Yin-Yang philosophy. Indeed, the name “Tai-Chi Chuan” means the martial art (*chuan* = fist) based on the balancing of Yin and Yang energies (*Tai-Chi*).

My research has included extensive travel in China, where I’ve come in contact with many valuable sources. Some of what I’ve discovered on these trips is pictured in this book. Above all, though, I learned directly from Sifu Kuo Lien-Ying, my teacher and late husband. During our twenty years of marriage, I had the opportunity to consult with him regarding all my questions. More important, I was privileged to share in the life of a great master, and to observe his manner of applying Yin-Yang philosophy to all aspects of daily life.

Much of the material included in this book was initially presented in the form of weekly lectures to my advanced class in Tai-Chi Chuan at San Francisco State University. Just as the lectures there are complementary to the twice-weekly practice sessions, so this volume is a companion to *Long Life, Good Health through Tai-Chi Chuan*. That volume depicts, in detail, the movements of the Tai-Chi Chuan form. The current volume focuses on how the philosophical roots of the art are applied in daily life—to self-care, for instance, and to daily practice—in order to live in harmony with the world of nature and of human society.

The knowledge conveyed here provides a background method for integrating body and mind—Yin and Yang—so that students can develop the balance and wisdom needed to live healthy and fulfilling lives. As a teacher, one always hopes that the next generation will receive the teaching and create something better, without sacrificing what is essential. I am proud to have several students who have remained true to this teaching, and who care for the integrity of the form and the tradition of knowledge it embodies.



I feel as if I helped to plant a tree together with Sifu, many years ago. Now I am watching a whole forest grow. So many of our dreams have come true! It is my pleasure to share some of the experience I've gained in the realization of these dreams. This book is an offering, a gift to the many dedicated students of Tai-Chi Chuan. May their practice deepen and flourish, and the benefit increase, radiating in all directions.

## *Introduction to Simone Kuo*

DANIEL RYBOLD

Master Simone Kuo, or Simu—meaning “female teacher”—as she is more properly and fondly addressed by those of us who study with her, has been teaching Tai-Chi Chuan in the heart of San Francisco’s Chinatown for the past thirty-five years. For the last thirteen of these I have had the great good fortune of deepening my own practice of the form with her. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that since I moved to San Francisco in 1987 to complete my family practice residency at San Francisco General Hospital, and more recently to take up the practices of acupuncture and energetic bodywork, Simu has helped me shape and reclaim the various landscapes of life informed by my form.

Simu has not only been an extraordinary practitioner and teacher of Tai-Chi Chuan during these many years, she has also gracefully—and with tremendous grit and determination—brought the form to literally thousands of students at San Francisco State University (where she began the first class of its kind in the state of California in 1980), authored several books on related practices (including the most recently published *Tai-Chi Chuan in Theory and Practice*, honoring her late husband Grand Master Kuo Lien-Ying—known as Sifu, or “male teacher”), hosted a TV show in the East Bay, raised her talented son Chung Mei (who himself inspired the first students at the square with his natural talent and gift of enthusiasm), and led various groups on cultural tours—all while keeping her Portsmouth Square Studio on Walter U. Lum Place open to those of us who continued our studies of this life-transforming discipline with her.

Perhaps the fact that Simu and Sifu donated the building next door to their studio to the Chinese Affirmative Action Cultural Center, a gift that benefits many citizens of San Francisco’s Chinese community, will paint for you a clearer picture of Simone’s generous and caring nature. I will finish simply by saying that it is with heartfelt gratitude and an ever-growing conviction in the application of these profound and beautiful movements to the entirety of my life that I humbly dedicate any merits of my practice to the long and healthy life of my Simu, Master Simone Kuo. I trust that by reading this book you too will receive the benefits and joy contained in her knowledge.

## Foreword

JOHN BRATTEN, PH.D., GERONTOLOGY

My esteemed teacher, Simone Kuo, has imparted much knowledge to me over the years. It was under her guidance that I developed self-confidence and an awareness of my own teaching ability by participating as her assistant in her classes at San Francisco State University. Prior to my assistantship, I had studied Tai-Chi Chuan for one calendar year with Simone Kuo—or Simu (“Simu” is a title of respect meaning “female teacher”)—first as a student in one of her classes at SFSU during the 1991–92 academic year, and continuing studies with her privately during the summer of 1992. Near the end of the ‘92 spring semester, Simu invited me to be her teaching assistant for the fall semester, and I accepted with pleasure and pride.

The writer/philosopher Kahlil Gibran said the following about teaching:

No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half  
asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his  
followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his  
lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his  
wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

My relationship with Simu has been the catalyst for some of my most valuable learning. She has been my friend always, and perhaps the primary consequence of our friendship as it has affected my studies has been its positive effect on my motivation to practice Tai-Chi Chuan. My ability to learn this “internal” martial art was jeopardized from the beginning by my lifelong tendency not to follow through with studies and disciplines regardless of my initial degree of interest or attraction. Simu very gently, and almost imperceptibly, led me to the threshold of my own self-motivation. Several times during the first year of studies of Tai-Chi Chuan, I was near the familiar point where I would give up (partly out of pure laziness, and partly out of shyness of participating in group activities) and simply cease attending classes. At first it was my attraction to Simu—to her fun, warm sense of humor and her gentle yet strong teaching style—that kept me returning. Later, it

was our friendship, a friendship that she fostered and carefully nurtured, a type of friendship she has with several of her students.

