

Changliang He Huang



Embrace Tiger,
Return to Mountain

The Essence of Tai Ji

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SI CHI KO
FOREWORD BY ALAN WATTS



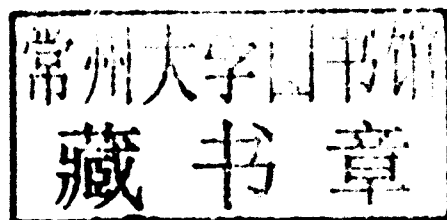
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EMBRACE TIGER, RETURN TO MOUNTAIN

by the same author

Essential Tai Ji

Chungliang Al Huang

Photographs by Si Chi Ko

ISBN 978 1 84819 053 5

Quantum Soup

Fortune Cookies in Crisis

New and Enlarged Edition

Chungliang Al Huang

ISBN 978 1 84819 054 2

The Chinese Book of Animal Powers

Chungliang Al Huang

ISBN 978 1 84819 066 5

Water 水 Mirror 鏡

Moon 月 Flower 花

To
My parents & Children
Most of all
Love
to
my Wife
Suzanne









*REFLECTION ON LIVING OUR
TAO NOW: INTRODUCTION TO
THIS PERENNIAL CLASSICS EDITION*

When I wrote the introduction for the last edition celebrating the Silver Jubilee in 1997 of *Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain*, I had just turned sixty, the age Confucius talked about being free from ambivalence and contradictions. Now, nearly a decade and a half later, I have already bypassed the age when the great sage celebrated his arriving at seventy to be able to “follow my heart’s desire, without going astray!”

A reality check: Have I been following my heart’s desire and not going astray? And, honestly, have I found my true bliss, and am I actually following it?

It is deeply humbling to be aware that at this age, Confucius was already at the end of his life, and was praying to God to grant him ten more years so he could devote himself entirely to the study of the I Ching. It is equally daunting to realize that my father had already passed at seventy and Alan W. Watts was gone prematurely at fifty-eight. Joseph Campbell and my mother only managed to live for another decade longer than my current age. Time is ephemeral, and the wish to stretch our moments longer and fuller becomes relative and a metaphor for the experience of being truly alive.

More than ever, the “Tiger” of time I am learning to embrace has to be qualitative instead of quantitative. I am grateful for this ongoing lesson through mostly being with my two bright and wonder-full grand children, and for feeling at ease as an acknowledged elder among my peers and students. Tai Ji practice helps to provide the blessed illusion to feel and act much younger at my age. And I believe in my ability to maintain the sense of wonder when I can be in tune with my grand children to being present in the Here and Now.

Living Tao Foundation celebrated its thirtieth year, joining my approaching seventy in August of 2007 to entertain a 30 + 70 Centenary, a good excuse for a gathering in Gold Beach, where we had re-established our non-profit educational status in the State of Oregon. This spontaneous party was a resounding success with 250-plus Living Tao friends from seventeen nationalities coming for the Family Reunion. It was a joyous occasion, an opportunity to stage an impromptu “arts and cultural festival” in Gold Beach. There were daily Tai Ji classes in school gymnasiums for the community, nightly music concerts in local churches, ranging from Jamaican steel drums to Chinese qin and Taoist reading, viola, trombone and didjiridu, clarinet and piano, to Bach’s Cello Suites; art and photography exhibitions in the galleries; several guest-authors’ reading and book signing at the Bookstore. And at the Events Center, a dance panel and performances of Modern, Flamenco, and Apsaras dances from the Dun Huang Buddhist Caves; showings of documentary films of Joseph Campbell, Ram Dass, and The Dalai Lama. Culminating at the week’s end, a beautifully designed banquet with award winning Oregon wines and scrumptious gourmet entries were served—this usually sleepy, small Oregon coastal town would never be quite the same again!

As I hope to gently settle into my delusional Sage-hood, I continue to perch vicariously on the balancing pole of the Yin/Yang dance of life. My wish for “Mountains coming to Mohammed” is only partially fulfilled with biannual in-depth seminars at our River House at the mouth of the Rogue River. A new experiment was launched summer of 2010 to

consolidate the essentials of my teaching into a conceivable curriculum, offering intensive month-long training for those who wish to gain competence and expertise, poised to call themselves “Living Tao Tai Ji practitioners” and “Living Tao teachers.” It proved to be a respectable success, with enthusiastic participations and many college students, who were ready and sincere in their wish to learn. With their clear accomplishment entering into this perpetual lifelong learning process, we were and will be able to coordinate and collaborate with partner institutions to offer them legitimate certifications and college credits.

