

# INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

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This newsletter is 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. Mailing subscriptions \$10 yearly

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

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## SPRING TIME

*Just stop and sink*

With the weather cooperating and we're able to get out and enjoy the sunshine, trees, flowers, and views of Mt. Rainier - - - it's time to stop, listen, and enjoy. Even if just for five minutes. Our studies and practice in the internal arts are for our own benefit, we are nurturing ourselves. Keep this in mind when you feel pressured into going to class! Perhaps you should just take the night off? Grab a book and go to the park, go to a movie, do something else for yourself.

All too often we get caught up in the timing, the schedule, the must of something. Even if it's beneficial to us we can make it too much of a chore. We are actually the only ones responsible for ourselves. We're the only one that really knows when time-out is needed, in spite of the many good intentions around us. Instead of waiting for when it's 'needed', perhaps take once a day (or at the least once a week) to go neutral, permit the chi to sink, let the mind and body 'feel' and enjoy, rest. Even just five minutes, sitting down with a cup of tea can give us the nurturing, rest, and strength we deserve. If it's raining and the house is full of people; hide in the closet or basement with your cup of tea, time-out.

Master Tchoung Visit  
May 7th



## PA KUA CHI KUNG

My book and video are now available on the Tradition Eight Pa Kua Chi Kung and Traditional Eight Pa Kua Zhan Zhuang. The first 21 minutes of the video are demonstrations of: Bird Through Forest Tree Chi Kung, Pa Kua Eight Elbows form, Pa Kua Short Staff, a few palm changes, the chi kung and zhan zhuang. The last hour of the tape is instructional. Also, the Pa Kua Five Elements, Three Levels, Three Powers form is also on video and available. I will have them available during class sessions, otherwise you can order them from CSI Productions 1-800-755-8862.



## YANG TAI CHI CHUAN Beginners

We are now 1/4 through with section #1. It's not as bad as it sounds since this actually means you now know 1/2 of the movements in section #1. Slowness is the secrets here. All of the movements learned so far we will encounter throughout the rest of the form, if you are interested in going beyond section #1 (there are 6 sections in the long form). It's important to take time now to let these movements sink in and try to understand what's going on with each posture. This way, when we encounter them later we can sail through them quickly. After memorizing them, the most important aspect is to understand the stances and body positions in each. How are the feet placed in the front stance? The back stance? Where is the weight? Where does the torso face?

You want to practice them over and over so they can begin

remember the last few movements it's OK, start at the beginning and go as far as your memory permits, next class you'll be lead through the last part. I really don't expect members to remember the last few movements taught, at least very well. Don't worry about practicing wrong, just practice, play with the movements. Our problem is that we think too much. Start at the beginning and listen to what your body wants to do, usually your body will lead you into the correct posture. As we continue there is more and more choreography to learn and a few new movements. It's important to get this part of section one into your body before we add more. A little confusion now is fine but if we don't stop and let it sink in we'll end up with too much confusion later.

How many Tai Chi instructors does it take to screw in a light bulb???

Ten, one to screw in the light bulb, and nine to say, "In our style we do it this way."

## MORE CHI KUNG

If you'd like to practice more chi kung, Yang, Chen, and Chi Kung class members can come and follow the Pa Kua Chi Kung session Thursday, 7-7:45. This is not an instructional session, it's the warm-up for the Pa Kua class. We are in room 7.

## MOVING OUTSIDE

As the weather begins to warm and stay clear we will begin to move classes outside.

parking lot but we will eventually move to the park on 58th & Phinney. Keep a sweater or light jacket in your car in case a breeze picks up.



## DID YOU KNOW

Yin Yang and Yang style Tai Chi are different Yangs? Several times I've received phone calls from students wanting only to learn the Yin part of Tai Chi Chuan, figuring the Yang meant the martial aspects. The Yang in Yang style is from the Yang family, Yang Lu Chan was the creator of this style thus: Yang style Tai Chi Chuan. It doesn't have anything to do with the Yang of Yin and Yang.

## LONG FORM WORKSHOP

April 30th, Open to anyone passed section #1. Refinements, Chi Kung aspects, meditations and applications will be covered. Location: Avant-Gardens Nursery, 1795 Hickox Rd., Mt. Vernon (206)428-5974. Exit 224, R turn, L turn onto Cedardale Rd., R turn onto Hickox Rd. 3/4 mile.