From the beginning Simu evoked a special faith in me that this study of Tai-Chi Chuan would yield great benefits and that I should continue with it. Though her words of encouragement are powerful—for example, her reminder that “Tai-Chi Chuan is like American Social Security: you practice, practice every day and it’s like money in the bank for when you’re old so you will have a good health and long life”—still, it is her actions that fostered the strongest faith in me. Those actions were not even intentional. The day I first met her, for example, I was searching for the Tai-Chi class at Cox Field, where it was scheduled to be, and I showed up at the top of the bleachers on the south side of the field. I was expecting a male teacher. There was only one person anywhere around, and that person had her back to me, looking out over Cox Field, obviously a woman, with her hair in a bun. I approached her to inquire about the class. She seemed to sense my approach and turned fully to face me, and I knew instantly that here was the teacher, and that I was going to like her. In the simple action of turning around, this woman showed extraordinary strength, confidence, and grace of movement. She turned around with a smile already on her face and her eyes shining and eager to meet whoever it was that approached. It was as if she were expecting me, as if I were an old and very dear friend. My faith in her skill as a teacher and the power of her art has never faltered since.

In the very beginning I think I expected magical benefits. Soon the practice began to seem like a lot of work, and the benefits weren’t proving to be magical at all, though I did realize many practical ones, such as improved balance and a new sense of grace in my movements. I pushed myself through prescribed daily practices; between my own efforts and the faith that Simu so beautifully evoked, I continued through to the point that, six months after beginning, I had learned the entire 64-movement form, and was finally a beginning student of Tai-Chi Chuan. And there stood Simu, beaming at my class; I remember feeling that now the real work was to begin, and here was our teacher ready to keep pumping up the faith, ready to work just as hard as we were ready. She was with us.

And I’ve felt like that about Simu ever since: She is willing to work just as hard with me as I am willing to work with me. She will meet the amount of energy I put into my practice, no matter how much energy that is. She can do this almost effortlessly, and this is part of what I consider her “magic.” Actually, it is part of her wisdom, and it is part of the wisdom of her martial art. It is a part of that in her which is the Master. I think she is willing to work like this for me because she loves me, as she loves all of her dedicated students. This love is also a part of her that is the Master, perhaps the largest part.

This love, in my case, manifests in one form as deep friendship, in another form as relationship between a devoted student and his devoted teacher, and in another form as relationship between a dedicated teacher and her dedicated assistant. It has been my most thorough pleasure—indeed, it has been my bliss—to be Simmo Kuo's teaching assistant during this semester.

As my assistantship began, I strived to be as "mechanically" correct as possible. That is, as Tai-Chi Chuan is comprised in large part of a specific, precisely executed series of physical movements, my primary concern was to be as mechanically accurate a model for the new students as I could possibly be. This striving taught me a very valuable lesson: It helped me understand how to keep my consciousness in my movements. This focus of attention in the movements is central to the practice of Tai-Chi Chuan. However, when I had practiced before for my own sake, I was never as motivated to concentrate on my movements as when I became as a model. From the beginning of the semester, I paid closer attention than ever to how Simu executed the movements, and as I modeled them for the class and corrected the students' forms, I became more acutely aware of the finest details and nuances of each and every movement. Simply through this concentration of attention to detail, I learned as much or more about the movements as the students in the class did. Moreover, through this concentration I learned how to concentrate better. And I learned of the power of concentration; indeed concentration *is* power.

While I was learning the form, Simu once said, "You practice over the weekend. I can tell when you come back Monday if you practiced!" I learned how she could tell: It can easily be seen in the performance of a student. I also learned that I can accurately determine the degree of a student's motivation and determination to learn. Also, I can spot the "gifted" ones, the ones who "get it" from the beginning. I can see those who struggle but have the will to make marked improvement, those who have to struggle against weak self-motivation, and those who are in class for an easy grade or some other reason than a genuine desire to learn the art. Then there are those who not only "get it" physically, but get it spiritually as well.

Tai-Chi Chuan is a spiritual discipline as well as a mental-physical discipline—a discipline that can show one how the spiritual, the mental, and the physical are actually one, while seemingly separate. Simu's late husband, the Master Kuo Lien-Ying, said, [while practicing] "The whole concentration of the mind is ... on the spirit, ... " and I've learned to recognize the students who have caught hold of the Spirit and concentrate their minds on it. They are elevated above simply being students learning and earning college credit in a physical education class; they are students on a spiritual path.

