

INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

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

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

Keep in mind: There are no wrong styles. What's important is that your life benefits from your studies.

ATD

MASTER TCHOUNG VISIT

At the end of February, a some of us went to visit and practice with Master Tchoung Ta-Tchen. Shr-fu had phoned after he returned from China asking me to come and visit. One of his reasons for going to China was to check out the chi kung Master in the Bill Moyer special. Shr-fu wasn't able to find him, or anyone who knew where he was. He did, however, travel extensively throughout China meeting with other instructors and Tai Chi practitioners. It turned out, instead of a vacation he ended up teaching on some occasions.

While visiting with him we worked quite a bit on tui shou and we all had the opportunity to have section one tested and corrected.

We plan another visit this month. If you're interested let me know, we'll be going up on a Saturday.

NEW PA KUA VIDEO

I have just completed a video and booklet on the Traditional Eight Pa Kua Chang Chi Kung and the eight Zhan Zhuang. They are available through CSI Productions, the tape is \$49.95. Members currently enrolled in classes will be able to purchase them from me for a discount, see me. The booklet covers basic stepping and movement patterns as well as instruction in the chi kung and zhan zhuang. In the next two months I hope to have completed videos on: Pa Kua

Chang 5 Elements Form, and O'Mei Mt. Chi Kung. If you have a copy of the Chen Tai Chi tape I will update it for you if you bring it in by May.

TUSEN TAKK

In order to excell in the internal arts applications requires softness, subtleness, timing and sneakiness. Well, you have an excellent start. Especially at being sneaky. For the month of February, club members have been gathering written impressions from current and passed members as a gift for the 20th anniversary of the Internal Wushu Arts. I am deeply touched, I've never recieved such a special gift. There are comments from members in the early 80's and fellow instructors. As requested, I will bring the box to all classes so you may read what others have written, or add to what's there.

As we practice these arts it's important to stop and look back over the last year (or years), just to see what we've accomplished and how far we've come. Sometimes we get frustrated at the difficulty we are now experiencing and loose sight of all that we'd overcome. In form work we're always working on 'NEW' stuff. As movements are learned and become semi-easy we shift our attention to the newer difficult movements not realizing what we can do, how much we've accomplished. THANKS Dave & Gerry for the 'before' pictures. They're very humbling.



APRIL SCHEDULE

I will be gone Thur & Fri, April 14 & 15. Classes are still in session however.

WORKSHOP

Weather permitting we will have our yearly week-long workout session This is a week long practice session for everyone. Chi Kung 1/2 hr. Form practice 1 hr. (various

forms), Tuishou and Sanshou the following hour. May 3-6th. Schedule in May newsletter.

APRIL 30th, 12-3pm

Advanced long form instruction: structure, practice, chi kung, chan ssu jin, applications. at Avant-Gardens, Mt. Vernon \$15.

MIKE'S VISIT

This month Mike will be down April 2nd. He will conduct a session on basic Chan Ssu Jin exercises. Sign up ASAP.

Last month I was able to meet members of Mike's club during a Pa Kua workshop. Thanks everyone, I had a good time.

"Tai Chi Chuan without tuishou (pushing hands) is empty. The Tai Chi solo form is the alphabet, tuishou is learning how to read and write, how to use it."
Master Tchoung Ta Tchen

TEACHERS

In class I talk about the teachings and stories about my teachers and Masters. New members have asked me to clarify who these people are. In this issue:

MASTER

TCHOUNG TA-TCHEN

Born in 1911 in Hunan Province, China, he began learning Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan at the age of 12. Since then he has studied with over 16 teachers and Masters of the internal arts. Most recently he practiced with Wu Tai Chi Master Wu Tunan until his death a couple of years ago in his late 90's.

