

INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS

NEWSLETTER

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TEACHING CERTIFICATES

I'm proud to announce Sifu will be issuing Teaching certificates to: Joel, Gene, SE and Bruce. This certification acknowledges members authorized in Sifu's family Tai Chi Chuan to teach. The last time Sifu issued teaching certificates in the US was in 1976 to Harvey, Dave, Don and myself.

TRANSLATION

The calligraphy Sifu gave me was presented to him by Master Cheng Man-Ching. Cheng man-Ching was not only Sifu's friend but also one of his practice partners. These are principles Cheng considered most important.

SONG OF FORM AND FUNCTION BY CHENG MAN-CHING

Tai Chi Chuan, the thirteen postures.

The marvel lies in the two chi divided into Yin and Yang. It transforms the myriad and returns to the one.

Returns to the One, Tai Chi Chuan.

The Liang I (2 powers) and the Four Manifestations are chaos and boundless.

To ride the winds suspend the head top.

I have some words to reveal to those who can understand.

If the Yung ch'uan has no root and the waist has no commander, studying hard until death will be of no use.

The form and function are mutually connected and nothing more.

The Universal Chi can be conducted to the hand.

Peng, Lu, Chi, An, Tsai, Liea, Jou, Kow (13 postures).

Advance, retreat, look left, look right, central equilibrium.

Not neutralizing it naturally neutralizes, not yielding it naturally yields.

Before you advance, shift backward.

The body is like a floating cloud.

In Tuishou the hands are not needed.

The whole body is a hand, the hand is not a hand.

But the mind must stay in the place it should be.

CHI CULTIVATION AND MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Meditation and chi cultivation are practiced for many reasons. There are equally as many styles as there are people teaching and practicing these arts. One of the rare and unusual Chi Kung systems is to use the strength and chi of various trees for healing ourselves and others.

Trees draw in carbon dioxide, then purify it and produce oxygen. They use the sun's rays to create food and take nourishment and water from the soil then transforms everything uniquely through its alchemical process. We can get a feeling the power trees have as we walk through a forest. There's a quiet peaceful and healthy feeling. Tree Chi Kung was developed by studying different trees and the effects they have had on the people practicing various meditations around them over the centuries. This chi kung comes from the Lung Men Taoist Sect, a parent of Pa Kua Chang.

Each tree has a certain current of energy going through it. The energy going up from the ground to the leaves, and the food produced by the leaves returning to the trunk and roots. Similar to standing in a breeze, when we stand by certain trees we are standing by an energy breeze so to speak. As we relax and calm down, our body meridians let our chi flow easily, unobstructed. As we relax even more our body opens up to the surrounding energy. Similar as the leaf of a tree (trees can take in fertilizer through their leaves).. If the energy around you is positive it will boost your energy and help heal sickness or imbalances of energy within us.

Some of the exercises use trees to filter out the bad or negative chi, some trees are for specific organs, and some just to help you center. The trees are also used to strengthen chi flow and sensitivity for Chinese massage techniques. Advanced Tai Chi and Pa Kua students should notice how the different locations effect practice and chi feelings. Some trees are friendly, supportive others are not.

We are very luck that Zhang Jie is very knowledgeable about this method of Chi Kung. If there is enough interest he is willing to do a weekend workshop this fall. I'm thinking about the end of September perhaps. If your are interested please let me know, also let me know if certain days are not going to work for you. There is a sign up sheet in the club file box.

By the way, Pine and Cedar trees are considered the strongest and most healing of the trees. Conifers in general are powerful, the older the stronger.



CIVIL AND MARTIAL

One unique feature of the Nei Jia (Internal Arts) is that in order for our practice to be correct and to achieve any level of skill we must train both civil and martial. One without the other lead to an imbalance and either injury (to ourselves due to poor body mechanics) or nothing to show for our time invested in practice.

Tai Chi is the flow of yin and yang, continually seeking a balance with the interacting flow from one to the other. It's not black and white but varying shades of gray.

Civil refers to the inner cultivation. This can be divided into basically two aspects, physical health and meditation. Basically the health of mind, body and spirit. The inner cultivation techniques of relaxation, calming the mind, regulating the breath, circulating the chi, and seeking a higher awareness improves our own quality on many different levels. This supports the idea that as each individual becomes healthier in mind and body our society will begin to reflect these positive changes.