I gained confidence in myself as a teacher during that semester. Simu commented frequently, "You're doing a good, job, but not a very good job." (Simu would never tell anyone she cares about that they are very good for fear that "the monster" will get them—the monster, I presume, being false ego that comes too frequently with praise and false pride.) I think she was right, not only because I thoroughly trust her, but because of the students' reaction to me. We would typically work with the class as a whole for the first half-hour, then allow the students to work individually or in small groups to practice as we circulated through the class, making ourselves available to make corrections, demonstrate movements, or answer questions. Several times I have stopped to demonstrate a move to two or three students and have attracted groups of students to work on that move. I have had individual students tell me I'm a good teacher. When Simu has heard that, she interrupts, "Not very good, though. He's OK, but not very good," she gleams and giggles, then scolds the student with a mock-fierce voice and a smile in her eyes: "You want the monster to get him?"

Teaching Tai-Chi Chuan is my bliss. I realized as I observed our classes practicing together *en masse* that I get a thrill, a kind of excited joy, actually, that can make me physically shiver when I see a student "getting it," catching hold of the Spirit. When I myself have hold of the Spirit, I ride it as if I were riding an animal, something alive, tangible, moving—something that moves with infinite strength, smoothness, and grace. I have eyes to see a student catch hold of the ride, and I have a heart that thrills at the sight. For these two things I am infinitely grateful; these are loose kin to the bliss I speak of, and these things together suggest strongly that I should be teaching Tai-Chi Chuan.

The bliss of Tai-Chi Chuan has brought great fullness to my life in ways that I never would have imagined. Now, with a Ph.D. in human development and working as a gerontologist in Portland, Oregon, I see *Yin-Yang in Tai-Chi Chuan and Daily Life* as the culmination of hard work and apprenticeship.

## Preface

JONAS HAMILTON

In her previous monographs—*Long Life, Good Health through Tai-Chi Chuan* and *Shao-Lin Chuan: The Rhythm and Power of Tai-Chi*—Simu Kuo explained the two fundamental systems of exercise and self-defense (Tai-Chi Chuan and Shao-Lin Chuan) that she and her husband, Kuo Lien-Ying, brought to the United States in 1966. In this book she broadens her scope, teaching the philosophy underlying the martial arts of which she has been a distinguished teacher for nearly forty years. Her readers will soon appreciate that “Tai-Chi,” for example, is not just exercise or self-defense (*Chuan*), but a traditional philosophy, embracing every aspect of life. The common thread in Simu’s writings is a desire to assist students and to enrich their practice—the same generosity of spirit that prompted Sifu Kuo and his wife to leave the security of China in order to bring this philosophical art to the San Francisco Bay Area. San Franciscans soon became accustomed to the sight of students practicing in the pre-dawn vapors of Portsmouth Square. In the last two years of his life, Sifu instructed Simu in the philosophical basis of Tai-Chi Chuan and Shao-Lin Chuan. By the time of his death in 1984, these teachings had become part of the curriculum at San Francisco State University, complementing the popular Tai-Chi Chuan and Shao-Lin Chuan classes. Thus, the seed of Tai-Chi Chuan and Shao-Lin Chuan—and of Confucius and Lao Tzu—has taken firm root and borne plentiful fruit. Following her husband’s example, Simu Kuo refuses to rest on her laurels, and she continues to strive as a teacher and artist. She has researched the roots of Tai-Chi Chuan and Shao-Lin Chuan in frequent trips to China. The product of these investigations, Simu’s new book is a great gift for those seeking to follow in her footsteps.

Anyone closely associated with Simu Kuo as a student becomes subject to her penetrating scrutiny. Naturally, one’s posture and manner of performing the forms receive correction. The student may be surprised that this attention often extends to other apparently unrelated matters, such as dress or moral conduct. A careful reading of Simu Kuo’s new book should make it clear that her method is based on traditional principles, carefully considered. Now the general public can enjoy the spirit of Simu Kuo’s teaching: namely, her vision of our moral responsibility for each other. Tai-Chi Chuan has never been for Simu Kuo a selfish pursuit; she has always

sought to foster not just balance, coordination, and good physical health, but also social harmony and proper conduct. Following Confucius (or Plato, or Aristotle), Simu Kuo believes that a healthy community depends on healthy individuals. In these pages the serious student will find inspiration. For others, Simu Kuo's book puts her magnificent art in its proper cultural and historical perspective.



*Simu Kuo with her husband, Kuo Lien-Ying, and their son,  
Chung-Mei Kuo*



## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank and acknowledge all of my good students of the past thirty-eight years.

Deep gratitude to the Chinese students whose generous contributions helped open the Lien-Ying Tai-Chi Chuan Academy in 1965.

Thanks to Dawson Lee and also to Wendy and Colin Hunter for their generous assistance over a period of three months in 1975 while I was developing a series of Tai-Chi Chuan educational programs for KPIX (Channel 5 in San Francisco, California).

Thanks to Professor Yao You-Wei (姚有爲) and Professor Jin Yu (金玉) of Yangzhou Teachers University for the painting used on the cover of this book.

And a special thanks to the Western students who have been willing to work with me and help with this book, continuing the Chinese cultural tradition of appreciation between student and teacher. For their help proofreading, editing, and rewriting this book, I express my thankfulness to Shannon Cook, Jeffrey Kessler, Tim McAuliffe, and Daniel Rybold.