In 1937 he studied Emei (O'mei) Mountain Chi Kung from

Abbot Nong Lian on Emei Mountain. In 1960 he established his own school of Tai Chi Chuan for health and self-defense in Taiwan. In Taiwan we practiced regularly with some of the most respected Masters of the internal arts including: Cheng Man Ching, T. T. Liang, William Chen, Wang Hsu Chin, and Wang Nien Yen (to name a few). In 1971 he moved to Johannesburg, South Africa and established the South African School of Health and Self-Defense. In September 1972 we were very fortunate to have him move to Vancouver B.C. and establish the Chinese Tai Chi Association of Canada. It was at this time he began to commute to Seattle, teaching weekly here. In 1976 he certified five students to teach his lineage of Tai Chi Chuan in the U.S. and established the Northwest Tai Chi Chuan Association. (Harvey Kurland, Dave Harris, Andrew Dale, Don Scott, Kerry Brooks. In 1994 he certified Gene Burnett).

Though Master Tchoung has primarily focused on Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan, his teaching also has included Pa Kua Chang whom he practiced with Wang Hsu Chin, and Hsing I Chuan that he studied with Master Yuan Tao.

We try to visit Master Tchoung once every other month. Even at 83 years old his power is incredible. He still bounces us off the walls.

CLASS RULES:

1. Relax
2. Practice if you're not receiving instruction.
3. Practice softly, gently, and mindfully.
4. Don't rush. This applies to your learning as well as your forms.
5. Talk during class should be either instructions or questions.
6. Move to another room if you need to visit.
7. Ask questions
8. Help one another
9. No pain, don't force any movement.
10. Club fee is due the first of the month. Please pay on time.

Within chi kung we have many, many styles with many, many variations of similar movements. Though many of the differences may be stylistic differences, many are slightly different to 'run' the energy in a different pattern. As many from the Friday chi kung class can testify to, a slight variation in one movement causes very noticeable changes in the effect of the exercise.

A good example of this is the grounding - opening - closing movement. This movement is very common in all the internal arts and the many chi kung systems. Before studying chi kung in depth, for me this movement was just a grounding, sinking movement; a preparation or closing of the forms. As I learned the Old Eight Pa Kua changes from Zhang Jie it was done slightly differently than in other forms I knew. It was the same and at the same time very different, the sensations of chi flow were different. The Wild Goose chi kung has the same movement with a slight change, again, giving a different energy sensation. My studies with Mr. Yueng have helped put all the pieces together (as far as I'm able to understand). Compared to the other methods I've learned, Mr. Yueng's chi kung is very subtle yet incredibly powerful. His teaching has 'boosted the amps' of everything I practice. It hasn't only increased my chi flow but also my awareness and understanding of what's happening as I practice.

Every exercise or form we practice can be practiced at many different levels. Each form, each chi kung, each exercise has many layers to them. The trick is knowing how to proceed and progress to the finer, higher levels of energy cultivation. On one of Park Bok Nam's visits he said he's met many ten year plus chi kung practitioners with nothing to show for their practice. He claimed they hadn't anything to show for their work because they didn't know how to focus in their practice. Similar to what I've seen in the internal arts, there are many who practice the forms but don't study or practice mindfully. Mindful practice is researching what you are doing and feeling, the movement and function. (It's like learning a song in a foreign language but not knowing what the words mean) The movements may be there but no understanding or content to them. This isn't a waste of time if the individual's only interest is in general health and conditioning, but it doesn't permit access to the deeper levels. Remember: *I-LING-CHI The mind leads the chi*. If the thought is scattered, or not really focused neither is the energy.

Another point that pops up is to have a proper progression to our practice and advancement. Mr. Yueng has cautioned me to be careful when teaching students. A weak elderly person doing the same movement, same level as someone more fit may cause physical or energetic problems. A student should not do chi kung for a while after a severe operation. I can definitely testify to this! It took me about two months after my jaw was broken before I could do any chi kung. I could only 'play' Tai Chi for that period. When I tried to practice my basic chi kung the surge through my body started me trembling and a sense of things being damaged internally. As with everything, the groundwork must be strong, solid and secure before building and adding layers. Our internal 'wiring' must be able to withstand the flow of energy we are working with. We need to move slowly and build internal physical strength and pliability. If a level is skipped there is a weak link and this also retards possible advancement.

