

# INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

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## CONFUSION OF CHI

"I feel my strength." When we make a fist and tighten our muscles we think we feel our strength when actually we feel the tension being held in our arm and fist. "I feel my chi." We relax and our movements flow, hands become warm and tingly, slightly heavy.

Both yes and no -- The chi is flowing but that 'feeling' isn't chi, it's the increased blood flow. As the chi flows and the body is relaxed and opened to this flow there are many positive sensations associated with the chi flow. The sensations are not chi, they are the feelings, by-products, results of the increased chi flow as the chi moves without restrictions.

We can feel air blow against our skin but what is it to touch air? What does air taste like? The best we can do is let go and open up so the chi can flow unrestricted. As this happens we'll get many sensations such as: warmth, relaxation, tingling, energized, peacefulness, a healthy feeling.

When applying a movement or a technique, if we feel the power involved we're blocking our power and strength. When trying to apply chi into a technique such as in FA-JIN, if we feel it it's not released. We can feel chi move throughout our bodies but JIN only the receiver will feel. What we feel is held inside. Any feeling of work, strength and power is a blockage of the chi and jin, or where it is blocked. Any of the applications should have an easy, natural flow, non-effort, non-strength. That's when JIN is being released - FA-JIN. This is the kung fu of the internal wushu.

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## TIME TO YOURSELF

*Beginning classes just once a week? Is that enough?*

We are use to the ideas of: train me, make me work, force me to be better, give me skill. You do it for me.

In the internal arts we are each responsible for ourselves. With aerobics, hard styles and some sports there is an outside force making us work. However, an instructor can force you to physically work hard and train but they can't force your mind to practice, train or focus. We can only do this ourselves. This is our responsibility. It's all up to us.

Internal wushu is a mind and body training. Following and participating in a class is the beginning, it's the way to learn the movements. Advancement, training and learning develops from our time alone with what we've been taught. Each lesson should give us at least a month of stuff to work on.

Once we have a movement or form, then it's time for us to be alone with it to research, feel, and permit the movement to sink in. This way the mind can begin to focus and understand. First, our body needs to know the

movements, after this is when the training actually begins. Working with our focus, our mind, our intent 'i'.

In a class situation we're focused on the Lao-shr, the teacher. We watch the movement, copy, memorize and repeat. In the internal arts we want to focus 100% internally, feel all that's happening with the movement. Learning from ourselves as we remember, practice and study. When following someone else or a group we can't really focus internally.

Ideally we should learn only one movement a week and study it the rest of the week. This means by the next week we're able to do the movement without thinking about it too much, or about the timing, stance or the overall movement. This way we're ready for the next one.

What good is a book if we can't read?

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## PA KUA BASICS

*Fire above -- Water below*

*Heaven - Man - Earth*

The movements/transitions within the Nei Chia (internal arts) are more important than any of the forms or postures. Without the proper connections it's only an empty dance.

We should strive always for the inner connections first. (This is after we know the postures). This inner connection isn't the flow, smoothness or transitions of the movements. The spine should feel like a rubber band slightly being pulled in both directions. The top of the head reaches upward yet keep the neck relaxed. The hips are tucked and the tail bone reaching downward.

Originally new student in Pa Kua were only shown a posture and required to circle until the Lao-shr saw they had this connection. Only after this were the changes and other forms taught. These postures are sometimes call the 'Inner Palms'. Each of these postures help teach and focus on various energies, body conditioning, connections and strengths. Our first linking set is the Inner Palms.

These are a part of the Pa Kua Chi Kung. Each posture is more difficult than the previous one. Floating hands is an easy posture to find this basic connection of 'Fire above Water'. As we progress to the Monkey posture it becomes more difficult to keep this connection. With each successive movement and posture it becomes more difficult to keep this connection thus it becomes more important to do so. It's the 'i' the intent that begin to make this connection - DON'T USE STRENGTH, just reach slightly.

Once we have this connection in holding the basic postures as we walk the circle then we try to maintain this feeling as we transition from one posture into another. Reeling Silk, smooth movement with no change in the inner connections. Once this becomes easy then we try to keep this connection in all the forms and other changes. If we can keep this connection throughout our practice then our entire practice has been correct, nurturing the chi and an excellent investment in our advancement.