Thanks, too, to Pam Suwinsky for her discerning editorial assistance, to Susan Quasha for her patience and skill in designing this book, and to all those at North Atlantic Books for their help with the production and publication processes.

This book is the culmination of the teaching from my classes at San Francisco State University and is a companion volume to *Long Life, Good Health through Tai-Chi Chuan*. I offer it as a gift to the new generation of Tai-Chi Chuan students.

*Sheshe* (Thank you).

# PART 1

## *Simu's Teachings*

# I

## *Introduction to the Martial Arts Tradition*

# 武术



FIGURE I.1: *Simone Kuo performs warm-up exercise called "Skating Lake."*

## The History of Chinese Martial Arts

(In Chinese)

## (一) 太極拳之起源與發展

早在人類社會產生之初，我們的祖先為了生存不得不  
 斷地與大自然及大自然中的各類野獸進行搏鬥。在  
 搏鬥中，他們由簡單地模仿野獸的攻守動作到進  
 一步觀察各類動物的攀登、跨越、跳躍動作，象  
 而形成了具有人類的風格的最初的拳術。隨着朝  
 代的变化，中國拳術這一偉大的文化也進一步發展  
 與改良，尤其是在國的主劇、雜劇以及以後的少林  
 寺出現後，更加促使中國拳術進一步完善。太極拳正是借  
 鑑了少林拳的精神，進而完善並最終發展為今天的  
 以增強體質、促進人的身心健康的體育活動。

## The History of Chinese Martial Arts

The martial arts began as soon as there were people on Earth who struggled with animals and each other for food and territory. People started practicing martial arts thousands of years ago in China by studying nature and by observing and imitating the movements of animals in combat. The stillness of mountains, the fluidity of rivers, the constellations of stars, and the power, speed, and camouflage of animals inspired the development of the ancient martial arts.

Each region of China had its own distinct native style, the basic division being between North and South. These early practices were later collected and refined into schools of martial arts for self-defense and physical conditioning. Approximately three thousand years ago, the early Chinese martial artists began to group together their observations and developed sets, or forms, into numerous distinct schools and styles.

Chinese martial arts are referred to collectively in Chinese as *wu shu*. *Wu* means "martial," and *shu* means "arts," "skills," or "magic," in the sense that you must practice the art for a long time to attain the skill to make it seem like magic. The Chinese martial arts can be divided into two main schools: external and internal. The "outer" school emphasizes primarily physical development, while the "inner" school emphasizes mental development as well. The external forms are characterized by developing speed and muscular power, building up the physical body, concentrating on the bones and marrow, and stressing quick movements, leaps, and kicks. Some examples are Shao-Lin Chuan, Japanese karate, Korean taekwondo, and judo. The internal forms are characterized by slower, gentler movements, concentrating on the muscles and tendons for the development of internal energy. In the internal arts, it is the mind that is the prime mover. Some examples are Tai-Chi Chuan, Shing Yi, and Pa Kua.

### *The Life of a Martial Artist in the Olden Days*

訣口藝賣

In the “olden” days—from the early days of the Ching Dynasty (ca. 1650 C.E.)—the martial artist made his living by traveling from town to town doing martial arts demonstrations for the local people. When he set up space for his performance, he first had to respect the local martial artists by reciting an introduction and a presentation of himself in a courteous and formal manner. The first thing he would do is to praise the locality by proclaiming:

This is the great land of the crouching tiger and hidden dragon.  
I am an old master with no crown on my head and my young  
student has no license atop his shoulders. You want to know who I  
am? After I finish, I will come to your schools and pay my respects  
to you. Right now I bow to you and your ancestors in greeting  
and great respect for you as to my oldest master. Please accept my  
courtesy now.

He would then bend his right knee and kneel on his left in a sign of humility so that no one would challenge him. This was the code for martial artists. After the demonstration, the martial artist would ask for a donation. He would say, “I would like the street cleaners, shoemakers, jewelry makers, farmers, teachers, students, businessmen, horse and buggy drivers, and any other workers to give a donation after the demonstration. We will deeply appreciate this, because we need to pay for our food and hotel.” In this courteous way, the passion was ignited in the people for the street artists, especially the martial artists.

## The Life of a Martial Artist in the Olden Days

(In Chinese)

未以此地大邦之地龍藏卧虎之地。  
 老師父頭上沒馬王字，少師父背後沒掛招牌，若不知道老師姓甚，叫甚，回到登門叩拜，不知老師父姓甚，叫甚，當坊叩拜，作揖，前謂長輩，父老，左右謂兄才，姐妹，少師父說：師父時候不早了，人也不少，祇說不練，走嘴把事，只練不說，傻把事。  
 老師父說：好練，練完怎麼辦？少師父說：吃飯，要做錢，住在甚麼錢，跟誰要呢？老師父說：跟拉車的，押地的，剃頭的，賣蒜的，釘桶的，把所有一切的工人都說去來，少師父又問：如果今天沒帶錢的怎麼辦？老師父說：沒帶錢的，看助件人多，財旺，拿幾大些，就付錢，敲一敲，表演，開始，以此說，礼多人不怪，武術界的人，就一定會挑戰，你，然後就拿你做好兄弟，所以說，中國走自，古以來，礼義之邦的國家，這就叫，有理不在高聲，山高遮不了太陽。

*The Courtesy of Martial Arts Street Performers in Olden Days*



這是龍藏卧虎之地

FIGURE I.2: *This is the land of Hidden Dragon and Crouching Tiger.*



龍

FIGURE I.3: *Hidden Dragon*



虎

FIGURE I.4: *Crouching Tiger*



*The Legacy of Shao-Lin Temple*

# 少林寺



FIGURE I.5: Monks and martial artists stand before the gate of Shao-Lin Temple.