A simple example of a chi kung exercise progression is the Opening/Closing movement. This movement, practiced mindfully and repetitively, can cultivate and circulate the chi in many different ways. The most basic, and so most important, is the first level which is the closing movement used in Tai Chi Chuan and Pa Kua Chang. The primary focus is on the exhalation and sinking the chi into the tantien and then into the ground. The flow is downward. This simple movement changes depending on how high you permit your hands to raise. If the hands raise only to shoulder level and sink from there, it grounds the energy gently and safely. When the hands reach higher the energy raises with the hands up to the head. Those prone to headaches and migranes should not do this (as some have definitely experienced). You can give yourself dizziness, nausea, and headaches. The chi gets stuck in the head even though the following movement is to ground it. Mr. Yueng describes this as there being a downward blockage of chi, the meridians flowing up are very open but blocked downward. The next level we move to is the way this movement is done in the Pa Kua chi kung. Using the same movement, but changing the visualization it boosts the energy flow. As the arms raise we draw in and store chi by inhaling through the Lao Gung point, then sink the chi as before in the exhalation. This version pulls in chi and then sinks it. Similar to the first method, students prone to headaches shouldn't let the arms reach above the head. The next version, also from Pa Kua, works the meridians and opens up the channels permitting the energy to flow better. This version is where we inhale as hands raise to shoulder level, open the shoulders (get the kinks out) then reach upward to open all meridians. The slight twisting at the top helps stretch the muscles and open the meridians even more, permitting greater chi circulation, then we sink it back to the tantien. With each variation of this basic movement we can change from either: ground, storing, or circulating the energy. If we practice these three methods in a progression we increase the energy flow greater than if we jump to the last method.

By knowing the purpose of the different movements and their effect we can get the most from our practice, get what we want from it so there can be a greater potential. When teaching forms or chi kung it's important to first teach an exercise very general, simple and very rooted. As time goes on and the student can perform the basic easily and smoothly, is when the next layer should be introduced.

Most chi kung, not all, are taught on a basic level: 'one size fits all'. This reduces negative results from practice and keeps things safe. Fortunately, also, practicing some of the advanced methods without the basic root doesn't get the same results as following the proper progression. If you're prone to headaches, or high blood pressure there are some variations to definitely stay away from since either improper practice or certain exercises may raise your chi too much and create problems such as increasing your blood pressure. Most of the basic chi kung methods focus on developing and storing chi in the tantien. This is our root. This root, this sense of tantien must be solid and strong before practicing the deeper layers of chi kung to avoid problems.

There are three tantien, lower (the root), middle, and upper. In general most of the beginning chi kung will help develop the lower tantien and sink the chi there. Other chi kung or variations can work the middle and upper tantien or just circulate the chi. Some of the Pa Kua Inner Palms do this. If the

upper tantien are worked and 'opened' before the lower tantien is strong many problems can arise. It's like a fireman's hose turned on full force without anyone holding the nozzle.

One chi kung method isn't better or superior to another--it's the quality that's important. Also, each individual is different so certain methods will be more suitable for one person than another, our health and back ground are extremely important. Human nature has this thing about comparison, better or worst, special and ordinary, powerful and weak. Spiritual maturity does not. Unfortunately we are influenced by human nature most of the time. It's best to look and the different methods and exercises like tools instead of stronger and weaker. A screw drivers isn't appropriate to saw a piece of wood, but it's great when you need to fasten screws. When I write or say things to the effect that one may be stronger, it's not better or it's not necessarily more powerful than another method. I will try to keep things neutral in my descriptions.

In the forms that I've been taught there seems to be certain categories the chi kung methods fit into. Though these are not 'OFFICIAL' classifications, it is my experience that these generalizations can many times be made. All chi kung is energy work. But. . . some exercises tend to work the meridians more than other exercises. Some help develop and sink the chi to the tantien specifically. Some focus on getting rid of bad sick chi. Some work as drawing in and storing chi. Some help the chi circulate easily in the entire body. Some exercise the body muscles. Some help cleanse the body energy. Some focuses and opens specific energy centers. Therefore, I will use the following terminology when appropriate.

