

Interview with Jürgen Graf, Düsseldorf, Germany

Forum: Hello Jürgen. You are my oldest Taiji-friend. We both started to learn Taijiquan at the same course with Ma Jiangbao in 1986. Can you remember that time?

Jürgen: Yes, of course. It was in the German-Chinese Club For Cultural Exchange in the Helmholzstreet in Düsseldorf. We also started the tradition of drinking tea before the training there. I also remember other activities of the club and the efforts of Hinchong Got to introduce us to the Chinese culture.

Forum: What was your reason for starting Taijiquan?

Jürgen: After an accident my doctors told me to go to a fitness gym. I didn't take to it and so I started Taijiquan. At the beginning I was very lazy and trained only once a week in the club. Nevertheless I wondered, why things were not working so well. In addition to the Taiji, I also studied Qigong with Hinchong Got. I wanted to try to understand the mysteries of qi. But after a while I found I made more progress with Taijiquan and so I concentrated on that.

Forum: You have now been training Taijiquan for nearly two decades. Has your motivation for training changed?

Jürgen: Of course. In old times I found it difficult to do the exercises. Today I really look forward to them and enjoy it very much. But I find there is always the danger of my not concentrating and dreaming away during training.

Forum: In the Forum there are young people training who were not even born when you started Taijiquan.

Do you have some tips for them?

Jürgen: It would be nice if these youngsters used the chance of playful learning to get the joy of the exercise. I can only confirm the health benefits of Taijiquan and it could help increase the joy of living while still young. But you have to learn this.

Forum: Jürgen, you are training for such a long time Taijiquan, but you have never taught it. This gives you a very special objective view from the outside of our teachers. Do you have any advice for the future that you would like to give them?

Jürgen: The teachers really need a view from the outside and feedback from people. Only in this way they can maintain their level or develop even further. That is why it is so important that the teachers continue learning in a group at their level. Only in this way can the teachers develop fully. Through the interaction between teachers the Wu-Style will retain its quality.