The foundation of the modern external forms of Chinese martial arts is Shao-Lin Chuan. *Shao* means “youthful,” and *lin* means “forest.” Shao-Lin Chuan is “the Fist of the Youthful Forest.” It was developed by and named after the Buddhist monks of the Shao-Lin Temple, built in a youthful forest in the mountains of Hunan Province in northern China. In the sixth century c.e., an Indian monk named Bodhidharma (known in Chinese as Ta-Mo) visited the Shao-Lin monastery. He had journeyed from India to China as a pilgrim carrying scrolls of Buddhist *dharma* (teachings). Bodhidharma withdrew to the Shao-Lin Temple and took refuge in a cave outside the monastery to meditate. He noticed that the monks had physically degenerated from sitting so long in meditation, so he taught them a set of movements with which they could revive themselves. He taught them yogic stretching exercises from India, which they then incorporated into the native fighting forms of their youth.

At the temple lived a group of eighteen monks who had been a band of criminals before retreating to the temple in remorse. They were excellent martial artists but had always used their skill in fighting to intimidate and rob travelers. The eighteen monks adapted Bodhidharma’s teachings ingeniously to the local people’s fighting forms, refining the set of exercises into the Shao-Lin Chuan form that was passed down from generation to generation to the present. After their conversion to a virtuous way of life, these eighteen monks became so famous for their good deeds and public service that they came to be recognized in Chinese culture as *lohans*, heroic examples of the possibility for redirecting chaotic and violent energy toward inner development and the common good.

Before the Shao-Lin Temple period (sixth century c.e.), Chinese fighting forms were wild in nature, tending toward violence and purely pragmatic application for battle. Through the compassionate influence of Buddhism, Chinese martial arts became a philosophically based system oriented toward health, exercise, and inner development. The martial arts tradition of China is like a great tree with many branches, the trunk and roots of which have grown from the rich soil of Shao-Lin Temple. It was here that the numerous and varied native fighting forms of China were refined into a system that has thrived for fifteen hundred years. The refinements that occurred at Shao-Lin Temple have been rich in long-lasting benefits, and the temple is honored as the source of the distinctive Chinese martial arts tradition. Other traditional Chinese arts, such as Beijing opera and acrobatics, have also been influenced and regularly include martial arts training for their performers. More important, the martial arts tradition conceived at Shao-Lin Temple has provided valuable resources for personal health and development to countless generations in China and throughout the world.



FIGURE I.6: *Shao-Lin Temple Village student group practices near the Pagoda Forest, May 2001.*



FIGURE I.7: *Simone Kuo performs line 3 of the ten-line Shao-Lin form known as Tan-Tui, or "Springy Legs."*

## The History of the 64-Movement Tai-Chi Chuan Set

(In Chinese)

## 六十四式太極拳傳授史

武林高手張三豐曾習武于武當山，在武當期間，虔修苦練，潛心鑽研創立了六十四式太極拳，武當由此而出名。中國武林門派衆多，拳術雖精却非其門人不傳，所以江湖上對六十四式太極拳也祇是可慕不可及，會此拳種的人更是寥寥無幾。

邯鄲境內的永年縣，有個武術之鄉（府城），是楊氏太極拳的創始人楊祿禪的故鄉，楊祿禪的次子楊鈺，字班侯（一八三七—一八九二），自幼隨父學武，練就一身好功夫，他不但繼承了楊家的拳術，而且還幾經展轉練就了張三豐的六十四式太極拳，成年應召進京後，又慧眼識金收了導師敬拳的愛徒王衛宇，王專攻六十四式，經多年勤練，終得張三豐拳術真諦。北平和平門內呂祖廟主持見王衛宇拳術高超，就讓出廟內空地讓其傳授武功。

當時的中國正值軍閥混戰，許多青年人在探尋著救國之道。有一位叫郭連蔭的青年武功高強，為進一步提高自己的造詣報效祖國，慕名前去拜訪王衛宇。王見郭才貌出眾，功底扎實，聰慧過人，便決定將六十四式傳給他，從此王、郭即是師徒，又是摯友，二人還盟約將六十四式太極拳完整無變地傳下去，意在弘揚中華拳術之精髓。