Meridian chi kung	opens and circulates chi in the meridians
Tan tien chi kung	develops tan tien
Storing chi kung	draws in and stores chi
Releasing chi kung	expells bad chi & toxins
Cleansing chi kung	purification cleansing
Exercise chi kung	works muscles as well
General chi kung	gentel overall chi kung
Breathing chi kung	specific breathing to generate chi
Meditation chi kung	seated visualization and meditation practice

As you practice the various methods you want to reflect afterward on what you've experienced. You should have a general well-being feeling, calmness, perhaps energized etc. There should be no headaches, dizziness, anxiety or tension. These are signs of either practicing incorrectly, or practicing an exercise your body/mind/chi are not prepared or ready for. If you do have any of these feelings ask me about them before continuing the exercises. *A.T.Dale*

THE NATURE OF CHI

By Steve Gray

This article is theoretical BS and is presented only for the sake of contemplation and feedback.

Once I was standing very quietly with my arms down. I slowly bent my elbows and brought my hands up and I noticed that the tone of the ringing in my ears increased in pitch. I thought, wow, am I hearing the sound of the energy in my hands, or are my hands interfering with background sound wave patterns. Then I thought, no, I am hearing the singing of my own nervous system, and when a muscle is used it changes the electrical noise or sound pattern in my nervous system. This thought lead to some of the following.

It is established that when you learn something new your brain grows new nerves and circuits, that when you get sliced in an operation and part of your body becomes numb due to cut nerves new nerves will grow back and the area will regain sensitivity. That we only typically use 2% of available brain power, that our brains are a lot more sophisticated than the most powerful computer, which can't imitate an animal with the awareness level of an insect, and that when

we learn Tai Chi and Chi Kung we are learning new and interesting ways of moving and our brains and bodies are becoming more intimately connected.

Therefore (theoretical BS) when brain cells die off they are replaced by fat so the term "fat head" has some basis in fact. No, just kidding. Therefore when we learn Tai Chi and Chi Kung we are growing more new brain circuits and using more of the brain, that we are also growing new nerve circuits in our bodies, some of which are feedback circuits which give more sensitivity and body awareness, and that the feeling of the chi energy is partly due to our becoming more aware of and more intimate with our own nervous system and its electrical nature. But this doesn't explain why some people can extend energy outside of their bodies.

For that we need a short explanation of phased array radar. A typical radar consists of a parabolic dish that sends out a parallel or slot fan beam of energy and it moves mechanically in order to change aim. A phased array radar is different. A phased array radar is a flat, non moving plate with lots of tiny little radar antennas on the surface. It controls beam direction by controlling the sequence with which the mini antennas fire. For example to send abeam to the left a ripple starts from the right on the antenna plate. It is called constructive interference. With a little computer technology it can be made to send beams in any direction and it can switch directions hundreds of times per minute. It also works as a receiving antenna, and by analyzing the rate of the arriving radar signal it can determine location of sender. This takes some fast clockwork. There are some phased array antennas up in the Arctic that serve in the Early Warning System by watching the skies over Russia. They're twelve stories high and wide and they have big power generators, they can crisp a goose in space. (microwave you know).

So what does all this have to do with the ability to extend chi energy, probably nothing. However, it is known that when nerves activate they send out an electrical field that ripples down the length of the nerve along with the nerve impulse.

Therefore (more theoretical BS) with the proper nervous system installed a person could control their nervous system in a way similar to phased array radar, and it could be more sophisticated and powerful in the same way that our brains are more powerful than the best computers. I suspect Tai Chi and Chi Kung help us to grow new nerve networks that could lead to the ability. Maybe not though because the message travel rate in our nerves is so much slower than the speed of light, which is how fast electrical signals travel through wire.

WHY DO YOU TRAIN THE WAY YOU DO?

By Harvey Kurland, M.Sc.

I am known for my aggressively asking questions. Occasionally, I have irritated some well known masters by asking, "Why do you do _____ that way?" or "What is the function of that technique?" Sometimes I ask very simple questions of teachers to see what reality they are living under. (But not to the extent of, "What color is the sky in your world?") Sometimes they answer, other times not. Simple questions are just that, simple and basic. But it is interesting the variety of responses one can get from teachers. What one teacher assumes as gospel is not necessarily what another teacher believes. A "Dumb" question may give three different answers from three different masters. This can give one an insight into another view of the same movement.

