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About the Cover
Katsuhiro Tsuyama
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“My understanding of Karate evolved as I grew as human being and as my Karate matured too I saw other important elements that were not there when I started.”

- Katsuhiro Tsuyama

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Gosoku Ryu in Poland
By Staff



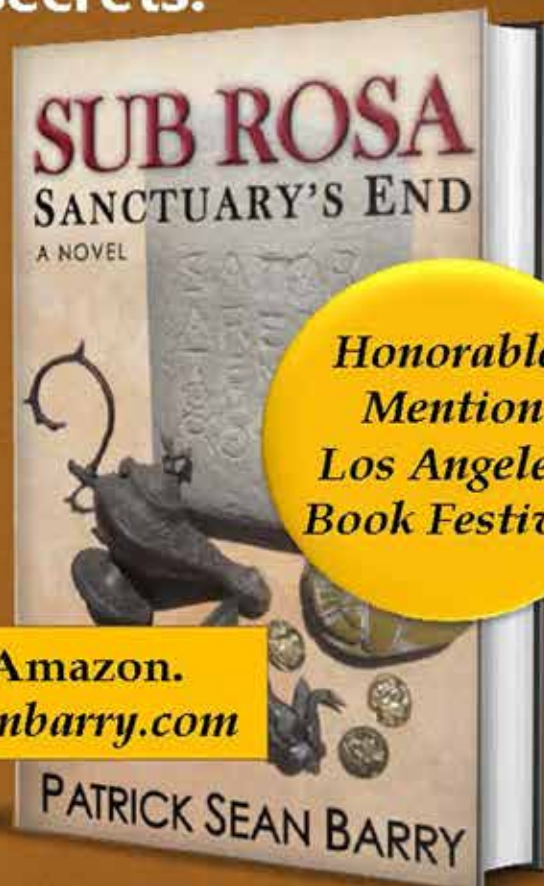
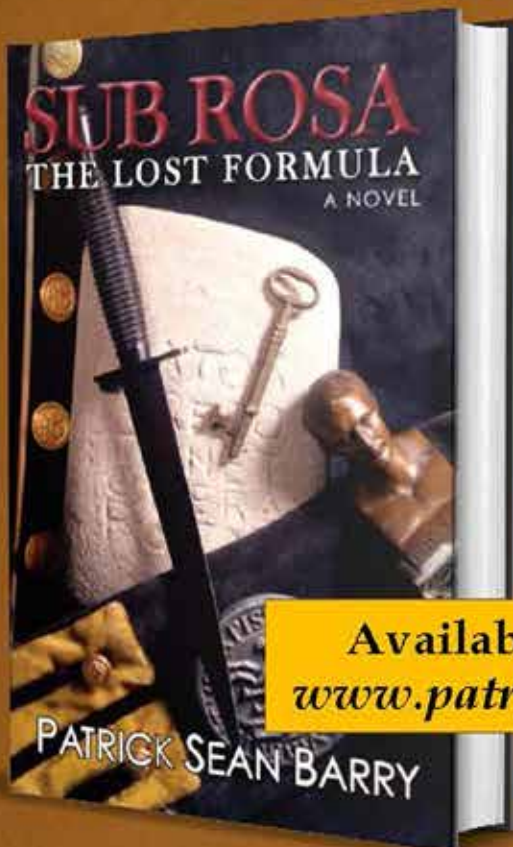
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CHENG MAN-CHING

Tai Chi's Polymath Pioneer in the West

By Patrick S. Barry, Photos by Ken Van Sickle



While well renowned in the West as a leading and innovative figure in the introduction of Tai Chi (t'ai chi ch'uan or taiji) to the Americas, Cheng Man-Ching (Zheng Manqing) was, in reality, a renaissance man of the highest order. Because of Cheng's accomplished skills in the disciplines of Chinese medicine, t'ai chi ch'uan (literally translated as 'great ultimate boxing'), and san-chueh (the 'Three Perfections': calligraphy, painting and poetry), he was also referred to as the 'Master of Five Excellences'. Cheng's published works were abundant. His genius appeared in three books of poetry, four tomes of his paintings and calligraphy, three volumes on medicine, four on t'ai chi ch'uan, and six books on culture and tradition. He was a member of National Assembly for Republic of China, a Confucian scholar of traditional China, and a college professor at a number of institutions, which earned him the appellation "The Professor" among his students.

