



January 21, 2026

Dear Master Aiping,

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for the many years of instruction, guidance, and friendship we have shared since 1998. I often look back fondly on the day we first met. You had just established your school Aiping Tai Chi in Connecticut and were demonstrating various Tai Chi forms to attract new students. I remember watching you perform Chen style and being completely mesmerized by the skill, power, and fluidity of your movement. In that moment, I knew I wanted to study Chen with you. Little did I realize that decision would lead to a journey lasting decades.

My path through fundamentals, forms, competitions, push hands, and philosophy was guided by you every step of the way. You encouraged me to deepen my understanding of the art by seeking out others beyond the school to exchange ideas and refine my skills, particularly in push hands. Your patience and dedication in helping me become the best version of myself made the experience truly meaningful. Many teachers lack the knowledge, skill, or clarity to impart the full depth of Tai Chi. For your ability to do so with such generosity, I am deeply grateful.

Now that you are semi-retired and spending time with your family in Texas, I continue your teaching legacy here in Connecticut. I founded Earth and Wood Martial Arts to honor what you shared with me. While Chen remains my primary art, I have expanded my training to include weapons work and full-contact sparring. My focus remains on preserving the essence of the art so that future generations may experience and benefit from it.

Over the years, I have learned how rare it is for a student to pursue an art for a lifetime. It is even rarer for a student and teacher to walk that path together for decades. You have given me the gift of Tai Chi, and I am committed to passing it on to a new generation with respect, integrity, and gratitude.

With deepest gratitude,

*Bob Shannon*

Bob Shannon (Aka Chenbob)