

## **Master Koh Ah Tee**

A brief report by John Chow of Tao of Tai Chi Chuan Institute on his Taipei trip, June/July 2005

Master Koh Ah Tee is one of the outstanding masters of the “next generation” - those coming after the old masters.

Master Koh Ah Tee studied under several top masters of the Cheng Mang Ching lineage:- Tan Ching Ngee, Wu Guo Zhong, and Lau Kim Hong. He has advanced his understanding to a very high level.

Master Koh Ah Tee believes Tai Chi Chuan is a teaching of the Dao. He reads the Dao De Jing daily. His Tai Chi Chuan is formless. He says all the different styles of Tai Chi Chuan was what the old masters had created by themselves from their own experience and understanding, and it is their own individual expressions. It is their students who learnt the teachings and formalised them into definitive structures that became styles. These are the teachings of human beings, and are not the Dao. In reality, there are no styles. There are only 2 types of Tai Chi Chuan:- incorrect Tai Chi Chuan, and correct Tai Chi Chuan which is based on the old classics, which are in accord with the Dao.

Master Koh Ah Tee says correct Tai Chi Chuan is formless. It should not look like this movement, or that movement. All the movements we have in our Tai Chi Chuan styles were created by the old masters to reflect their ideas about the Dao. They are ideas and creations. They are not the Dao. The real Dao is formless. Therefore, everything we do, speak, act, think or feel is movement of the Dao. We must understand the way of the Dao and apply that to our bodies, speech, minds, functions and activities. That is practising the Dao. As long as the expressions are in accord with the Dao, that is correct Tai Chi Chuan.

Master Koh Ah Tee emphasised to practise the exercise form. Everything and every training is found in the exercise form. Relaxation, yielding, neutralising, attacking, stepping, alignment, Fa Jing, Yin & Yang, emptiness, 13 Postures Nei Gong, mental intent etc etc are included in the exercise form.

I asked what Nei Gong exercises he recommends. His response was that if one practises the form diligently in the correct way, there is no need to specifically train in Nei Gong. The special skills and abilities of Nei Gong can be obtained via the exercise form.

When I asked how to develop “Fa Jing”, his response was the same. Mental intent (“Yi”) is the driving force. Relaxation and yielding is important. All these are in the exercise form. There is no need to look further.

How about Pushing Hands? He said that if one diligently practises the exercise form correctly, all the skills of Push Hands will be obtained. How about the 13 Postures? The same! Everything comes from Peng Jing in the sense that Lu etc follows after Peng. If one has developed Peng Jing, then all the other 13 Postures can be mastered and all associated Jings will be mastered. Therefore, Peng Jing is the mother of all other Jings - in the practical sense.

How to develop Peng Jing? The answer, invariable, was the same. Practise the exercise form diligently.

How does one develop high combat skill? Practise the exercise form diligently. One is formless and one's techniques have no format. Thus, the opponent can not know what shape or form or direction one is coming from. One is empty so the opponent can not find one and thus, can not effectively attack. All these abilities arise from diligent practise of the exercise form.

Similar answers are given for other training devises such as the San Shou (2 person sparring set).

I note that when Master Koh Ah Tee was developing his Tai Chi Chuan skills, he trained hard as all others do. Now that he has attained skills and understanding, he has attained to a high level, and discarded fixed format and fixed techniques and fixed styles. He has discarded various different "extra implementations used as training devices by other masters. His Tai Chi Chuan is formless.

Master Koh Ah Tee is a reasonably wealthy man, but he lives an austere simple live.



Portrait of Master Koh Ah Tee performing Snake Creeps Down



John Chow with Koh Ah Tee



John Chow with Master Koh Ah Tee



Nigel Sutton with Master Koh Ah Tee

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