Foundations for the Excellences

Born in 1902, Cheng Man-Ching's mother taught him poetry and calligraphy at an early age, and he apprenticed during his youth to Wang Hsiang-ch'an (Wang Xiangchan), a well-known artist. Within years, Cheng began earning his living as a painter, leading to a lifetime of success selling his paintings. Also, during Cheng's early years, his mother taught him the essentials of traditional Chinese herbal medicine which included identifying and harvesting medicinal plants.

His success as an artist led to positions at a number of colleges in Beijing and Shanghai, teaching both art and poetry. In his twenties, however, he contracted tuberculosis, with pronounced bloody coughing, which injured his lungs. In response, Cheng ceased classroom teaching in college, partly due to his lung's sensitivity to chalk dust, and intensified his study of t'ai chi ch'uan and traditional Chinese medicine, along with formal medical training, which included Chinese gynecology and obstetrics, as well as orthopedic medicine. He was said to be able to memorize complex information at a glance.

One critical element of Cheng's medical studies included his relationship with famed doctor Dr. Sung You-an, whose family was renowned for nine generations of practitioners in traditional Chinese medicine. While on a visit to Shanghai, having retired from medi-

cal practice, the distinguished physician from Anhui province happened to see a complex herbal prescription written by Cheng. Much impressed, Dr. Sung asked to meet the man who wrote it, expecting him to be a fellow greybeard physician. To his surprise, Dr. Sung learned Cheng was in his late twenties. While Dr. Sung had four sons who were successful doctors in China, he felt none were capable of preserving the complex body of knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine. Now he saw in Cheng a candidate who might be able to continue the tradition he had sustained through unbroken generations in knowledge transference. After years of invitations conveyed through correspondences, and managing various conflicting commitments, Cheng finally accepted the offer to study with Sung. In response, Dr. Sung came out of retirement to demonstrate his treatment of patients. Cheng undertook an intensive study with Sung for two years, wherein he learned and mastered his teacher's knowledge of the Tao of medicine. In doing so, he came to comprehend the hidden wisdom of Chinese medicine's forefathers, the great doctors of the Tang, Sung, Yuan, Ming, and Ching dynasties – along with their potent pharmacopoeia.



Tai Chi's Expanding Role in The Professor's Life

During the 1930's Cheng studied the Yang-style of t'ai chi ch'uan with Yang Ch'eng-fu (1883–1936), deemed by martial arts historians to be the leading teacher of the Yang-style of his era, and the third generation descendant of Tai Chi's Yang-style founder, Yang Lu-ch'an (later known as Yang Wudi – 'Yang the Invincible'). During his training in close proximity to the grand master, Cheng gained a deeper understanding of the principles of t'ai-chi ch'uan. At that same time, however, Yang's wife grew seriously ill – where no doctors had been successful in healing her – as her condition worsened. Cheng Man-Ching ultimately treated her, and helped return her to good health. In response, Yang's wife entreated her husband to teach Cheng the inner wisdom of the martial art, offered only to a select few. Deeply indebted, Master Yang honored his wife's wish and taught Cheng all the important secrets of t'ai-'chi ch'uan and t'ai chi jian (sword), without exception. Cheng and Yang's relationship deepened in many ways, and Cheng reportedly ghostwrote Yang's second book – *Essence and Applications of T'ai Chi Ch'uan* (1934) – for which Cheng authored the preface and rendered calligraphic dedications. Cheng studied with Yang until the venerable teacher's passing.

