

Tai Chi master teaches for health, not defense

By Kelvin Wee
Of the Emerald

A class in Tai Chi, a martial art rich in the cultural expression of the Chinese, will be offered at the University this summer by the Innovative Education Development office.

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art form fast gaining popularity in the Western world, and is still a popular form of exercise in China.

And while most other martial arts require the person to exert force and violence, Tai Chi only involves breathing and mental concentration, as well as graceful, controlled body motions, said Sik Hung Chan, who will be conducting the course and has practiced Tai Chi for more than 40 years.

Chan added it is the required concentration and grace which can be beneficial to a person's health.

Chan originally is from China and has taught Tai Chi and

other Chinese martial arts there for the last 30 years.

He immigrated to the United States with his family a year ago and has been learning English since then. "The culture and language here is very different, but I like it better because the people are more friendly," Chan said.

Chan began learning martial arts when he was eight years old. "I started learning Shaolin Kung Fu as a boy, and began taking Tai Chi classes when I was 20." Since then, Chan has taught martial arts in the South China Agricultural University for more than 30 years, and has been a board member of the Canton Martial Arts Association since 1960, he added.

"Tai Chi can also improve a person's health by reducing stress levels," Chan said. "Many scientists believe that a person who practices Tai Chi regularly will have a more efficient circulatory, respiratory,

digestive and central nervous system. Tai Chi can also be beneficial to those who cannot take strenuous exercise because of high blood pressure and other chronic heart diseases."

Chan will be teaching a combination of the best movements from the various forms of Tai Chi. "There are over eight different forms of Tai Chi, the most popular of which are the 'Yang' and the 'Wu'. However, there is a lot of repetition in many of them and I have worked to combine the 24 finest movements from all these forms and will be teaching them in the class," Chan added.

Chan also plans to teach breathing exercises and other basic Kung Fu motions in the class. "I will not teach Tai Chi for it to be used as a weapon," Chan said. "However, I will demonstrate that if one were to speed up the motions in Tai Chi, it could turn into a dangerous martial art."

Chan said his main reason for offering this class is to share this ancient cultural art from China, and he hopes it will help some people here.

"I would also like to learn more about the American peo-

ple, their culture and language. I hope that this class will help me learn more about America as much as I hope that I can help others learn and understand more about China and the Chinese culture," Chan added.

Chan said he believes language will not be a problem for him while conducting the class. "Tai Chi is an art of movement and concentration," he said. "My aim is to teach the art and develop the skills of my students."

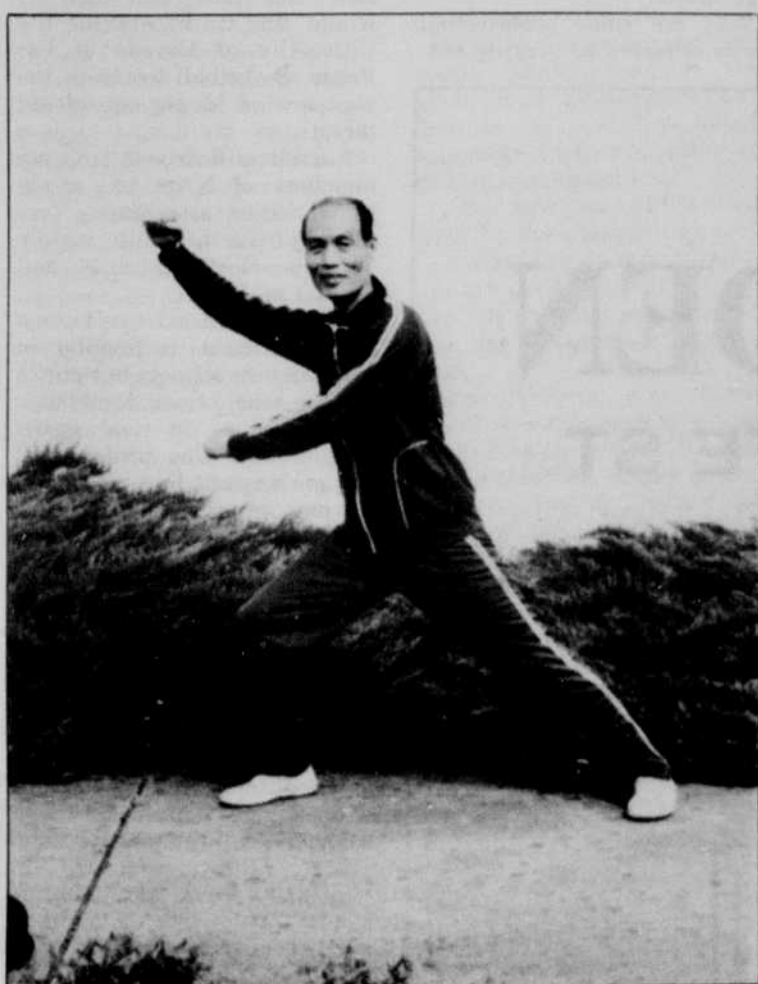
Chan's English tutor, Kobi Miller, has taken classes in Tai Chi for the last six months. Miller said that it is the chance of a lifetime for someone to have the opportunity to study this art with a teacher who originally is from China.

"Chan is not just a teacher of Tai Chi, he is a master of the art. He brings with him the knowledge and tradition of Tai Chi which is not clearly understood by many of the teachers without that background," Miller said.

"In fact, Chan is not just a master in Tai Chi. He is a high master of this art in China, but

he is too modest about it. There are many hidden secrets in Tai Chi and other Chinese martial arts, but Chan is not afraid to share them with his students. His abilities as a teacher of the arts has impressed many people who are studying under him now," her added. Miller also will be assisting Chan in conducting the classes.

The class will begin June 23 and ends Aug. 13. The class meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., and there is a \$25 fee for the non-credit Innovative Education class. Interested people may register for the class at EMU Room 110, or call 686-4305 for more information.



Sik Hung Chan

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