Teachers all have their own reality. The obvious answer is not always forthcoming. I judge the teacher and their character by how they answer and their answers to basic questions. What is obvious to one person is not obvious to another. Over the last 25 years the more I see the more I realize there are many individual differences of perception and belief in the internal arts. That is why they are "Arts".

"DO AWAY WITH MYSTERY," says Master Wang Xuanjie when discussing the martial arts. Wang writes in DACHENGQUAN, "Under the guidance of a teacher, a person, honest thought with little talent and knowledge, may become an expert in a certain field through persistent efforts. Because his expertise, one-sided as it may be, is above most people, his talks may sound abstruse, and his skills may seem miraculous to those with poor discernment, who make a mystery of him, hardly realizing the absurdity of it. Myths originate in ignorance, poor discernment and inexperience. A person who happens to get the essence of shadow boxing, and yet is unable to comprehend often feels mysterious about things more abstruse. When he becomes more experienced and well informed, he will see the light and do away with all mysterious beliefs. This applies to all branches of learning, including, or course, the shadow boxing." Wang goes on to say you need to know why you are doing something. Wang says, "Knowing and doing go hand in hand. . . When you do the thing, you should know the why."

Sifu, Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-Tchen, would say, "What use?" He would tell us that when you do a technique you HAVE to know what the application is and what the intent of the movement is, or else you do not know the why. There must be alacrity in the form, it is not an abstract "Dead thing". If you do not know what you are doing, then you cannot be precise and you don't know t'ai-chi.

Precise movement is much more simple if you understand intent. Many students who are interested in health promotion or a mystical experience are often surprised by this idea. To learn the application does not mean you are learning to fight, it means you are learning how to move your body correctly. Intent gives the movements life. The fault I see in many t'ai-chi competitors is that there is no alacrity and no spirit. The classics maintain there must be a spirited feeling in the form, no where do I read be a zombie or a modern dancer. When too much emphasis is placed on dance and looking good, without underlying spirit and intent, then something is missing. It is not important to be a fighter thought, that is a totally different path.

Students who want to learn the martial side of t'ai-chi ch'uan or pa-kua chang need to practice in a specific way. What most of us do is practice shadow boxing with emphasis on health and exercise. For exercise you need to do the routine on a regular basis, for example at least 4 days a week for 30 minutes a day, depending on your current level of health, fitness and your goals. The less fit person needs less exercise at first and needs to build up gradually. Anyone with a medical condition needs to check with their physician before starting a new exercise program.

There is a concept called "Specificity of Training", you get what you train for. If you train for exercise and health that is what you get; if you train for martial art you have to train specifically for martial art. Know what you want and work toward that goal. Don't fool yourself and train for one thing, while thinking you are training for another.

KNOW THE WHY

Grandmaster Tchoung would also tell us you have no business teaching t'ai-chi if you do not understand the use. This goes back to knowing the why. He related the decline in t'ai-chi over the generations to holding back knowledge and a generation of teachers who do not know the why. These same teachers are found rationalizing their form as a mystical dance. T'ai-chi is not a free form flowing dance, it is a precise system. Why do you do a movement? If you don't know, ask the simple question "Why?" If your teacher doesn't know or is reluctant to tell you, start reading this again.

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FRIDAY CHI KUNG

Releasing breath - sinking	In Yang Chi out Toxins
Body circle	Leg curl
Wuji posture - sinking	Goose Drinks Water
Shoulder circle	Misogi Body drop
Open & Sink Chi	Open & twisting
Waist Rub	Rowing exercise - Funekogi undo
Arm Swing	Shaking wrists - Tekubi kosa undo
Clam	Wuji posture - flame above water
Open, Draw in Chi & Sink	Seated leg bounce
Ming Men tap	Zhan Zhuang
Shoulder tap	- Monkey Holds Cauldron
Pushing the circle - Tui Moh	To sleep
Tan Tien Breath - YANG TAN	One point meditation