Martial refers to the application and outward training of the arts. Training the body not only to be healthy but strong and able to protect itself. Proper body mechanics and efficiency not only lead to proper useful techniques but teaches us to move efficiently and safely during daily activities. An easy example of this is the proper way to pick up a heavy object. The 'correct' way is the same body structure for Needle at Sea Bottom and Punching Downward, keeping the lower back rounded and letting the legs do the work. More precisely, using the entire body as a unit so we have access to our total strength.

The merging of the two is what makes these arts complete. The martial art is based upon know ourselves (or more accurately) understanding ourselves. The civil is what makes the martial effective. As the inner awareness, sensitivity, softness and centering increase so does the martial ability and accomplishments. Without the martial there is only limited possibilities in the civil. Training the *i* (intent) with the postures and applications guides the Chi and Jing through the body. The martial circulates the chi which increases our health and opens our 'inner' doors to discover more about ourselves.

One of the possible health dangers of seated meditation is prolonged sitting, the chi is restricted to certain limbs due to the sitting posture. Zhan Zhuang meditation serves better for Chi development but it can also strain the Chi if overdone. Our moving postures not only ease the strain of the body and circulates the chi but the purpose of each posture helps guide the chi by its action as well as the thought.. Each method has its proper place.

Once in a while I get calls from people only interested in the 'exercise' Tai chi or the 'meditation' Tai Chi. These are parts of the whole, without all there is no Tai Chi. It's like asking for the steering wheel without the car. In Tai Chi, the grand ultimate, there is no yin without yang. A coin has two sides as do these arts. Civil without martial or martial without civil is not Nei Jia.

INNER CULTIVATION - HEALTHY THOUGHTS

Last month I wrote about the importance of *I* and the power that develops as we practice mindfully. Our mind is like an empty fertile field, be careful what you plant! If we plant and cultivate healthy and positive habits then that's what will grow. The Same holds true for negative or harmful ideas and habits.

No one is perfect. Just as we're continually trying to refine and correct our practice and forms throughout our lives, cultivating our healthier self is the same. Over the years we have accumulated some harmful ideas, thoughts, habits, and self images. Much was introduced in our childhood when we couldn't discriminate between positive and negative, we were like sponges soaking it all up. As time goes on, some of these habits (seeds) grow and become stronger. As we practice our arts, one thing we're trying to do is to replace the tension and fighting habits with relaxation and centering.

Thoughts like, "I'll never get this", or "This is too hard", etc. all plant a road block within our minds. This may be hard, but there's time to work it out. Nothing in these arts is instant, advancement comes after continual practice over the years. If we meet a road block in our practice, training or form then we should take a minute to rest, center and relax. GO YIN! Then go back to the difficulty *gently*. There is no time clock, no rush. Unfortunately what happens many times is we start to beat ourselves up for not getting it NOW. Let it go, don't harp on the difficulty, or how hard a time we are having, go on to something else or rest. The more trying we do, the more tension and road blocks develop. This is just a small example of learning the forms. Throughout our day we re-enforce some of the negative thoughts and habits without even thinking about them. Try to catch ourselves and neutralize these habits. We shouldn't scold or beat ourselves up, instead plant healthy ideas. There are many different ways to neutralize the negative with the healthy. The first thing is to know what we want or where we want to go. Instead of feeling guilty or angry at eating whatever or too much put our thoughts on what we'd rather do and imagine our goal. Drop by drop we're adding fresh water to the cup of tea. We're changing our chemistry with each thought very subtly. Over the years many members of the club have stopped smoking this way.

As our awareness and sensitivity grow we will notice some of the changes and results happen quicker and easier. We must remind ourselves time to time where we want to be or in what direction you want to go, then let it go. Do we want to be healthier, stronger, more centered, or what ever. Plant positive seeds in that direction. We shouldn't dwell on not being there, why we're not there, or why it's hard, just focus, relax and then let it go.

Everything is *easier said than done*. Tai Chi comes from the Wuji. Wuji is the original, the abstract, the intent before anything noticeable happens. Wuji is the standing before practice, the thought before movement, Yin and Yang are the beginning of motion. Wuji is the thought of being healthy, Yin Yang is our life and practice, Tai Chi is being healthy. Tai Chi is the harmonious interaction of Yin and Yang. BE CAREFUL OF THE SEEDS YOU PLANT.