

INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

A.T.Dale - P.O. Box 77040 - Seattle WA 98177 - (206)283-0055

INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS Video tapes available

Seattle

Evenings:

Yang Style Tai Chi - Tues. 7-10pm

Pa Kua Chang - Thurs 7-9

at: PNA 6532 Phinney Ave N.

Mornings:

Yang Style Tai Chi - Wed 9-10:30

at: Discovery Park

Fee: \$50 monthly - one style

+ \$10 additional classes
except Chi Kung

Private lessons \$30/hr

Mt. Vernon:

Sundays

Affiliate Clubs:

University District:

Gene Burnett - 547-7293

senior citizen classes available

Cedar Acosta - 782-6275

Capitol Hill:

Gao fu

Gao, Li-Ting - 324-1375

Vashon Island:

Deborah Goldhaft - 463-3601

Tacoma:

Betty Jones - 564-8121

Randy York - 564-5810

Snohomish area:

Shaun Munger

P.O. Box 202

Sultan, WA 98294

Application specialist:

Dave Harris - 782-1170

PNA 6532 Phinney Ave N.

Los Angeles:

Harvey Kurland - (714)796-3332

Nelson BC:

Rex Eastman - (604)352-3714

Vancouver BC:

Mike Smith - (604)241-0172

CHEN TAI CHI CLASS

First, master Gao-fu has returned the class to me. To simplify her schedule she will be teaching an intermediate class on Saturdays 12:30-2pm at the Taoist Studies Institute. This class is open to students who are at least part way through the 48 form. She is also teaching a beginning Chen class Mondays and Wednesdays 7:15-8:15pm. Monday is at the New Seattle Massage, Wednesdays is at the Center for Motion in Fremont district.

We have finally been moved back to our original time slot: 7-9pm in room #5.

Class will now be 1/2 hr Chen warm-ups, 1 hr individual instruction, and 1/2 hr Chen tuishou.

PA KUA WORKSHOP

If there is enough pre-registration the workshop will be at Crossroads Learning Center, February 12th.

BEGINNING CLASSES

The Yang Tai Chi class is now closed until September. The Chen Tai Chi, Pa Kua Chang, and Chi Kung classes will be open on a monthly basis.

ATTENTION

I will be gone February 18 - 14, class times are reserved so it's a good opportunity to practice with other club members and workout.

PLANT LOVERS

The annual Avant-Gardens open house will be March 5 & 6th. First-pick of the new unusual plants, shrubs and trees for this year. A full selection of herbs will be later this spring.

TAOIST STUDIES INSTITUTE

Located at 80th and Greenwood, the institute has books on Tai Chi Chuan, Taoism, Acupuncture and more on Chinese related arts. There is also a selection of wooden practice weapons. The institute offers a great list of courses related to the internal arts.

WOW!

The new chi kung class is quite a success. I had expected perhaps only 8 - 10 people and on one night we had 29. I am checking into a larger room for us if enrollement continues to stay in the 20's. I'd appreciate feedback from members attending, is the class enjoyable? useful in your other practices? does it shed new light on old methods? **CAUTION:** women should cut

MASTER GAO-FU WORKSHOP CHAN SSU GONG

Sunday, Feb 6, 10:30-1:00

\$30.00

back on practice or stop during their menstrual period. **PLEASE:** don't wear perfume or cologne to chi kung session.

20th Anniversary

February 1994 marks the 20th anniversary of the Internal Wushu Arts. The original name was Internal Arts. After the first year I kept getting mail from medical firms so Wushu (martial art) was added. It sure doesn't seem that long.

Harvey's Book Suggestions

The Relaxation Response by Benson.

The Laughing Sutra & Iron and Silk by Salzman

Year of the Dragon by Daley (also on video)

ATTENTION!

Cedar is organizing a tuishou practice session starting March for club members Saturdays 9-10am. Practice is open to all knowing any of the joint hands drills. Free hands and fa-jin practice will be restricted to those passed section 4 and knowing walking four hands. The more members attending the greater the benefit for all. Andy will visit once a month to help with refinements.