By 1938, Cheng had developed a significantly abbreviated 37-movement version of Yang's traditional form (108 moves), which was ultimately adopted worldwide by practitioners of Tai Chi. Cheng's short form 37 movement postures reduced many of the redundancies in the longer Yang form, thereby making it easier to teach, learn, and practice. Early in the Second Sino-Japanese War years (which ultimately became a theater of World War II), Cheng moved to Chongqing (then known in the West as Chungking) in Sichuan Province, where he practiced medicine and continued his craft as an artist. As well, he taught t'ai chi ch'uan, at the Central Military Academy (formerly the Huang-po Military Academy), China's equivalent of West Point in the United States. A few years later, he served as the Director of Martial Arts of Hunan Province. During this period, Cheng also wrote the early manuscript version for his *Thirteen Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan*.

Tai Chi's Polymath Pioneer in the West



Winds of Change in China

After World War II, the new Chinese Communist government engaged in the suppression of all traditional teachings, including the practice of martial arts. Training facilities were closed and practitioners were prosecuted. Forced to flee mainland China during the Chinese Civil War, Cheng settled in Taiwan in 1949, where he founded the Shr Jung School of T'ai-chi Ch'uan. While there, Cheng continued his career as a physician, along with actively practicing painting, poetry and calligraphy. He published 13 Treatises of T'ai Chi Ch'uan in 1950. As well, Cheng reportedly served as personal physician to President Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) and was one of Soong Meiling's (Madame Chiang Kai-shek) painting teachers. A number of prominent Tai Chi practitioners who trained under Cheng-Man-Ching in Taiwan subsequently came to the United States to teach. They include Ben Lo and William C.C. Chen, who ultimately started his own form of Yang. Included in this group was Robert W. Smith, who was stationed in Taiwan with the CIA and studied as Cheng's the first non-Chinese student. Smith was later known for his many books and articles (including co-authoring a book on Tai Chi with Cheng) which helped popularize Asian martial arts in the United States following World War II.

Cheng's New York Years

At the age of 63, Cheng wanted to share his knowledge on a wider scale. Seeking new and broader horizons of opportunity for him and his family, Cheng accepted an offer from the Chinese Association, a collection of expatriate Chinese businessmen, and moved with his family to New York City in 1964 and began teaching at the New York T'ai Chi Association on Canal Street. In doing so, he brought Tai Chi and a rich blend of Chinese

culture to the West during the swinging, turbulent 60's. He was one of the first teachers of Tai Chi offering this privileged knowledge to Westerners, a breakthrough opportunity for the melting pot of Americans interested in studying this unique martial art in the New York area, where before, options were severely limited.

So broad was the appeal of studying this compelling and comparatively new martial art in the West, the background of the students coming to Professor Cheng's studio ranged from experienced martial artists to sensitive artists. Students from all walks of life came to study and practice, men, and women as well, in far more equal proportions than traditional martial arts. Cheng Man-Ching also brought the broad-based wisdom of his life's accomplished disciplines to his students' benefit, sharing insights in painting and calligraphy, as well as offering



his knowledge of Chinese pharmacopeia to help some students overcome illnesses. He represented a wellspring of deep proficiency and seasoned knowledge, readily accessible to his students. Sharing this unique and invaluable learning experience so openly and widely to non-Chinese, however, was not at all what the Chinese Association sponsors originally had in mind.

Push Hands and Sword

Years before Cheng Man-Ching came to New York City, back in China during his tenure with the Central Military Academy, Westerners had seen firsthand The Professor's impressive skills in t'ai chi ch'uan. On one occasion, the British embassy gave a banquet where the ambassador requested a demonstration by Cheng Man-Ching. This prompted proud members of the British Army to challenge the Chinese master. A similar episode at a party with members of the U.S. Army occurred as well. In both instances, when attacked, Professor Cheng simply appeared to turn his hands and arms slightly as he rotated his body, almost imperceptibly, as his opponents were reportedly flung more than ten feet away. While witnessing such feats as an observer might be impressive, now in the New York studio, Western students had the opportunity to 'own' this knowledge, to become practitioners, for some ultimately to master it, and in turn, have the ability to teach others.