五十年代初，郭連蔭滿懷對武術的熱愛之情，肩負歷史賦予的責任，途經香港，來到中國的台灣省——寶島。到臺後，他勤奮習武，研磨拳道，光大拳術。著名書畫家于右任先生的責任，途經香港，來到中國的台灣省——寶島。到臺後，他勤奮習武，研磨拳道，光大拳術。著名書畫家于右任先生觀其武，賞其德，鼓勵郭著書。郭便于一九六〇年完成了他的第一部作品《太極拳譜》，于右任親自為其封面提字。

中華文化學院院長賈文山先生讀了郭連蔭的《太極拳譜》後深受啓發，于一九六五年邀請郭連蔭到美國西岸表演、講授武功，郭所到之處均受到當地人士的歡迎和贊許，隨後在舊金山創立了「連蔭太極學院」。金山省立大學體育系還把原版六十四式太極拳定為學生的必修課。

現任連蔭太極學院院長盧漫茹女士是郭連蔭大師的夫人兼弟子，被金山省立大學聘為太極拳教授。為讓後人知曉楊班侯、王衛宇、郭連蔭三位拳師的功德，為把這套古老的拳術完好無損地流傳于世，盧女士深感責任重大，借籌此書機會，二〇〇一年七月親自到中國河北邯鄲尋訪太極名師楊班侯的故鄉，與楊氏傳人當面切磋，交流武功。願太極之花在大洋兩岸盛開！願這套古老的拳術永遠為人類的健康和文明做出貢獻！

### *The History of the 64-Movement Tai-Chi Chuan Set*

Tai-Chi Chuan, an internal martial art form, incorporates aspects of Shao-Lin Chuan. Shao-Lin Chuan forms the basis for all martial arts, and should be learned first whenever possible.

*Tai*, in Chinese, means "vast and all-encompassing," while *Chi* is the "ultimate or extreme point." The Tai-Chi concept existed long before the creation of Tai-Chi Chuan, influencing early Chinese philosophy, medicine, and religion. The martial art of Tai-Chi Chuan is "the Fist of Balance." In Tai Chi Chuan, the emphasis has been not on physical strength and muscular power, but on building up internal energy, developing mental concentration, and the coordination of natural breathing with movement.



FIGURE 1.7: *Chang San-Feng, the founder of Tai-Chi Chuan. Based on the rubbing taken from a stone engraving at the Monastery of Hsun Tien on Wu Tang Mountain, Hubei Province, China.*

The creation of Tai-Chi Chuan is attributed to the legendary Chang San-Feng. He left no historical record. Legend has it that he studied outer schools of martial arts in his youth and was a well-known bodyguard of the Sung Dynasty emperors in the eleventh century c.e. He met a Taoist with whom he practiced for many years and whom he accompanied to Wu Tang Mountain in Hubei Province. Here he united many Taoist martial arts—such as Pa Kua and Shing Yi—with Shao-Lin Chuan and Tai-Chi philosophy to create Tai-Chi Chuan. There are many stories of how he came up with the form. Some claim it came to him in a dream. Others say he was visited and taught the form by a powerful spirit. Some say he developed it through intense study of the *I Ching*. But the most common story is that he came up with the idea after his many years of martial arts training and Taoist studies while watching a snake and a crane fight on Wu Tang Mountain.

*Wu Tang Mountain*

# 武當山

China contains a great many wonderful mountains. Among these are Five Sacred Taoist Mountains where Taoist philosophers lived as hermits in inaccessible regions in order to cultivate the elixir of life. Wu Tang in Hubei is one of these. These mountains are the birthplace of the 64-movement Tai-Chi form, created here by Chang San-Feng to benefit the world.



FIGURE I.8: *Simone Kuo stands before the three peaks known as "The Three Old Men" atop Wu Tang Mountain.*



## 單鞭

軸——太極一詞最早見於《易經》：「太極謂天地未分之前，元氣混而為一，即太初、太乙也。」十三勢作為太極拳別名的由來即五種基本步法和八種基本手法，俗稱「五步八門」，即五行與八卦相合而成。腰力運用得當，能確保全身平衡，有助內動運轉，所以太極拳走架過程中必須以腰為軸。腰為腎之本，人生三寶為精、氣、神，命門為水火之府，陰陽之宅，精氣之海，生死之寶，是元氣之根，所以練拳轉換變勢時要「命意源頭在腰際，刻刻留心在腰間。」

靜——太極拳術重用意，腰如車軸心行氣，靜字為首，頭腦冷靜，心寧膽定，全神貫注，以意運身，動中求靜，靜而能得氣，得氣則通過，病灶通則不痛。



FIGURE I.9: Chang San-Feng on Wu Tang Mountain, with students behind him practicing Tai-Chi Chuan's Single Whip.

Although the 64-movement Tai-Chi Chuan form was famous in China, not many people could execute this style because instructions were only given to the students of the Wu Tang School. The first time it is formally documented is in the "Tai-Chi Chuan Dictionary" of Wang Tsung-Yue, and later in the sixteenth-century writings of the Chen family. The Chens kept this practice in their family from generation to generation, only allowing two individuals from outside the family to learn this style. One of these was Yang Ban-Ho, who mastered the style in the nineteenth century, then moved to Beijing and opened a school to teach Tai-Chi Chuan to the royalty and the common people there. Yang took on a dedicated student named Wang Chou-Yee, who was very diligent and closely practiced his teacher's style, careful to preserve Yang's teachings without any changes. From Yang Ban-Ho and his famous disciple Wang Chou-Yee comes the Tai-Chi Chuan form as we know it today. In his old age Wang lived in the Li Tsu Temple in the Ho-ping Gate sector of Beijing. Many students came to him in the front yard of the temple during the early twentieth century. Among these was Kuo Lien-Ying.