Rereading my first book based on the transcriptions of my early years of teaching at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California (soon to celebrate fifty years since its inception), I am delighted to realize how timeless it still is, with its essence in my wish to transmit the Tai Ji philosophy and practice, a fortunate birthright of my Chinese heritage. My attempt to express all I knew and felt of what we could learn and why we must practice was palpably simple and clear. Everything I was eager to impart through my teaching then still rings true today. Living Tao Foundation was founded three years after the book was published. Nearly four decades since, I have continued to receive guidance and support from mentors and colleagues, and from all our Living Tao seminarians, many of them started in the early years were in fact my seniors; I bow to them. We gratefully remember many of our elders who have passed on.

Three years ago at the Friends of Esalen benefit weekend, I was officially honored as an “Esalen elder,” and was very moved to have the spectacular Esalen deck by the Sea where I had been teaching for four and half decades, named as the “Chungliang Al Huang Tai Ji Deck.” What an honor to live up to. Now my grandchildren tease me affectionately, telling others that their grandpa is immortalized as a “Deck”!

As China looms larger than ever on the world stage, my work in realizing an East-West Cultural Synthesis becomes even more timely. With good fortune, we were able to re-establish our early good relationship with

Wu Yi Mountain in Fujian where I first took our Lan Ting Institute there in 1984.

Since UNESCO declared Wu Yi Shan a World Heritage Site in both cultural-arts and scenic beauty categories, we can be assured that increasing tourism will not spoil this special place as quickly as other unfortunate beauty spots in China. Lan Ting Institute, with seminarians from eleven countries returned there for a month in the spring of 2008, and again, autumn of 2010. What a pleasure for me to be able to share my teaching right at home in my birth country. At the moment, we are also working with the new and very receptive Wu Yi University to establish affiliations for future collaborative curricular developments. With the same focus on China, focusing on citizen's diplomacy, I have rejoined the team at Esalen Institute to revive the Sino-American Forum we first initiated in 1987. The rebirth of this early project is now called "Potential China" which will bring Chinese from various walks of life to meet their counterparts in the West, annually at Esalen for a week of dialogue, to foster deeper understanding and cross-cultural exchange. During the first three years we have brought Chinese professionals in journalism/communication, internet/media, green ecology/business, to meet with their Western counterparts. In the coming years, we will reach out to the cross cultural-arts communities and other inter-disciplinary groups.

Since 1997, I have written several new books, co-authored with my friend, the sports psychologist Dr. Jerry Lynch. Our first two collaborations, *Thinking Body*, *Dancing Mind*, and *Tao Mentoring* are still perennial favorites for many readers. We are planning to launch into another project soon, plunging deeper into "Tao Sports" practices, gleaning the wisdom from the eighty-one verses of *Tao Te Ching*.

My next writing project has become imperative. Since my recent pilgrimage back to China in search of both my parents' ancestry, I have vowed to write the past century of Chinese history, interweaving with my family sagas from both parentage. Excerpts from early installments have

already been serialized in “The Empty Vessel,” the magazine of Contemporary Taoism.

As a grandpa performer, I am grateful that I can still rely on my CHI to continue giving concerts, dancing my Tai Ji with several fine musician friends. In the past ten years I have enjoyed continuing collaborations with acoustic harpist Andreas Vollenweider, cellists David Darling and Michael Fitzpatrick, even a reunion with old friend, flutist Paul Horn at a recent Esalen Institute gathering. For five summers, I taught and performed at the Oregon Bach Festival in Eugene, Oregon. I was privileged to join the teaching staff to work with young conductors and chorus members at the festival under the mentorship of Maestro Helmut Rilling; and shared concerts with pianist Robert Levin, flutist Lorna McGhee and trumpeter Guy Few.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Jessica Kingsley of Singing Dragon Publishers, who has the insight to consider my first three books, *Embrace Tiger*, *Return to Mountain*, *Essential Tai Ji*, and *Quantum Soup* as perennial classics, and see to it that they will stay in print for generations to enjoy. In addition, my first and so far only children’s book, *The Chinese Book of Animal Powers*, will also join these three books to become a perennial, timeless favorite for children from age 8 to ∞ . It is my great honor to be working with Jessica and her staff at Singing Dragon and to be acknowledged in this way.

I greet you readers, many old friends who have shared my passion in Living Tao philosophy and Tai Ji practice long before this book was first published, and to new friends who may have just discovered Tai Ji and Tao philosophy. May this simple volume inspire you to celebrate fully your Tai Ji body, mind and spirit. Enjoy the Dance of your Own Life, NOW!

Chungliang Al Huang
Year of the Golden Hare 4709