## CHI KUNG INTRODUCTION May, Sundays 10-11am

Avant-Gardens Nursery, Mt. Vernon on Sundays (except mother's day) (206)428-5974

## 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.

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

May 3-6, 1994

	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.
9-10am	chi kung	chi kung	chi kung	chi kung
7-8pm	chi kung	chi kung	chi kung	chi kung
8-8:30	1-2-5-6 Yang	48 Chen	1-3-4-6	48 Chen
8:30-9	Pa Kua	Tuishou	Pa Kua	Tuishou

to feel comfortable. If you can't We may first end up in the lower

## MR. YUENG

Of all the martial artists and high level teachers I have encountered, Mr. Yueng shines bright among them. His skill is exceptional in martial arts, chi kung, and healing, but the extra special quality is his joy. When Mr. Yueng is around there is a joyousness, and bright energy that sparkles. This quality is one of the reasons he has been a hero of mine for 20 years.

Mr. Yueng permitted me to ask questions about his training and his past. As always, there was a wealth of information he shared with me..

Mr. Yueng was trained in the Chinese Opera. Those familiar with Chinese Opera know that the members can put any gymnast to shame by their flexibility, strength and fitness. Mr. Yueng said there were two types of members in the Opera, the ones with high education and those without. The literate members were usually the singers while those without much education learned acrobatics and kung fu. The training was extremely hard, beginning at 4am and training for 2 hours without permission to even go to the bathroom.

In those days if your skill wasn't of high quality you didn't eat, it was survival. If your kung fu wasn't any good you didn't work, no one would hire you. At that time kung fu was for real, not exercise or enjoyment like today. The training was brutal, beyond what practitioners are willing to endure today. If you fought, your life was on the line, you could be crippled or killed. Now a days it doesn't matter how skilled you are, you can't defend yourself against a bullet. Today practitioners compete for prizes, first places and better health, it's very different than if your life depended on it.

Mr. Yueng sees three levels of martial arts practitioners: young, middle, and older. The young practitioners are innocent, they want to be strong, they may like to fight, show off what they learn, they don't worry about getting hurt. The middle aged practitioner is afraid of being injured, they seek exercise and self-defense, they aren't interested in fighting. As a practitioner gets older the focus moves on staying healthy and fighting illness.

Speaking about studying kung fu, Mr. Yueng said the best teachers were the pickiest. They wouldn't train just anybody, so they didn't have many students. They were very careful who they taught, the sincerity, determination and character of the new student was continuously tested. Mr. Yueng being in the Opera had the opportunity to study with many martial artists and has learned many styles. Tai Chi, Pa Kua, Wing Chun, several Mantis systems, Crane, Monkey and many more (he practiced with Sun Lu Tang's students). I asked him if there was one instructor that stood out above the rest that he looked up to, or was a model for him. He said all his teachers were very good, each had their own unique gifts and talents. He wasn't taught that one style was better than the other, each was useful. However, he didn't idolize the teachers, or want to be like them, since the life of a kung fu teacher was not a good life. A kung fu teacher's life was very difficult and sometimes sad. To start with few had families, they had to continually train hard so their skill was high in order to stay alive and be

successful. If you were a kung fu teacher anyone could come up and challenge you thus injuries and possible death could result. If they weren't killed, injured or handicapped, they'd go off into the mountains to become monks. Running a school meant you were responsible for all your students and their actions. If a student hurt someone or was quarrelsome it was the sifu's fault. The sifu had to train and instill a sense of responsibility in all students, continuously. The life of a kung fu sifu was not a peaceful one. When you accept students it's your responsibility to look after them, take care of them, educate them. Even if their health wasn't good the sifu must guide them back to better health. Many of the kung fu teachers became doctors and healers when the martial arts lost favor since they were knew how to deal with injuries.

Currently, Mr. Yueng focuses on chi kung for health and healing. He sees this as the most useful and important aspect of the arts. He represents a special chi kung from Tibetan origin called Tien Shan Chi Kung which a few of use are fortunate to be studying. This is a high level chi kung that not only work on self-healing but also in increasing ones' chi power. Mr. Yueng states that the secret to chi kung is studying from a master with strong chi that can boost the chi of the student. The teacher must give the student chi to help accelerate their development. Otherwise it takes an extremely long period of time to build a storehouse of chi. Before storing and building chi a person's sick chi has to be cleansed. So along with learning and practicing the movements with the teacher, the teacher boosts the students chi to help heal them and accelerate the process along.

