

INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

January 1993
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NEW INFORMATION

Take a look at the latest Pa Kua Journal in the file case. One of the beginning articles talks about the origins of the words INTERNAL STYLES and the title of WU TANG ARTS. The name internal was originated in the late 1800's by Pa Kua, Tai Chi and Hsing I teachers referring to their inner group. This term was not used publicly until Sun, Lu-tang published the term in his books. Prior to this there was no such distinction as Internal Vs External.

CONSULTATIONS -Is

your practice and training method working toward your goals? Just what should you focus your practice sessions on? How can you accelerate your advancement? If you really want to know I'll tell you; just ask. Most of the club members come to practice for fun, exercise or relaxation. If your goal is a bit more serious I'll help you develop a training schedule to help reach your goal..

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The healthier each one of us is the more help and impact we can have on the world in a positive way.

WINTER SEASON:

The element is WATER, color is black, time for reflection, resting.

The related organs are the kidneys and bladder. The cypress tree represents the water energy, Tsuan Chuan in Hsing I (drilling),

VANCOUVER VISIT

January 9th we will pay a visit to practice with Master Tchoung and his group.

CLASS CANCELED?

If you wonder about classes the best thing to do is call the Phinney Center first 783-2244. The only exception to this is for the Saturday group; call my home number (206)428-5974.

ADVANCED LONG FORM SESSION

Friday, February 12th, I will hold a special session on the inner teachings of sections 1-6 for those

of you having a strong foundation in the long form. The session will be 7-9pm fee will be \$10.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

If you practice relaxation, you will get better at relaxation. If you practice procrastination you will get better at that. In what ever direction you choose to put your effort in you will get better, for good or worse. If you practice the various forms you will get better at the forms and the lessons they teach. If you sit around thinking about practicing you'll get better at sitting around thinking about practicing! Another thing to think about is if you keep telling yourself that you'll never get it you are practicing not getting it. Thanks DG

THE ART OF PEACE

The Art of Peace begins with you. Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here for no other purpose than to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply the Art to all that you encounter.

- MORIHEI UESHIBA, Founder of Aikido

ON MOVEMENT AND STILLNESS

Master Tchoung, Ta-Tchen
translated by Felicia Hecker

Stillness (ching) contains movement (tung). The earth is a living entity; it has breath. In a year's time, the earth exhales and inhales once. In the spring and summer it exhales; in autumn and winter, it inhales. In the space of a minute, a man normally breathes in and out eighteen times. But, while doing Tai Chi Chuan, the same man will breathe only twelve times in a minute; and while meditating, he breathes but six times. (At this point, Master Tchoung calculated how many times a man would inhale and exhale, if he lived to be ninety, but his figures are not recorded.)

The movements of Tai Chi Chuan have an order and track, which imitate the cycles of nature's body. They can dispel illness and gain longevity for the human body. Harmony with the natural movement of the earth requires both movement and stillness. And, in movement and stillness there are, for the human body, the benefits of longevity and happiness. Opposing the

natural movement of the earth is truly confused movement and injures the human body.

Stillness contains movement. But true stillness is death. A living person never experiences genuine stillness. What we ordinarily call stillness is just our seeking to quiet the mind.

FIGHTER, POET, MARTIAL ARTISTS, SCHOLAR, ATHLETE, TEACHER

There are many reasons we study these arts. We start for one reason and then discover other areas of interest to focus toward. Few people begin the Internal Arts for self-defense or fighting but these are areas that you can pursue. Actually you can't separate them from the art itself. If you practice correctly you gain in health, peace of mind, and in self-defense skills.

If you have a solid foundation, about three years of practice, the emphasis of your practice should change toward the direction you want. Someone with the intent to teach has different responsibilities as to what to learn and how to train than a fighter would or a poet or athlete. If your interest is in self-defense or fighting, the two are very different, you will focus on the TUISHOU and SANSHOU and HSING I training. In self-defense all you have to do is keep yourself safe, this includes running, escaping whereas fighting implies you want to hurt the other you have a commitment to do something to the other person. A fighter would focus on the chi kung breathing to develop the iron shirt and toward developing strong FA-JIN.