CHAN SSU GONG WORKSHOP

Chan Ssu Gong is the spiraling energy we develop in the internal arts. Chen style Tai Chi Chuan is known to focus more attention on this spiraling energy than other arts. The spiraling is to store and release chi for health or martial purposes. This workshop is open to all, these exercises will improve the quality of your practice. Sign

up as soon as possible to secure a spot.

FEBRUARY PA KUA WORKSHOP CANCELLED

This newsletter is intended for students of the Internal Wushu Arts and interested parties. The intent is to give greater depth to some subjects, share my studies and current learning from various teachers. To keep members informed about events and changes in schedules.

My hope is the newsletter will motivate and encourage students in their own research.

ATD

Better stop short than fill to the brim.
Oversharpen the blade, and the edge will soon blunt.

Amass a store of jade and gold, and no one can protect it.

Claim wealth and titles, and disaster will follow.
Retire when the work is done.

This is the way of heaven.

Tao Teh Ching

VANCOUVER

Possible visit to Master Tchoung February 12th
Let me know asap if you're interested.

Video Night

Another great one. We were honored by Madame Gao-fu, Mr. Yueng, Dave Harris, and Mike Smith. The last hour or so was an informal freehands practice. Thanks everyone for showing up.

Bad Habits & Ruts

Recently I was talking with members of the club about bad habits; particularly my bad habits and how it effects my teaching, practice, study and how it has changed my approach to the arts. Let me say that there are some bad habits that are not ruts, and ruts that are not bad habits. Also, what's considered a bad habit will change depending upon one's perspective. If you merely want 'range of motion' exercises and something to help with relaxation then 'playing' Tai Chi is not a bad habit, it's not good or bad, it serves it's purpose.

The problem, which is always the case in these arts is the fact they are based upon CHANGE which is contrary to our hopes, wants and desires. We'd like things to remain consistent, have only one 'true' way to do or practice, and have right and wrong clearly defined with no leeway. Unfortunately, as we proceed through the art what's appropriate to practice or how to practice keeps changing. This is why I prefer to keep the term 'art' is so correct. These are arts of life, constantly moving, adapting, shifting, growing and evolving. Creativity and life.

My approach to teaching beginners is to 'play'. This reduces the friction, and helps them get an introduction of the art. If we approach the art with expectations on being exact, and having to perform every movement perfectly we won't get passed the first movement. Anger, depression, confusion and hopelessness can easily set in with no benefit what so ever. To name just a few requirements: Relax, loosen, crown of the head suspended upward, tail bone reaching downward, limbs and torso form 5 curves, tongue to the roof of the mouth, chi sinking to the tantien, elbows down, shoulders sunk, all movements smooth and connected, intent leads all movement, etc. We need to go from the general to the more precise as we study and practice the arts over our lifetime. As a beginner you get to play with the movements in order to get a general idea of how to move and what to do. Now, if after knowing what the basic movement is you continue to *play* it you re-enforce bad habits violating the principles of the arts. Only after the muscles and memory can perform the movement can the true art begin. That's the time you begin all over again and try to listen to the movement and transitions, not merely the postures.

Is the body connected smoothly? Is the 'i' leading the chi? At the end of the postures can you sink and store the chi? Is the movement issued from the foot to the fingers in a ripple? Is it first initiated from the tantien? To focus on the physical movement or only the forms are to create bad habits, but this is where we need to begin, this is the door that needs to be open in order for us to enter the internal arts world.

When we get to tuishou the same thing happens. This is where my approach, bad habits and stubbornness show themselves most. The tuishou forces us to root, center, and relax deeper than the forms ever can. The static tuishou and basics are needed in order for us to take a good look at ourselves, what we feel, where our center is and our attitude. This is where I differ perhaps from other teachers since I see this as only the basic and beginning of the martial applications of the art. After

developing depth, 'ting jin' and understanding of body mechanics I see staying at this level developing bad habits as far as the martial aspect of the art. Once there develops a sense of softness and rooting the next level I insist is moving. The minute there is pressure, force or an attack the feet should move freely and the entire body should be used in response. This moves the tuishou into sanshou. Once arriving at this level I see the tuishou as a possible warm-up but the primary practice is the sanshou. Keeping the possibilities of attacks, movement and responses greater than the tuishou. I'd prefer my advanced students practicing the sanshou instead of tuishou. This does not mean sections 7 & 8, it's free form. It means playing with attack and defense. As a true martial art even this develops bad habits since, due to safety sake, things shouldn't get to a chance of severe physical injury. It's not the same situation faced by the old masters when it was life or death. We can't afford an injury keeping us from work, who wants to take the chance of getting hurt? As we practice freehands it does become useful in basic self-defense situations. Tuishou builds good basics but at the same time it re-enforces staying in one place or only expecting to be pushed.