Drawing from the exclusive knowledge passed onto him by Yang Ch'eng-fu, Cheng Man-Ching's technique in both push hands (tui shou) and sword (jian) was peerless. Push hands is an exercise between two practitioners, where both hands and arms are engaged with the partner in a constant application of flowing movement meant to find the other's weakness in balance or stance, and moving them off their center. In more advanced applications, this becomes quite a robust experience, as the British and American military challengers experienced decades before. With sword, a similar approach is applied, with the practitioners striving to keep the swords in contact with each other through constant movement, until an opening is found. Cheng did not teach from specific techniques, per se, but strove to cultivate a feeling so the body had no singular spot, to "listen through your hands."

The way of Jian in Tai Chi. Contrasting technique-centric traditional iaido – the Japanese martial art of drawing the sword, cutting [kiri], and returning it [noto] to the scabbard [saya] – or kendo – the Japanese martial art of sparring with bamboo swords – t'ai chi ch'uan sword technique takes a different approach. Instead of crisp attacking, cutting, blocking and aggressive throat thrusts [tsuki] techniques – Tai Chi's Jian strategy is centered around maintaining 'sticky' contact with the opponent's blade at all times, to feel the currents of intention from the opponent, and to organically flow into opportunities when they are presented. Other applications included with the sticky approach incorporated more advanced applications of 'following the center' and 'adhering', which relate to connecting to your partner's root.

Cheng and Tui Shou. In push hands (tui shou – translated as 'sensing hands'), the essentials of the Professor's teaching philosophy and methodology boiled down to the idea of 'investing in loss'. Here the practitioner allows the opponent push them, and not let the ego interfere, or to worry about losing. Contrary to many other traditional martial arts, it has nothing to do with training students to deliver force against force. Cheng Man-Ching's approach involved handling aggressive energy seamlessly, and to come back from it with the right egoless response, at the right instance, in the right measure. "When there is force, yield. When there is emptiness, fill it up," was one of his lessons. 'Listening with the hands' means feeling the constant changes in your opponent's movement, and with that, knowing where the emptiness lies to fill with a selfless balanced response. Where



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tai chi does not attack and is never more violent than what came in. During push hands demonstrations, Cheng would also show martial applications found within the t'ai chi ch'uan forms themselves.

The 8 Energies of Tai Chi. Deeper exploration of push hands and sword study involved gaining a more profound understanding of the eight energies (ba jin) of Tai Chi. The first four are primary, and the second four are secondary. The Primary Jin are:

- **Peng Jin** – Ward-off energy, the core jin which manifests a radiant relaxed flexible resiliency, with rooted stances and anchored movements, where any kind of attack enhances the power released in response
- **Lu Jin** – Rollback backward, swinging or absorbing, yielding power 'to lead into emptiness', where the centerline of the body acts as the axis of a wheel
- **An Jin** – Pushing down the center of gravity through the practitioner's core (lower daitian), creating a dense fluid moving power rooted in the axis of the body's trunk
- **Ji Jin** – Press straight ahead, forward power applied to crossing any of the opponent's actions over their own center, to compress the opponent's structure.

The Secondary Jin, or 4 Corner Movements, are:

- **Lie Jin** – Split, or possibly more accurately 'snap', as in snapping of fingers, a quick, short, twisting, or torqueing motion, and/or going in different directions, where actual splitting or breaking in two is not the objective
- **Cai Jin** – Plucking, pulling or jerking, as in moving something from one place to another after grasping it, as with a throw in judo, which applies to all directions, upwards, downwards, sideways, etc.



- **Zhou Jin** – Energy expressed through the elbow (or knee), it applies a strategy called ‘full and empty’ – where when the opponent is full, evade; when the opponent is empty, attack – it involves the ability to feel in the elbows (and attack), not just the hands
- **Kao Jin** – To lean or bump (or body check) an opponent with the side of the body or shoulder against to unseat the opponent’s balance or to stage a strike.

The 8 Jins are naturally demonstrated in everyday activities of life. These insights into the jin of t’ai chi ch’uan, were only part of the rich wealth of knowledge Professor Cheng Man-Ching shared with his students.

