

Tung (Dong) Fu Ling

You asked, "Who is Tung Hu Ling and what style of taijiquan does he teach?" As I sit here at my word processor, I am tempted to write many pages about this man. But, unfortunately (or perhaps, fortunately) I am a lazy boy, so I'll just give you a few words.

If you would like more information you should read an article in Tai Chi Magazine, February, 1993, Volume 17, Number 1. It has a lot about the man and his taijiquan. It also includes an obituary, since Tung Hu Ling died on November 29, 1992, in Honolulu.

I had the good fortune to study under Tung in Honolulu beginning in 1978, and continuing until his death. I am presently a disciple of Tung's youngest son, Dong Zeng Chen.

Tung Hu Ling was recognized by all the people with whom I have met to be a master of taijiquan. When I visited Singapore in 1990, several people there stated to me that they thought he was even better than his father, Tung Ying Chieh (one of Yang Chen Fu's top disciples).

Tung's taiji was characterized by a softness that was deceptive. When you pushed with him you were pushing on nothing. And when he applied a move to you and destroyed you, you usually didn't know what happened.

He taught the traditional Yang style of taijiquan as perpetuated by Yang Chen Fu. I have seen films of both Tung and his father. While the flavoring is different, the basic form is the same. I am confident that he carried on the Yang style, true to its roots.

He also taught the Tung family fast set. This was a set created by his father. Tung's grandson, Alex, once described this set as containing "all the best moves". I tend to agree. It was taught to us as an advanced set that was focused on the martial art application side of taijiquan. While patterned around the Yang form, it has elements from the old Wu form and other flavors as well. It is characterized by short energy, slow and fast movement, stomps, slaps, and a pounding fist.

Tung also taught the Yang style broadsword (or knife) and the straight sword.

When he was teaching in Hong Kong he developed a single stick set and a double stick set. He also taught these in Honolulu. I was told by one of the senior students here that he developed these sets using sticks because you could not carry weapons in Hong Kong, but that the sets were actually made for a single and double knives. When I do the double stick set now I like to use hooked swords. My preference.

He also told us that he created a series of seven two person sets when he was teaching in Thailand. The Tung family were the first to teach taijiquan in Thailand. Apparently no one before them had been able to defeat the Thai boxers. Tung Ying Chieh did the job, and ever since the Tung family has had many followers there. Tung Hu Ling said that he created the sets in Thailand because the people there liked to fight. So the fighting sets were of interest to them.

I have not seen these sets. His son, Dong Zeng Chen, did teach us a two person set patterned after the Yang style set. I don't know if it is one of his father's creations or one of his own.

So Tung Hu Ling was a master of the Yang style of Taijiquan, the Tung style, and a creator of various other expressions of the art. Those who knew him believed that he exhibited the highest level of skill in his arts. While I am not a master, and thus not qualified to judge, I believe they are correct in their assessment.

If you are interested in the Dong (Tung) family there are a few members of the Neijia List and the Taichichuan List who have studied with the Dong family. Also, Alex Dong, Tung Hu Ling's grandson, is available on the internet at [dong@aloha.net](mailto:dong@aloha.net).

I hope this at least partially answers your question.

Aloha,

Chip Ellis