The weaponry has a similar limitation. After learning the movement the intent must be on how the weapon cuts, pokes etc. instead of merely doing the form or movement. Too many artists 'dance' forms putting them in a different category than martial arts. The weapon is to train the intent, focus the chi, increase awareness and condition the upper body. It is also to teach targets, defenses and vulnerabilities, this is why the partner sets are valuable. How to grab, where to grab, where to strike, how to position the body to get efficient use of power and coordination. The training methods of jujitsu, kali, arnis, aikijitsu, and aikido are very good in coming close to a dangerous situation with weaponry practice. Though the practice isn't 'real' level of danger is forces a higher alertness. Even though in Aikido only a wooden sword is used to attack, if you don't get out of the way and counter, the wooden sword will still put a big dent in your head. As students advance the speed picks up and the awareness has to increase and the energy has to flow. As we practice our partner weapon sets we need to move pass the point of 'doing' the forms into 'flowing' and responding. The intensity should increase so our energy and awareness is forced to grow and develop.

The bottom line is if we stay at one level, without change, it becomes a groove and a bad habit. Determining the timing for this change, when we need to move on, is best left to our teachers and masters because we're to involved to make a clear decision. However, we will usually resist the attempt to help us improve, it's just something more to work on.

ATD



One of the primary functions of our practice is to learn to reduce the friction in our lives so we can improve its quality. Friction infiltrates all aspects of our lives from mere physical movements to our emotional and spiritual states. On all levels it injures our health or our functioning in some way. Friction, in its many forms is what keeps things from moving smoothly and easily. Friction slows us down on all levels: mental, physical and spiritual.

Friction isn't necessarily bad, sometimes it forces us to get stronger (which is a pian!), yet in some areas it's the friction that stops our progress, especially when it comes to the internal wushu and chi kung.

As we practice our forms or meditations we become more aware of blockages so we can begin to correct them. As we continue to practice we begin to move away from 'doing' and 'trying' (friction) to 'listening' and 'feeling' (flowing). In Taoism and Zen 'Wu Wei' is often used to describe the perfect action, state of being, or (being) in harmony with nature. Wu Wei is translated as 'non-doing', effortlessness. If we're doing something we like, time flies by, no feeling of effort or straining. This is one type of Wu Wei. In tuishou or applications, your partner goes flying backward yet you don't feel as if you've done anything, this is Wu Wei.

Everything we do has some degree of friction to it. The better and more skillful we are in our jobs, forms, and movements, the less friction we have, the less wasted energy. Things just flow smoothly.

Friction isn't merely on a physical level, it manifests itself on mental, emotional, spiritual, and energetic levels. As children, a form of friction we've all had to deal with is being told we couldn't do something, even before we had even tried. Unfortunately, those words usually come from someone close who's only trying to help. This tends to give the word, the friction, even more power.

As adults much friction is self-induced due to our own negativity or low self-esteem. Very few of us can just do something to see what happens; there's always an expectation or a predetermined attitude, fear or hope attached to it.

All of our training and practice in the internal arts is to understand and eliminate friction, on all levels. Physically, as we practice our forms we seek a smoothness and a softness to our movements. With each practice we begin to figure out where the friction is: tension, disjointedness, excess muscle strength, poor alignment etc. Only then can we begin to neutralize or dissolve it. As we continue in our study of the forms, each muscle joins the symphony of our body movement, not merely a stiff piece separate from the rest. We are like a musician tuning up and perfecting each piece of music. Instead of working with a musical instrument and a piece of music we're working with our bodies, mind, and chi to develop softness, the ripple of movement, our circle of strength, getting out the kinks. As each muscle is worked, understood and tuned-up it then begins to harmonize with the others. With each practice, the muscles work together better, less friction between them, eventually moving in unison. This results in greater efficiency and strength. The classics refer to this as the 'Silk Reeling energy'. When it develops the entire body is strung together smoothly, evenly and efficiently.