This chi kung must be taught individually, each person is different and thus requires different instruction. The master must be able to focus on the student completely so large classes aren't possible. An older person has different requirements than a younger one. Someone who has, or has had some type of illness must be guided very gently, carefully. The master must invest much chi and effort into each student which is why this chi kung isn't very popular, few masters are willing to do this. We are very lucky to have someone as generous and skilled in our area.

### 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

The more I practice these arts, the more I'm amazed with what unfolds with each practice. The complexity of the internal arts, the completeness and wholistic approach is mind boggling. The method these systems have been mapped out is beyond comprehension. Though we may practice for exercise, health, self-defense, we can't practice mindfully without learning more about ourselves, whether we like it or not. And as we learn about ourselves we also learn about the process and cycles of nature. Much of this is due to the slowness and relaxation required. We can't help but smell the roses, or anything else around us as we practice. In the March issue Rex of the Kootenay Tai Chi Centre shared an article about the Taoist creation myth. For those not familiar with the I Ching, or the art of Pa Kua, Pa Kua refers to the eight trigrams, representative of one of the stages of creation. Instead of saying every direction sometimes it's said as: all eight directions. The progression a student takes in the art of Pa Kua Chang (eight trigrams palm) through the forms act out the creation myth more obvious than the Tai Chi Chuan form does. If you're not familiar with Pa Kua visit the class on Thursday 7-9, it's sometimes nicknamed Tai Chi for the active person.

Whether it was a conscious decision or not, the progression of the art of Pa Kua Chang flows from the wuji to the ten thousand things, from the simple to the complex and back to the simple. The lesson begins with walking the wuji circle, the void. This meditation helps clear the mind, root the energy, and begin the moving Zhan Zhuang of Pa Kua Chi kung. Physically it begins to strengthen the body and encourage the chi flow. From walking the wuji circle, yin and yang begin to form. The movement begins to walk the line (the s curve) that differentiates the yin and yang in the Tai Chi diagram instead of merely walking the outer circle. This movement begins to work the upper body to soften, stretch, and twist as the hand rise and fall, symbolically representing the rise and fall of the sun and moon. This chi kung exercise is named '*Becoming one with the Tao*'. This pattern actually is the single palm change, Phoenix Extends Wing; the foundation for all Pa Kua changes similar as Grasping Sparrow's Tail is for Tai Chi.

From here, the yin spot begins to form in the yang tear drop, and the yang begins to form in the yin tear drop. The walking patterns and upper body movements begin to become tighter spirals, giving the upper body more work, greater stretching and balancing is then required.

The next step for a beginner is to learn the eight palm changes and its linking form. The palm changes require twisting and stretching every muscle in the body: up, down, sideways. In addition each palm change represents one of the eight kuas, the characteristics of the eight animals and their strengths. So, at this point the movements have become very intricate and complex. As we proceed into the linking forms

the changes and movements are numerous and can mix in any way; hence, the ten thousand things. As we come to the end of our practice we return to the wuji, just walking the rim of the circle, quieting down the mind, sinking the chi, then coming to a stop. Stillness, the void, the journey is over, we are home.

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### A REFRESHING APPROACH

Correct practice in the internal arts are governed by a series of guidelines that describe physical, energetic, and mental requirements of the art. Tai Chi Chuan in particular has a series of classics, some theoretically dating back to the Taoist saint Chang San Feng. These writing and classics stem from the Taoist traditions and the source being the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tse. Reading the various translations of the Tao Te Ching is one of my favorite ways to check my practice and how I apply these to daily life.

I recently picked up a book entitled: *A Warrior Blends with Life: A Modern Tao* by Michael LaTorra as was pleasantly surprised to find a modern translation/version of the Tao Te Ching. Along with the basic translation of the 81 poems he also gives his summary of the the poems. I now have a favorite new translation. For this month I will have a copy in my file box if you care to take a look at it.