Managing His Original Sponsor’s Conflicting Interests

Ultimately, the idea of passing t’ai chi ch’uan’s secrets to the Westerners proved objectionable to the Chinese Association sponsors. While Cheng Man-Ching was out of the city, traveling back to Taiwan, the Chinese sponsors in Chinatown barred entry of the studio to all of Cheng’s students. Upon his return to the city, Cheng enlisted the assistance of his most senior students who had been barred, and set up a new Tai Chi studio – the Shr Jung T’ai Chi school – at 87 Bowery, in Chinatown. From here, the new school thrived, ushering in a generation of teachers who took their knowledge to other parts of the country and beyond.

End of an Illustrious Era

In 1974 Cheng Man-Ching returned to Taiwan to finish Yi Ch’uan (a commentary on The I Ching or Book of Changes), a work consisting of more than 100,000 words. 75 at that time, he supported the publishing process of his book, where he personally proof-read the galleys of the proof edition. At that time, he seemed to recognize his coming departure with discussion about affairs that should be taken care of after his death. On March 26, 1975, as is described in one of a number of versions of this somber moment, Cheng Man-Ching died at his desk, after a long night working, appearing to pass in his sleep.

The Controversy Around Cheng’s Yang Short Form

Through the years, a number of traditional Tai Chi purists have taken issue with Cheng’s popular innovation. Some claim that despite the intention to eliminate the repetitions of certain movements – or postures as Cheng preferred to refer to them – that a number of repetitions in the Short Form remain. Others take issue with the count of the 37 movements, claiming that applying uniform standards of movement counts established with other older forms would result in Cheng’s form actually being 70 movements. Yet, at the same time, some Tai Chi experts observe that the traditional 108 moves of the Yang Long Form are actually 88 moves (maintaining the resonant digit 8, considered the luckiest number in Chinese culture, where 88 as 88 resembles [shu ng x], or “double happiness”). The matter fundamentally boils down to a form of semantics and the choice of definitions preferred by the proponents of the variations in style. This is especially significant when one considers that the Yang style of Tai Chi is one of five styles of Tai Chi practiced today (Chen [the oldest, form], Yang [the most popular, with at least 20 variations in the style worldwide], Wu Hao, Wu, and Sun).

The Yang family never officially recognized Cheng’s 37 Postures Form, yet Cheng did receive approval from Ch’en Wei-ming, the most senior Tai Chi master of Yang Ch’eng-fu’s disciples, and the influential author of the first books on t’ai chi ch’uan for public audiences. The bottom line is the Yang Short Form, created by Cheng Man-Ching, has a rightful place as an enduring contribution to the practice of Tai Chi worldwide, as well as a legitimate place on the evolutionary branches of the Yang style of Tai Chi. Meanwhile,

The Yang 24 Form

The Postures of the Yang-24 Form

Since the first 24 posture form was developed, numerous versions have evolved since then. Here Shifu Allan Levine of Thousand Oaks, California, who has studied over 30 years, demonstrates the postures of the form. As variations of the 24 form evolved, so too have the descriptions of the postures (for example some cite “crane” while others describe “stork”, etc.).





Turn and Cast Fist



Cloud Hands



High Pat
on Horse



Kick with Left Foot



Kick with Right Foot



Low Punch



Kick with Right Foot



Turn and Cast Fist



Double Wind
to the Ears



Wild Horse
Parts its Mane



Jade Maiden
Weaves Shuttles



Snake Creeps



Golden Rooster
Stands on Left Leg



Scrape to face (Beginning)



Heel Kick



Advance to
Punch Groin

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in apparent response to Cheng's 37-posture form, a 24-posture Yang style posture was developed in 1956, at the behest of the Chinese sports commission.

The Professor's Enduring Legacy

The lineage of Cheng Man-Ching's branch of Yang style t'ai chi ch'uan extends globally. In Taiwan and Southeast Asia over 40 schools have been established. In North America, schools range from New York, Wisconsin Minnesota, Colorado, Nova Scotia and more. As well, his style of Tai Chi is gaining popularity in Europe and Latin America, with students numbering over 100,000.

During a span of 25 years he had many one man shows both at home and abroad including the Asian art museum, Musée Cernuschi, in Paris and the World's Fair in New York in 1964. His other books, on a range of subjects, are still treasured today by appreciative readers around the world. One biographer stated that many people believe Cheng Man-Ching be the most outstanding individual in Chinese cultural history of the 20th Century. While some might argue that point, his place in the heights of modern Chinese cultural history remains uncontested. A poem on his chosen martial art by Cheng Man-Ching seems a suitable closure to this study of the man.