On a physical level it's very easy to see where the friction is and how to melt it away, knowing what's not quite correct. As we



“ Study the teachings of the pine tree, the bamboo, and the plum blossom. The pine is evergreen, firmly rooted, and venerable. The bamboo is strong, resilient, unbreakable. The plum blossom is hardy, fragrant, and elegant. ”

Founder of Aikido

advance in form our attention begins to penetrate deeper into our center and we encounter other forms of friction.

When we first work on our physical forms and postures we are primarily working with muscles. The muscles are worked; they are stretched, strengthened, and softened. The more pliable the muscles are the more true strength can be utilized, the muscle has less friction within it, and in conjunction with its surrounding muscles, ligaments, tendons etc. If you tense your arm and throw a ball it doesn't go very far. Next, if you relax the arm, keep it loose as you throw (using it like a whip) the ball is flung farther. The next thing to work on is the coordination of the weight, waist, the arm and the final release of the ball from the hand to maximize the distance thrown. The smoother this flow and the closer the coordination of the parts permits the acceleration of the arm and the power to be released.

This is FA-JIN, releasing energy.

When we talk about energy, pretty much the same things happens. The major difference is that much of the friction is mental. Once the body is trained, the muscles conditioned and soft (not dead or limp) the mind can create blockages to the flow of our chi, our vitality and our health. A negative attitude is a huge blockage to our health and all aspects of our lives. In our practice too much effort creates anxiety and tension which is friction. As we practice, our mind should be alert and feeling. We may have certain visualizations to guide the chi or direct our movements but even these should be soft and gentle, everything has its own timing. A runner doesn't attain top speed from a dead start, there is a flow from the still position to the top speed, just as throwing the ball; the hand has to wait for the weight and the body to be in the proper position for the arm to follow this ripple of movement. Our 'i', intent, must also have a flow to it for the chi to respond and flow efficiently.

As we practice, at first we feel the muscle movement, perhaps the tension within the muscles or the stretching of the muscles. As the movement become refined our attention then can move toward the 'feelings' of the movement. The usual feeling is a smooth flow and the warmth of the fingers or a tingling sensation. The warmth is actually more blood to the fingers which is also a sign of increased energy there. The warmth is the blood. The warmth happens because there is less friction (on many levels). If we try to force our hands to become warm, or 'force' the energy to move to our hands the friction created by the attempt reduced the flow there. If we just practice the movements correctly and just 'feel', the friction is reduced thus more energy is permitted to flow. There is less force, less friction, less blockages for the energy to deal with or be caught by. As our awareness increases we begin to feel the actual energy, it's more of an inflated feeling than a warmth sensation. It's as if our skin is a balloon and our chi the air inside the balloon. As our entire body opens up this inflated feeling is everywhere simultaneously. The energy radiates like a star in all directions.

Slowness increases feeling, it permits time to 'taste' what's happening. As we go slow it gives us a greater chance to see and

Bad Habits & Ruts continues:

feel the friction both physically and energetic level. It's the forms themselves that have the answer to releasing the friction. The slowness also permits us time to 'taste' the feeling of the energy as it moves and circulates through our bodies. A mind concerned with finishing a form has no time to develop depth of feeling or energy flow. If we practice our forms at a quick pace the energy may run along certain lines but it doesn't have time to accumulate, store and sink in. It flows through us instead of nurturing us.

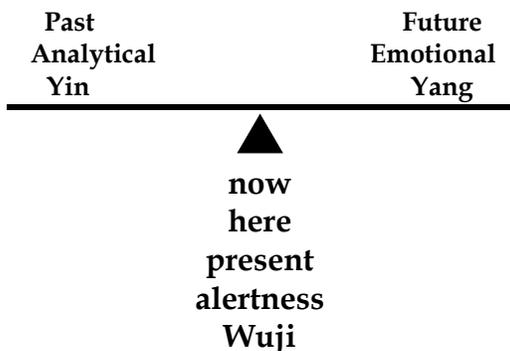
If we're interested in nurturing our chi our goal is to reduce the internal friction and permit it time to 'sink in'. We need a calm mind focused on what we're doing and feeling NOW, then practice within the guidelines of our art. Keeping the body relaxed and soft so all our movements are guided by our intent "i" so the chi can increase.