**“Successful people hold no fixed ideas.**

**Their principles are high, but their minds are open.**

**They meet kindness with kindness.**

**They also meet hostility with kindness, because kindness is the gesture of life.**

**They are faithful to the faithful.**

**They are also faithful to the unfaithful, because faith is the sign of eternal life.**

**High speed living saturates the senses, but successful people keep their goals in mind.**

**Most people gorge on sensory experiences.**

**Successful people attract others to their joyful state.”**

#49 Tao Te Ching

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## OUR CIRCLE OF STRENGTH

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reprinted and updated from September 1991 newsletter

Don't lock your arms or legs, don't completely extend your limbs, keep your feet flat on the floor, sink your shoulders, drop your elbows, stay upright, don't lean, the list goes on. Focus on the here and now sink into your center. Control your balance, control every movement. *ALL MOVEMENTS MUST BE COMFORTABLY DONE.*

All these guidelines serve to help us stay inside our circle of strength as well as teach us where our circle of strength is. On tip toes we're not only not steady, but we have no strength. Anytime we reach beyond our circle of comfort and strength we might as well be standing on a sheet of ice.

Our circle of strength is the way we move our torso, arms and legs in all directions comfortably and efficiently. This type of movements enables us to use the full power of our entire bodies when moving and applying strength. It also serves to keeps us inside a safety zone, it helps keep us from straining and from being hurt.

All the forms and styles we practice in the internal arts teach us to move within this circle. This is why the martial applications are important to know. Without this the arts become health chi kung instead of martial arts. These arts retrain our bad habits and teaches us to stay strong, safe and centered. This is important regardless whether we're doing martial arts or painting the ceiling. A typical example of moving outside our circle of strength is being on the top step of a ladder and reaching a bit too far to get that one spot. At that point we are in danger, we may just strain a muscle or we can fall and break a leg. When practicing our forms the execution of our power isn't at the end of our movements or reach, It's 3/4 of the way to the end of the movement. The last part of the movements is the sinking. At the end of each posture you should think of someone pulling your hands, trying to pull you off balance. As we practice, what we are learning is to move and stay as structurally strong as we can.

I see this habit of extending too far or reaching too much as a physical example of our greed and fighting mind. During applications a common mistake made is to try to respond to an attackers strikes while they are still out of range, thus throwing yourself off balance. Trying to manipulate the situation. Cheng Man-Ching had a saying: "Let the meat come to the hook." We tend to try to control this physical attack before it's a threat to us. This puts us in a disadvantageous position. The other point is we can't really control someone else, we can only try to control ourselves and our own actions. All these are within our circle of strength. Another example of this greed is in pushing hands, **trying** to push our partner, instead of surfing the situation to notice when the time is right to push. The purpose of pushing hands is to gain sensitivity, greater relaxation and feed back as to where our strength and tension is stuck, and where our partners tension, stiffness and weakness is. What happens as we practice is that our mind tries to control and calculate the situation, wanting to win, trying to force a win. There is no winning or loosing in

tuishou, only learning and working out. What we need to do is keep our mind inside our circle of strength, our center, and observe what our partner does. Our job is to relax and surf our partners strength, energy and power. As we do this, windows open as to were the weakness and stiffness is, then we need to seize the moment. But when this happens we should respond within our circle of strength.

The more we try to control something or someone, the more they have control over us and the less control we have over ourselves. It's like parents demanding their children not

to do something. The kids are more likely to do it. If you wish someone would act a certain way and they don't or won't it only pushes your own buttons.

The internal arts are based on wu-wei, non-action. This is actually letting things follow their own path and direction. Trying to understand energy and how it flows, changes and grows. Many people begin to study for self-control and discipline. The problem then soon starts; as soon as we start to try to control ourselves we'll find every reason to do something else. We need to be sneaky, instead of applying force, we need to focus on our center and direction we'd like to move toward, then guide ourselves in that direction. We

should remind ourselves of our goal, our focus or reason for the change we want and slowly we'll move in that direction, but we shouldn't beat ourselves up for not being better. Each time we remind ourselves of our direction, it's like adding one drop of clear water into a cup of tea. Each time we remind ourselves to relax, not loose our tempter et., is one more drop of practice in the direction we want. A healthier, safer, stronger life. If we try to force ourselves to relax we usually get the opposite, we'll tense up even more.

We need to be firm in a sneaky, gentle way, inside our circle of strength.

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*When you attend to the structure and form, you may lose your softness and relaxation. When you attend to the softness and relaxation, you may lose your structure and form. Gently let your attention rock between them until you have both alive and correcting themselves.*

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*Practicing and Teaching T'ai-Chi by Gene Burnett  
(book available in my file box \$5)*

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