

## **Walk of Survival**

Kung Fu Keeps him a young 94

By Ben Liu (Published in the Fremont Argus on April 28, 2003)

For Ching-Tang Tuan, a day without exercise is a day of pain. So, at 94, having survived a bout with cancer, he takes a 45-minute walk to Central Park in Fremont, six days each week to practice an ancient form of Chinese martial arts.

"Exercising with Chinese Kung Fu is my most favorite part of daily life," he says.

Tuan needed surgery in 1997 after he was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Doctors told him that, because of his advanced age, it would be difficult for him to fully recover.

But he defied the odds by practicing the "soft style" or internal arts, of Kung Fu. The internal arts consist of three different styles – Tai Chi Chuan, Ba-gua and Hsing-I – and contribute to health, fitness, longevity and self-cultivation.

Tuan and other use movement and stillness to increase and calm their internal energy. Practitioners seek first to regulate their body, then the energy within the body – qi (or ch'i), often associated with the blood flow – then the mind.

Tai Chi Chuan is an art form that resembles a dance. The movements are simple and done slowly, to regulate the qi fully. Tai Chi Chuan does not have strenuous or rigorous movements. Practitioners say it is a simple style that anyone – of any age – can practice and appreciate.

Every Monday through Saturday, Tuan spends three hours exercising near Lake Elizabeth. On Sundays, Tuan walks 20 minutes to the Fremont BART station to catch a train to San Francisco, where he attends the Mandarin Baptist Church.

His faith is as important to his health as his exercise.

"The Bible is spirit food," Tuan says. "Being a Christian helps me think about my behavior, making me judge myself."

Tuan was born in China on June 15, 1909, when the country was still governed by an emperor.

In 1936, he graduated from the Central Aviation School in China and worked as an engineer in aircraft maintenance and supply management.

During World War II, he enlisted in the Chinese Air Force to fight against the Japanese and for democracy.

He retired from the military as an officer in Taiwan in 1967. It was then that he started seriously learning Chinese Kung Fu and was baptized as a Christian. His faith, he says, has taught him about honesty and sincerity, and his provided him with a calm and peaceful lifestyle.

Tuan moved to San Francisco in 1980 to be with his family. His two sons, five daughters, seven grandchildren and four great-grand children live in the United States.

The leader of Tuan's exercise group, James Chew, 67, calls Tuan "my model."

"If I live up to 90 and be like him," Chew said, "I'll be happy."