An athlete can work on the forms and exercises to condition the body and get a workout. A poet or one focusing on the meditative aspects may just work on the solo forms and chi kung studying the

various internal actions of the forms. The exactness and training isn't as important as for a fighter. The scholar can compare and study the differences of the styles and forms. The martial artists can study the various techniques and training for the discipline and self-understanding learning the various weapons and the versatility of the art.

If you're interested in becoming a teacher you can't pick and choose. You may not train as a fighter but you should know how to do so. You need to know all areas of the art so your teaching is complete. You are responsible to the art and the past and future generations to pass the entire system on or to enable those practicing under you to achieve their goal. You need to present as much of a complete art as possible. Unfortunately many forms and training methods have been lost by insecure teachers in the past. The first rule for a teacher is to guide a new student toward correct and strong basics. Regardless of what area the students wants to move toward without basics nothing will be able to develop. This is also where the student shows the teacher they deserve the teaching in the particular direction they are interested in. As a teacher you don't have the luxury of dropping or forgetting a form, though this may happen accidentally. Teachers are responsible to guide the student in the proper direction, make it easy to understand, safe to practice, and help overcome road blocks.

ONE PRINCIPLE COVERS MANY LEVELS

JIN CHANG LI DA roughly means that you will gain power/strength by opening and expanding your joints and ligaments. This is considered one of the secrets of the Internal Wushu. Instead of using brute strength we try to work with our natural strength which comes from the coordination of mind, balance, legs, torso, arms, weight, chi in harmony with our body structure and the ground. Similar to the effectiveness of a soft leather whip, the softer the faster and greater stinging power it has. This is the same principle we use to FA JIN; the body must be soft, relaxed and pliable for the power to move through the muscles and joints to the target.

On a more important note, for the quality of our daily life this is also true. The less knots we have in our system the better our circulation, daily energy and peace of mind. If our body is relaxed, open, loose, free and graceful we are conserving our energy and moving efficiently. When we are surrounded by stress our muscles and joints close and tense up. As we relax more we 'open-up' to the environment on a physical, mental, and spiritual level.

The unique thing about the Internal Wushu is we are studying ourselves, how to move efficiently, how to release tensions, how to relax. Our emphasis is on principles instead of merely the techniques and forms. The forms help us study ourselves. Health, empty hand, weaponry, applications, meditation; are all governed by the same principles. This is true if we are practicing correctly and mindfully. When we practice for health we are also working on applications and on the meditation and on the weaponry (even if we are not doing a weapons form). Body mechanics are all the same, proper focus and concentration draws the mind into a meditative state, this relaxes the body and the mind thus increasing our circulation of blood and chi.

If our muscles are tight, tense or stiff we can trace it back to either mental or physical stress. If we carry our tension in our shoulders it's can lead to get headaches, high blood pressure, depression, aggravation, etc. One of the most important principles of the NEI JIA is to **relax**. On the health front the tension can lead to the above mentioned illnesses, on a martial level it slows reactions drastically. Though we seldom have a need to fight we need to stay loose and alert when driving the freeway or city streets and occasionally when shopping in a supermarket! Look at a champion athlete, the best one always look very loose and limber.

Chinese health theory goes a step beyond this. It makes sense that if there is a kink in a hose the water hardly flows through it if at all. The same thing happens with our muscles and meridians, the kinks reduce the flow of blood and chi. After our muscles relax there can still be a subtle kink in our system, in our chi flow. Pa Kua, being purely Taoist in origin, has all movements working toward opening the smallest of the meridians continuously as you practice. Tai Chi and Hsing I do this but not continuously like correct Pa Kua practice does. This is why after a session of Pa Kua you end up so energized and may find it difficult to fall asleep. You are constantly keeping the kinks out of the meridians as you practice without resting as in the other arts so the channels are open and flowing strongly.