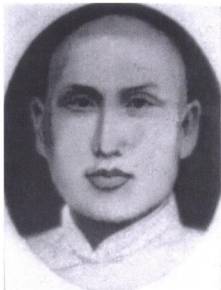


FIGURE I.11: Grandmaster Yang Ban-Ho

王  
矯  
宇

FIGURE I.10: Dedication to  
Wang Chou-Yee



FIGURE I.12: Kuo Lien-Ying

*The Life of Grand Master Kuo Lien-Ying*

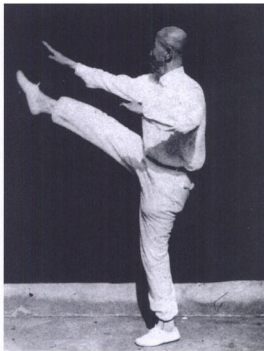


FIGURE I.13: *Sifu Kuo performs a double kick*

Kuo Lien-Ying studied various martial arts from the time he was twelve years old. He was eager to improve his skills to better serve his country, which was in a time of turmoil. When he heard of Wang's mastery he went to visit him in Beijing. Acknowledging Kuo as an outstanding and intelligent young man with a solid foundation in martial arts, Wang decided to teach him the 64-movement form of Tai-Chi Chuan. Beyond their teacher-student relationship, the two became good friends and pledged to each other that they would pass on the 64-movement form to later generations. They vowed not to change any aspect of the set, so that the lineage would remain pure and the best of the Chinese martial arts would not be lost.

Kuo, who had served as a congressman to the National Assembly of China, left his homeland in 1952, traveled through Hong Kong, and settled in the Chinese province of Taiwan for fourteen years. In Taiwan he researched and wrote about Tai-Chi Chuan while teaching martial arts part-time. In 1965, at the invitation of Huang Wen Shan, Dean of the Chinese Culture Institute, he sailed to the United States. In San Francisco's Chinatown he founded with his wife the Lien-Ying Tai-Chi Chuan Academy. Sifu Kuo was very well received by the local people, and the studio has flourished ever since.

### *The Lien-Ying Tai-Chi Chuan Academy*

The master of the Lien Ying Tai-Chi Chuan Academy is now Simone Kuo, wife and student of Kuo Lien-Ying. Simu Kuo (Lu Eing-Ru) left Taiwan in 1966 and came to the United States with her husband. She studied Tai-Chi Chuan, Shao-Lin Chuan, Shao-Lin Staff, Shao-Lin Sword, Tai-Chi Sword, Pa Kua, and Shing Yi with her husband. The form that is presented in her books and classes carries the same vow she made to Master Kuo not to change any aspect of the traditional form. In gratitude for the selflessness of the three masters of Yang, Wang, and Kuo, Simone Kuo paid a special visit to Han Dan, the birthplace of Yang Ban Ho, in July 2001 and exchanged ideas with students of the Yang family school.



FIGURE 1.14: Kuo family studio in Chinatown, San Francisco, on Portsmouth Square. Established in 1965, it moved to its current location in 1989.

*The Kuo Lien-Ying Family*



FIGURE I.15: *Father and son play at the Monkey Form.*



*FIGURE I.16: On a cold winter day in December 1993, Simu visited Sifu's ashes in Hu Ho Hao Te, Inner Mongolia. In the "Green Grass Cemetery" rest heroes such as Sifu, who was honored with a state funeral, and whose remains rest peacefully in this small wooden treasure box.*

## II

### *Yin-Yang in Theory*

## Tai-Chi Philosophy

(In Chinese)

## 太極拳之哲學

根據中國古代的論理學，太極拳是武術，太極是哲學。  
 太極，太是指廣，洞無邊，大的意思，極是高，拳無頂之  
 意。古代哲學家伏羲最初認為宇宙是空虛無止境的，  
 並把這一狀態稱為無極。根據這一學說，進而推斷在  
 虛無的宇宙之外，存在了主要力量，陰與陽，或者  
 說是正與負。中國人統稱陰陽為太極，並認為極大  
 是永恒的，存在萬物之中。這其中包括大自然的氣候，  
 植物，時辰，地理，以及現代的科學研究。陰陽有別，  
 但是陰與陽不可截然分開，獨立存在。在運動中的者



緊密聯系，相互轉換，相輔相成，協調配合成宇宙間乃至人的一系列活動。簡述之，白晝為陽，黑夜為陰，動為陽，靜為陰。太極拳正是以這一學說為基礎，主張不要過分用力，要體現人的本質的統一。發揮體內的能量，協調陰陽兩力。因此在練太極拳時，速度要適中，不快不慢，剛柔結合，使動作柔和而又連貫。

### 功夫與武術

功夫是中國武學的一種通俗稱呼。正統的說法應該是武術。功夫一詞照字面解釋是時間的練習，用來警惕那些習武之人是需要時間來練習，並非一朝一夕可成功的。

## The Tao

*Tao* is an ancient Chinese concept loosely translated in English as “the Way,” or “the path.” The “way” of the Tao is not static, but a constantly changing, continually ongoing process. It is “the way” of all things, the “way” all is created, the many ways things evolve, and the way it all eventually ends. All phenomena in this world of change and transformation are seen as dynamically interrelated, and supported, by the matrix of the Tao, which underlies the entire universe. From this fabric, all things are issued forth and interact.

