

March 2, 2026

Dear Master Aiping,

I want to thank you for providing the foundation and inspiration that continues to sustain my Tai Chi practice. You have touched my life, my family's and, by extension, the lives of the many students who have passed through the Tai Chi program at Guilford's Nathaniel B. Greene Community Center since you sowed the seed and began that first senior's class in 1998.

It was my mother who first told me about you; she was in that original class. I had recently returned from working in Hong Kong and had briefly studied Tai Chi both there and in NYC. I was one of those people who could not wait to leave home and experience the wider world and here was my mother telling me about a Chinese Master teaching Tai Chi in my childhood hometown!

I first saw you at a Sunday morning class at the Guilford dance studio. You were seated behind a table, reviewing students, two at a time. Later you moved swiftly among different groups of students, correcting and demonstrating. You said little. The training was disciplined and the demonstration efficient and beautiful. What I was seeing transcended place; I was watching a world-class athlete and coach. I did not yet understand what Tai Chi could be but I determined then that I would commit to studying and somehow find a way to study with you.

By 2010 my parents needed help and it was time for me to spend more time in Connecticut. It was then my dedicated Tai Chi journey began: first beside my mother at the Guilford Community Center, which was then your satellite school, and then with you in Orange and Milford.

When my mother could no longer attend her classes, we adapted and practiced seated Tai Chi and Qigong. Tai Chi became a bridge between mother and daughter and gifted me patience, peace and energy during difficult years for us both. One of her final outings was to your last wushu performance. She would not hear of missing it!

Later I taught as I learned, mentored by the kind and open teacher you had placed in Guilford. You generously provided additional classes and I began this new chapter in my life.

Some of my fondest memories of you come from the 2016 China trip. I can still see you warmly presiding over fabulous dinners, folk dancing in the parks and dashing on high heeled sandals onto an exquisite bagua and into Baguazhang. It was just you, the bagua and sheer joy!

Today the Tai Chi program at the Guilford Community Center (as it is called among the locals) remains open to non-residents and active adults. We average 75 students per session with 10 classes each week. We focus on foundational skills and then primarily on Yang Style with meditation and Qigong. Most students study two or three times a week. New generations of students study your videos and related forms. The 108 Form is a favorite.

In good weather members of the community practice together in Guilford parks. New friendships are forged. Some students demonstrate at wellness events. For holidays, we

volunteer at local residential facilities where students participate in seated Tai Chi classes similar to what I once practiced with my mother at home. A strong and welcoming local Tai Chi community has emerged.

As I work daily to refine my Tai Chi and improve my teaching, my appreciation for your accomplishments continues to grow and inspire. Sharing my Tai Chi journey as a teacher has given me a sense of purpose that I had not foreseen and has introduced me to many wonderful people in this community and beyond. For me, the journey has come full circle. Tai Chi has helped me redefine the wider world in internal terms. I now live and practice where I grew up, in a little valley by a lake with a mountain behind.

And the seed planted continues to grow.....

With gratitude,
Karen

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