

Revisiting Grandmaster Feng

Twenty years ago, I began my study of Chen-style Taiji with Grandmaster Feng Zhiqiang in Beijing, China. Since then, I have practiced, taught, written about, and promoted the Taiji of Grandmaster Feng for close to 20 years. Fortunately, I was able to study with Master Zhang Xue Xin, Grandmaster Feng's senior U.S. representative in the U.S., since 1991. I did the best I could to raise my own level as well as those of my students and others who read my articles. In August 2000, I traveled back to see Grandmaster Feng in Helsinki, Finland. He was there teaching the Hun Yuan Taiji 24 and 48 forms, Hun Yuan Qigong, and Push-Hands training exercises from the Hun Yuan system.



Accompanying me was SiHing (now SiFu) Herb Parran, SiHing (now #1) Jim Bushman, Laura Clark, and Herb's student Troy Holloway (**all pictured with Grandmaster Feng above**). We traveled for 19 hours to get to Finland and were met by Laura (she had traveled ahead), who showed us around and got us to the workshop. The workshop was excellent and Grandmaster Feng was wonderful. There were other students of Masters Zhang Xue Xin, Yang Yang, and Joseph Chen, including Yarron Seidman, who is a student of Joseph Chen and Feng's official translator. By coincidence, we also met Yang Yang's student Bob Schlagel, who Karen Caldwell is working with in North Carolina. We all had a great time getting to know each other.



Grandmaster Feng, Sifu Justin, and others



Left to Right: Sifu Herb, Sifu Justin, and Sihing Jim

Grandmaster Feng was impressed with our dedication and hard work. He granted us a private audience, and I had an opportunity to interview both him and his son-in-law Wang Feng Ming, who was hosting the workshop. I will be writing an article for *Tai Chi Magazine* which will go into greater detail.

After reviewing our form, Grandmaster Feng stated we had practiced well and with almost no mistakes. He encouraged others to work as hard. He complimented our class's dedication and seriousness (we all took lots of notes, came to class early and practiced hard). Grandmaster Feng remembered me from when I was a member of the 1st Sports Delegation to study with him in

Beijing in 1981. He invited me personally to visit and study with him again in Beijing. All this made me even more appreciative of our teacher, Master Zhang Xue Xin. Master Zhang really did give us the "gold" when he gave us the "details." Grandmaster Feng has a brilliant mind and discusses everything in context of the "Big Tao," which includes everything from Chinese philosophy to quantum physics. Had we not had the detailed understanding provided to us by Master Zhang, I doubt if we could have learned as much or attracted Grandmaster Feng's attention. We felt like Grandmaster Feng's teaching was like a big wheel, but Master Zhang's teachings were like the spokes in the wheel, which gave the wheel its character and shape. On behalf of our school, we wish to thank Master Zhang for his teachings. His teachings took us all the way to Finland and resulted in Grandmaster Feng telling us that we had done a good job. I felt personally that, at very least, Grandmaster Feng thought he had not wasted his efforts when he took time to teach me back in 1981 and that Master Zhang had done a good job training us and preparing us for our visit to Grandmaster Feng Zhiqiang. (More Info Later)



Sifu Justin in between Bob Schlagel and Yarron Seidman