It is said that “the Tao gives rise to all forms, yet it has no form of it’s own ...” (Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*). It is also written that “in Tao’s changes and hidden permutations ... Heaven and earth and the ten thousand things were issued forth and are still inseparable from the Tao” (Lao Tzu, *Hua Hu Ching*).

道



FIGURE II.1: The author's mother holds prayer beads.

*From Wu-Chi to Tai-Chi*

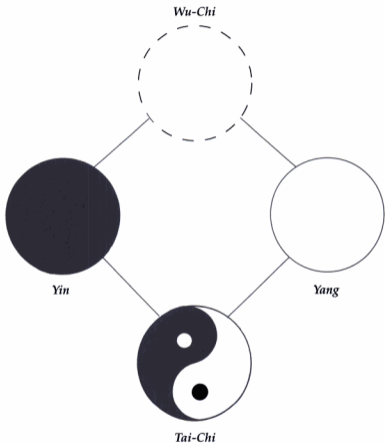


FIGURE II.2: *From Wu-Chi to Tai-Chi*

According to Tai-Chi philosophy, before this universe came into being there was nothing but a formless, boundless Void. Chinese philosophers termed this state *Wu-Chi*, meaning “no limit” (represented in FIGURE II.2 by a dotted circle). In the limitless emptiness, polarization occurred and the primordial energetic charges spontaneously distinguished themselves. The duality of complementary opposites is known by the Chinese characters *Yin* and *Yang*. (In FIGURE II.2, Yang is represented by the light circle, and Yin is represented by the dark circle.) These two primal opposite forces were irresistibly attracted to each other and combined to form complementary halves of a singularity, containing all the energy of our universe fused into one point, the seed of all manifestation. This state of unity, known as *Tai-Chi*, is represented by the classic symbol shown in FIGURE II.3.

YIN

YANG

陰陽

FIGURE II.3: *Tai-Chi* symbol

Tai-Chi symbolizes the whole of which all things are a part. "Tai-Chi" is made up of two Chinese characters: *Tai*, meaning large and all-encompassing, and *Chi*, meaning ultimate or extreme point. Simply stated, *Tai-Chi* refers to the "absolute" or "ultimate point" of the universe, which is at once everywhere and nowhere in particular, forever constant and existing in all things. Tai-Chi is the union and dynamic balancing of the primal forces of Yin and Yang, through whose interplay the cosmos comes into being. These forces are balanced perfectly in Tai-Chi, the state in which Yin and Yang are fused together, but once they begin differentiating themselves they set in motion the continual process of evolution, leading to the arising of all phenomena. Within the expansive Oneness, top began to separate from bottom, up came to be distinguished from down, centrifugal and centripetal forces began to push and pull, always seeking balance.



FIGURE II.4: *Tai-Chi* means "balance," as is reflected in the translation of the Chinese root words, *tai* and *chi*, as "infinitely horizontal" and "infinitely vertical."

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MARTIAL ARTS

"Now the general public can enjoy the spirit of Simu Kuo's teaching: namely her vision of our moral responsibility for each other."

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**Shannon Cook, contributor**

"It is necessary both to accept and to struggle against one's very apparent limitations. Nothing could be more humbling, nothing more edifying."

**Simmone Kuo, from the book**

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In *Yin-Yang in Tai-Chi Chuan and Daily Life*, Simmone Kuo provides the philosophical context for the practice of this popular martial art, showing how Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian traditions have shaped the practice of Tai-Chi Chuan. Included here are student accounts of the strong impression Mme. Kuo made on her students. Drawing on yearly research trips to China and her lectures in Advanced Tai-Chi Chuan at San Francisco State University, Mme. Kuo explores the application of Yin-Yang theory to:

- Health and Nutrition
- Daily Practice
- Traditional Chinese Philosophy and the I Ching
- The Teacher-Student Relationship
- Self-Awareness and Self-Defense

The present volume is a sequel to *Long Life, Good Health through Tai-Chi Chuan* (North Atlantic Books, 1991), which contains her careful instructions and sequenced photos for the traditional 64-movement form of Tai-Chi Chuan.

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SIMMONE KUO, disciple and widow of Sifu Kuo Lien-Ying, is the master teacher at the Lien-Ying Tai-Chi Chuan Academy, which she founded with her husband after they immigrated to San Francisco in 1966. She has been on the faculty of the Department of Kinesiology at SFSU since 1980.

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