In the NEI JIA or CHI KUNG when our push or performing any other movements, we sink at the same time, soften the shoulders and EXTEND, we don't reach. Here is the secret and the difficulty. When an arm moves forward we seek to telescope the arm from the spine, shoulder, elbow, wrist and fingers. Each joint has a gentle extension/opening to it. If we try too hard we create tension which inhibits the movement to flow and the power to be released. The gentle opening/extension removes the kinks in the meridians of the arms increasing the chi flow. Just like driving; the more curves in the road the slower the car must go. Pa Kua's Single Palms position keeps this open roadway between the arms, the back and spine thus creating a powerful open continuous flow. Eventually we try to keep this openness through out the body. In Tai Chi we have this extension/opening in the process of the postures prior to the postures arriving and HSU.

OPEN THE JOINTS As our pathways become open and clear, our chi flows uninhibited and strongly. When the chi flows strongly there is less chance of illness to enter our system, there are no crevices for it to hide in. When our chi circulation is strong we are healthy. As this circulation

increases the various points, Tiantien and energy centers are able to absorb the chi becoming stronger. Taoist theory believes this can help us advance to a higher level of awareness, calmness, and enlightenment.

When practicing we can't exclusively work on just one level. While stepping into a river we step down, into the river, we get wet. Can we step up into a river? Can we touch water and not get wet? If we practice the movements correctly and continuously the changes happen on all levels. If we relax a muscle we not only permit greater blood flow but greater chi flow and soothe our mind as well. As a beginner we can't feel the opening and closing of the joints or the sinking and expanding of the chi but we can feel either comfortable or tight, relaxed or awkward. This is where we begin, gradually the other areas begin to unfold as we mindfully practice, relaxed, comfortable, smooth. As we advance we can differentiate the tension within our joints instead of only the muscles. We'll begin to understand the difference between rooting and being heavy, light Vs floating, relaxed Vs limp, peng JIN Vs strength.

There is one problem with all this, it doesn't happen without daily study and mindful practice. If we practice only in class we have about two hours of inner health work to the remainder of the week, enforcing habits of tension and stress. The more we can practice the greater chance to change our habits into healthy ones. As our practice continues daily, weekly, yearly these habits of health begin to filter into our daily life. Eventually we should be moving relaxed, centered and efficiently from the moment we walk up to going to sleep.

As a beginner we don't notice or realize how much excess tension our bodies carry and how much energy is wasted and scattered. One of the first levels of practice and the inner awareness filtering into our daily lives is noticing how tense we actually are. This level is very frustrating since it wasn't noticed before. At this level a certain mantra finds its way into our daily life **RELAX**, let go, loosen up. We notice our shoulders up or our neck stiff in circumstances where we didn't before. As we become accustomed to releasing the tension and stress we move to the second level.

At this level we begin to notice when the tension starts creeping in so we can begin to neutralize it before it takes hold. We notice our reactions to various situations sooner and are able to either avoid them or work to neutralize the stress.

The next level is much more fun. This actually is learned in TUISHOU/pushing hands and the application. Here we use the pressure and stress to help us relax instead. When feeling pressure we let it help and ground us, making us stronger, looser and more relaxed. In order to reach this level we need to have good basics in the solo form and diligently practice TUISHOU and SANSYOU/free hands.

Keeping the body loose, joints open and extended is much easier when we practice on our own. TUISHOU and SANSYOU is the exercise we use to find out how to transfer these principles into active situations. With a partner we are constantly trying to maintain our openness and rooting while our partner helps by applying pressure so we can study the principles under 'friendly' pressure.

PATIENCE PLEASE

As you can see by the format of this newsletter things have changed slightly. I've gotten a new computer and a new word processor. This newsletter has taken me over two weeks to get to this condition. After finding out how to get it back from the computer after I typed it in, fighting with the various formatting icons, having read the wrong texts (two books) !!!!!?... I've been able to get this far. Next issue the print type will be larger and easier to read.