

PEACE MOVEMENT

THREE PEOPLE WHO'VE TRADED
BUSINESS FOR PLEASURE

Former physics teacher C.K. Chu
now gets his kicks teaching tai chi.



Chris Sanders

MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE

Even the names of the positions in which C.K. Chu spends many of his waking hours have a timeless, contemplative ring about them: Horse Stance. Snake Creeps Down. Embrace Tiger Return to Mountain. White Crane Spreads Wings. Rhino Gazes at Moon. For more than 50 years, Chu, a 66-year-old resident of Queens, New York, has actively practiced these and other elements of the nearly millennium-old meditative exercise form known as tai chi. Last summer, his Times Square school, Chu Tai Chi (www.chutaiichi.com), marked its 30th anniversary.

Born in Hong Kong and educated at the City University of New York in Queens, Chu taught physics for more than 20 years, mostly at prestigious Brooklyn Technical High School. Only in 1995 did he step away from quarks and neutrinos to devote himself fully to tai chi. Along the way, "Master Chu" has written several books about his passion, including *Tai Chi Chuan Principles and Practice*, soon in its third edition; *The Book of Nei Kung*; and last year's *Chu Meditation*.

"I enjoyed teaching physics," he says, "but I figure a lot of people can teach physics, so they don't need me. Tai chi is more difficult."

At times Chu has witnessed dramatic results. In the last two years, he's developed a more accessible approach to tai chi called Eternal Spring chi kung, a "healing exercise" simplified so that even nursing-home residents and those confined to wheelchairs can improve their mobility. One student, Chu says, had suffered from hip and back problems since childhood. "He now is a different person. He lost 50 pounds. Now he has no pain. His life changed. I think part of the nature of human beings is to help other people and also help yourself. This job is perfect for that."

—Mike Grudowski