

## Thoughts on the passing of Laoshi Ben Lo

Thanks to all of you who have gathered in memory and recognition of Laoshi Ben Lo.

There is so much that can be said about this extraordinary Tai Chi teacher who refused to be called a Master, yet who—in his unique Internal skills, and in his teachings—definitely touched Mastership.

I believe the source of his gifts and teaching came from his deep love of and respect for this awesome art called Tai Chi Chuan, of which he often said that "he just had the good fortune" to learn from the Master of Five Excellencies, Professor Cheng Man Ching.

Our good fortune has been to receive the gift of Tai Chi Camps and Workshops that Ben developed and taught all over the world—from Norway, Sweden, Holland, and Israel, to places throughout the United States. Through these camps and workshops, he passed on the incredible knowledge and wisdom of this Art's rich and valuable legacy, a legacy to which it is not easy to gain access. Through these venues he taught us the "secrets"—the Principles—and also *how to practice*.

Teaching us how to practice has been so important to me. In teaching us to practice, Ben taught us how to embody the Principles, to instill the Principles in our bodies and, eventually, in all aspects of our everyday lives. Ben's practice led us not only to *think* the Principles, and not only to *follow* them, but to *think, follow, and experience* the Principles simultaneously.

At his camps and workshops we also got to see and experience the wonderful and sometimes magical things Ben would do with his mind and body, allowing us a glimpse into the awesome possibilities of this Art. And in doing the work, he would take us to places within ourselves and beyond ourselves, where we gained access to a capacity we had no idea we were capable of, in this way changing the possibilities of who we could become and what we could achieve in this lifetime.

Often referred to as Tai Chi Boot Camp, to get through a Ben Lo Tai Chi camp required accomplishing a lot. But even though the camps were serious, Ben manifested a unique love and lightheartedness that balanced the heaviness of the work, and he could be so funny as we laughed through our sweat.

Ben and his attitude fostered something unique in those camps. We learned to work extraordinarily hard. Ben said Professor would say that Tai Chi is henan (very difficult): that's the way of martial arts. We trained with the push hands, training through the difficulties and challenges that martial arts present, and at the end of the training, coming together to be held in Ben's arms, energetically filled with Love and Compassion that enabled us to honor and respect each other as brothers and sisters on this incredible journey along this Tai Chi Path, together.

Ben taught us and gave us independence in how to train and do our own practice; and how to be in community, how to train together. Such a gift he left us.

There is so much that can be said about Laoshi Ben Lo. We are so fortunate to have been in the light of his "sun," and to have felt its nurturing warmth.

Near the end of his life, Ben asked me to share his wish for us all: to wholeheartedly practice this art in the way he has instructed us, using the Principles, with devotion and dedication.

I am wishing us all the best path through processing our great loss.

Thank you for celebrating Laoshi with Honor and Love at this event. A special thanks goes out to Joanne Chang for creating this important remembrance for Laoshi Ben Lo.

Laoshi's student and your classmate,

- Lenzie J. Williams