As we advance in the art there should be a feeling of the chi propelling our arms and legs to move. This means we have minimal effort, only intent leading our movements. As our chi gathers strongly in the taintien and circulates with the movements, the mind rests and notices as the intent leads.

ATD

BOOKS:

- 📖 THE TAO OF TAI CHI CHUAN - Jou, Tsung Hwa
- 📖 THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TAI CHI CHUAN - Wen-Shan Huang
- 📖 **THERE ARE NO SECRETS - Wolfe Lowenthal
- 📖 TAI CHI CHUAN TA WEN - Chen Wei-Ming
- 📖 TAI CHI CHUAN AND THE I CHING - Da Liu
- 📖 THE WAY OF ENERGY - Master Lam Kam Chuen
- 📖 KI IN DAILY LIFE - Koichi Tohei
- 📖 THE ESSENCE OF TAI CHI CHUAN - Lo, Inn, Amacker, Foe
- 📖 PRACTICING AND TEACHING TAI CHI - Gene Burnett
- 📖 **CLASSICAL PA KUA CHANG - Johnson, Crandall
- 📖 **THIRTEEN CHAPTERS - Cheng, Man-ching
- 📖 LIANG ZHEN PU - Li Zi Ming
- 📖 **CHENG SHI BAGUAZHANG - translation Crandall
- 📖 CHI KUNG Health & Martial Arts - Yang Jwing-Ming
- 📖 TAI CHI CLASSICS - Waysun Liao
- 📖 CHEN STYLE 48 FORM - Martin Mellish



Training in T'ai-Chi Ch'uan

Harvey Kurland, M.Sc., M.F.S.

TRAINING MEANS EXERCISING TOWARD A GOAL. Exercise means human movement or physical activity, usually in a recreational sense. But in old exercise physiology texts "Work" was interchangeable with exercise. After all chopping trees, throwing bales of hay or climbing trees is no different physically than walking on a stair master or heaving weights, maybe better. Training is exercise or work toward a goal, it is KUNG -FU. There are a variety of goals that t'ai-chi ch'uan students have.

1. To learn or master the art.
2. To reduce the negative effects of stress with a low intensity exercise.

In either case you need to practice regularly, at least three times per week. At first it is best to do short practice or about 20 minutes and concentrate on the form. This will allow you to learn the form and be able to do it by yourself. If you do not practice between classes you will have a hard time learning the form and it will be hard to keep up with the class. You also will not get much exercise benefit. Everyday on your own you can practice the stances, the basic walk, and the individual techniques as well as the form. Just like with other types of exercise you need to train regularly to gain lasting benefit. When you stop, the benefit stops too.

The late Great Cheng Man-Ch'ing recommended to practice at least 10 minutes every day. If you stick to this minimum you will gain a minimum benefit from the exercise as well as learning the form. You get out of it what you put into it.

Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-Tchen would tell us to practice 20 minutes every morning and every night. He said that, "I can show you the method, but it is up to you what you do with it." Most of learning of the art is by practice. Practice makes permanent, not perfect, and only perfect practice makes perfect.

When you practice you should be MINDFUL. Mindfulness is an important part of the psychological payoff of the practice. Mindfulness is what is meant by "Be here now" and "Being in present time." Doing this helps to get rid of the negative effects of stress and produces a serene feeling. Mindful practice also increases your skill and allows you to learn faster. you than get the maximum benefit from your training program regardless of your goals.

Next the effect of cutting back on training.

Harvey Kurland, M.Sc. is a t'ai-chi ch'uan instructor at the university of California, Riverside and an exercise physiologist. He is a Chief instructor of the Chinese Tai Chi Association of Canada and Northwest T'ai Chi Ch'uan Association.