TAI CHI

Tai chi ch'uan has no opinion. It has no intention. It is an idea without motive.

It is an act without desire. It is, properly, the natural response to an outside force, not being perceived as such.

For in nature, all are the same, everything is one. That which attacks is the same as that which responds, the same force – redirected and recycled.

When you initiate an ill-intentioned move, it comes back on you.

The principles of tai chi are the same principles behind the inner mechanism of the great engine of the universe.

Tai Chi in Film: The Professor – Tai Chi's Journey West

Featuring a rich array of both black and white and color vintage archival footage, the documentary film tells the story of Cheng Man-Ching's remarkable life, with a special focus on his ten years in New York. Drawing from a range of interviews with students of his years in New York City, and his family, the film portrays the range Cheng Man-Ching's many worlds of mastery beyond Tai Chi. Highlighting Tai Chi as a martial art and spiritual practice, Cheng's approach for his students embraced his knowledge of calligraphy, painting, medicine and Chinese philosophy, applying practical applications demonstrating a universal quality of fusing all the disciplines. Included in the Tai Chi perspective are the form, as well as sword (jian) and push hands (tui shou). His remarkable, seemingly effortless ability to launch someone partway across a room, with the mildest gesture of movement, is an experience in itself.

With Cheng as one of the first people to teach Tai Chi openly in the United States, the film also chronicles an era when the country was undergoing seismic social upheaval, while The Professor attracted students from all walks of life, philosophies and cultures.

This dramatic cultural change in the film also included the reaction of Cheng's sponsors in New York's Chinatown, businessmen who objected to The Professor teaching Tai Chi to non-Chinese students. They closed Cheng's Tai Chi school and classes, locking them out of the studio while he was traveling. Upon his return, this compelled The Professor to open a new location in Chinatown for these barred students.

The portrait of Cheng, drawn from his many original students, includes Ken Van Sickle (the film's cinematographer), Maggie Newman, Ed Young, Bill Phillips, Carol Yamasaki and Hugh Kwok Ming, providing an insightful and heartfelt portrait of the man. Overall, the film is insightful, engaging and moving, even for viewers outside the style and martial arts in general.

The film is directed and co-produced by Barry Strugatz, who studied with several students of Cheng Man-Ching. His produced feature films include projects with Meryl Streep (screenplay, *She-Devil*), Jonathan Demme and Michelle Pfeiffer (screenplay, *Married to the Mob*), as well as Melissa Leo (director, *From Other Worlds*). The film's cinematographer and co-producer, is Ken Van Sickle, a senior student of Cheng Man-Ching. His produced film credits as cinematographer include *Hester Street*, *Between the Lines* and the Academy Award-winning documentary *Marjoe*.

The DVD's extras include Cheng Man-Ching performing his 37 Movement Form, *The Origins of Tai Chi*, as well as an interview on Medical Science and Tai Chi with Peter M. Wayne, PHD, of Harvard Medical School. To learn more about the film, or to purchase a copy, go to: <http://www.tai-chifilm.com/>

Contributor Biography

An avid practitioner of Tai Chi's Yang style, Patrick S. Barry is also a 4th degree black belt in karate at the world headquarters of the International Karate Association, as well as a 3rd degree black belt in Toshin Ryu (the study of Japanese weapons, including katana, tonfa, bo, bokken and other weapons). Barry has published three novels (the Sub Rosa trilogy), written for TV shows such as *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *War of the Worlds*, *Hunter and Beast Wars*, and computer games as *Command & Conquer Lands of Lore* and *Nox*. For McGraw-Hill, he authored three textbook modules on professional communications, and recently served as senior contribution editor of *Borderless Behavior Analytics – Who's Inside? What're They Doing?* (1st and 2nd editions) which explores the cutting edge of cybersecurity through advanced security analytics. Barry is currently a marketing consultant with a number of global tech companies. 🐼

