



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout April 18, 2021

The Long River



Water and river analogies were often used by Bruce Lee in his description of his martial art performance and practice and can be found in many of the T'ai Chi classics.

“Nothing in the world is softer and more supple than water,

Yet, when attacking the hard and the strong, nothing can surpass it

The supple overcomes the hard

The soft overcomes the strong”

Lao Tzu

T'ai Chi has been compared to a “great river rolling on unceasingly.”



The flow of water is analogous to the flow of energy, or movement, when performing a Tai Chi form, or between two people engaged in a martial art activity like push hands. In both jiu-jitsu and T'ai chi the ultimate goal is to 'go with' this flow in such a way that you defeat your opponent. From a health and wellbeing perspective, the flow of the postures is calming and enhances the smooth cooperation among all systems in the body. This is how the mind, body and spirit coordinate to achieve the sense of serenity and self-discovery. The flow of qi is when we are in touch with and fully aware of our mind, body and spirit.

Master Wu Yu-Hsiang (1812–1880) was a T'ai Chi Ch'uan (taijiquan) teacher and government official active during the late Qing dynasty. Wu was a scholar from a wealthy and influential family who became a senior student (along with his two older brothers) of Yang Luchan. Wu also studied for a brief time with a teacher from the Chen family, Chen Qingping, to whom he was introduced by Yang. Chen is the first family of T'ai Chi. Yang style is the second of the five families but is the most popular worldwide.

“Be still as a mountain, move like a great river”

Master Wu Yu Hsiang

As we practice our T'ai Chi movements and postures, we take to heart Master's perspective. We move efficiently and with intention. Our internal world is still and calm. We shift our weight and form our postures as the river moves- ebbing and flowing, heavy to light; full to empty in a continuous flow as a river.





South Fork of the Shenandoah River

Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you.

Away, you rolling river.

Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you.

Away, I'm bound away

'Cross the wide Missouri.

“Don’t Push the river, Listen to it instead”



May you find meaning in the Long River

Peace,

Linda