

TAIJIQUAN JOURNAL

A TAIJIQUAN WORKSHOP AT YOUR DOOR!
-- TAIJIQUAN (T'AI CHI CH'UAN) --
THE CHINESE MARTIAL ART, HEALTH EXERCISE, AND MOVING MEDITATION

OCTOBER 18, 2018

In Memory: Benjamin Lo



One of the leading figures of late twentieth-century taiji, Benjamin Pang-jeng Lo, has passed away. Born in 1927 in Mainland China, Ben, as he was called by his students, was one of **Professor Cheng Man-ch'ing's** earliest students in Taiwan after both of their families had resettled there at the end of China's civil war in the late 1940s.

In his early twenties, Lo was not well; his father sent him to see Cheng Man-ch'ing, who was a well-known artist and traditional doctor, as well as a t'ai chi master. Lo was not able to consume the prescribed herbs, so Cheng recommended he study t'ai chi to build up his body strength. Lo began training with Cheng, and never stopped. He studied literature in college, and then got a masters in public administration. After working in the government, all the while continuing his t'ai chi studies, he moved to San Francisco, and with Cheng's encouragement, began his teaching career.

Over the years, Ben Lo taught thousands of students, both in his San Francisco studio and in regular camps and workshops in many cities around the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. He was a regular visitor to the Shih Chung T'ai Chi Association when visiting Taiwan. Lo, along with Robert Smith, was a staunch defender of Cheng's teachings and reputation.

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about taijiquan (t'ai chi ch'uan / tai chi / 太極拳 / 太极拳)—the Chinese health exercise, martial art, and moving meditation.

Please note that our **print edition** is currently on hiatus, however, **back issues are still available** (quantities limited).

I ♥ T'ai Chi

Taijiquan Journal editor Barbara Davis is director of **Great River Tai Chi** in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and is author of *The Taijiquan Classics: An Annotated Translation*, and translator of Chen Weiming's *Taiji Sword*. She serves on the editorial advisory board for the **Journal of Asian Martial Arts**, and is at work on a full-length biography of **Cheng Man-ch'ing**.

Lo produced several important books. He worked on a translation of the Classics with Susan Foe, Robert Amacker, and Martin Inn, titled *The Essence of T'ai Chi Ch'uan*, which was one of the earliest t'ai chi books in English (it has since been reissued by the [Inner Research Institute](#)). With Robert W. Smith, he translated Chen Weiming's *T'ai Chi Ch'uan Ta Wen: Questions and Answers on T'ai Chi Ch'uan*. With Martin Inn, Lo translated Cheng Man-ch'ing's seminal *Cheng-tzu's Thirteen Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan*.

Lo was the subject of a number of articles, including a lengthy interview in the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*. He also gave a series of lectures and made videos, produced by the Inner Research Institute.

Lo's workshops were grueling, challenging, enlightening, and informative. They were usually quite large, with scores of students in attendance. They struggled to hold postures while he walked around making corrections on everyone. Lo's ability to root was legendary; he was able to playfully shrug off the most aggressive and large push hands challengers, always with a smile on his face. His teaching style was very direct and often very critical-sounding, but always with humor. "You must go lower! Remember my name, Ben(d) Lo!" He regularly admonished me and others, saying, "Why do you Americans have to write books about t'ai chi? You should just practice more!" Another pet peeve he had was how impatient people were about learning and presumptuousness about becoming teachers: "They think they can teach t'ai chi after just studying one month. They think they can be born after just one month!"

Ben Lo's work lives on in his many students and others whom he inspired.

—Barbara Davis

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