

Biography of Tung Hu Ling by Chip Ellis

(Dong) Tung Hu Ling is recognized by many in the martial arts community as one of the top level practitioners of Taijiquan. (For example, he is included as one of the major figures in Taijiquan in the texts studied by Martial Arts majors at the Beijing University of Physical Education, China's top school of its kind.) The eldest of six children, he was born in Ren Xian, Xing Tai, He Bei, China on October 25, 1917, which makes him a fire snake in the Chinese horoscope. His name translates as "Tiger" (Hu) "Mountain" (Ling). His father, Tung Ying Chieh (Dong Ying Jie), was one of the most senior disciples of Yang Cheng Fu, and a pillar in Taijiquan history.

In his early years Tung Hu Ling studied the Art under several well known teachers, including his father and Yang Cheng Fu, and became well experienced in its martial applications. He practiced the slow set for eight years before he began to learn push hands. Two years later he began his study of the sword (jian) which was his favorite weapon. Four years after that he began to study the knife (dao) under his uncle's tutelage, as his father only practiced the sword and spear. He taught Taijiquan in He Bei province, Guangzhou (Canton), Shanghai and in other locations within China.

In 1947, he and his son, Tung Kai Ying, joined his father, Tung Ying Chieh, in Hong Kong where the elder had set up the "Tung Ying Kit Tai Kik Kuen Gymnasium" (Cantonese transliteration). In the 1950's the family taught in Hong Kong at two locations, one on Hong Kong Island and the other about a 15 minute ferry ride away in Kowloon. During that time Tung Hu Ling lead most of the classes in Kowloon. In 1956 he published a book, *Application of Taijiquan* in which he showed the applications of the Yang style set. He was also featured as the model for the pictures of the Tung family "fast set" in his father's book *Taijiquan Explained*, published in 1948.

Following in his father's footsteps, beginning in 1953 he traveled throughout Asia teaching in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. In 1967 a group of students in Honolulu, Hawaii, invited him to the United States where he visited Honolulu, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York and demonstrated his art. The July 1967 issue of Black Belt Magazine featured him in a story by Anthony DeLeonardis entitled *The "Grand Ultimate Fist" of Tai Chi Chuan*. In 1968, sponsored by Wah Duck Young, he settled in Honolulu which he used as his home base and where he taught until his death. While he lived in Honolulu he frequently traveled back to Asia to teach and promote the Art.

In 1969 he brought his elder son Tung Kai Ying from Hong Kong to Hawaii. In 1971 Tung Kai Ying went on to live in the Los Angeles area and teach throughout the mainland United States and other locations around the world. In 1983 he brought his younger son, Dong Zeng Chen, from the family home in Ren Xian to

Honolulu to take over his classes. Dong Zeng Chen then also used Hawaii as his base for his teachings in Asia, the US and elsewhere. Carrying on the family tradition, in 2003, Dong Zeng Chen's son Alex moved from Honolulu to New York City which he now uses as his base for teaching the Art around the world.

Tung Hu Ling taught and inspired many talented students and teachers of the art of Taijiquan. He was also highly skilled in the practice of acupuncture, and he helped many people achieve better health through his talents. While he had immense skill and power he was not a self promoter. He was a traditional gentleman who spoke humbly, diplomatically and with respect regarding others and their opinions. He encouraged his students to ask questions and he was open to discussion and frequently demonstrated his points during classes.

After eating a normal lunch at St. Francis Hospital in Honolulu, Tung Hu Ling died at about 2:30 in the afternoon from an ongoing heart condition from diabetes mellitus on November 29, 1992, at age 75. He was buried in Hawaii Memorial Park overlooking Kaneohe Bay on the North side of Oahu, Hawaii. At the time of his death his living family included: Wife: Li Feng. Brother: Tung Jung Bo. Sisters: Tung Wah and Jasmine Tung (Mrs. Chen). Sons: Tung Kai Ying and Dong Zeng Chen. Daughters: Dong Shio Rung and Dong Xiao Rung. And numerous grandchildren. Memorial ceremonies were held in his honor at various locations around the world.

Author's note: The information above is from my personal knowledge and a variety of other sources. Both the Wade-Giles and the Pinyin forms of transliteration are used. For example his family name, "Tung" in the former system, is written as "Dong" in the latter. The Chinese characters, and thus the words are the same. Generally I have used the Chinese custom in which people's names begin with the family name, followed by their given name.

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