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INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

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1995 FALL SCHEDULE

	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		am Yang Tai Chi		private	9-10 am Misc.
7-8pm	Yang Tai Chi	Chen Tai Chi	Pa Kua	lessons	10-12 Basic/beginners class
8-9	Intermediate(tuishou)	Applications	Advanced	1/2 hr \$20	

PA KUA SEMINAR

August 20th, 10-noon, \$5.00
Woodland Park practice area
59th & Phinney Ave. N.

Joe Crandall, Victor's brother, will conduct a workshop on Sun Lu Tang's 10 palm changes on his visit to the northwest. Joe Crandall is an authority on Pa Kua Chang and has co-authored and authored several books and video tapes on Pa kua Chang. In addition he has translated and made available several Chinese pa kua books making them accessible to all non-Chinese students (one particularly on our system of pa kua). His most recent, and one of the Pa Kua classical books, is a translation of Master Sun Lu Tang's pa kua book. A standard book of pa kua used in China. Joe will have copies available at the workshop. If at all possible attend the workshop, I highly recommend it.

NEW BOOK

An important resource book for Pa Kua students:

Sun Lu Tang's

Study of Pa Kua Chang

translated by

Joe Crandall & Helin Dong
copies available during workshop or from Victor.

FALL 1995

CLUB PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Basic fee \$55.00 monthly.

1st additional hr class \$65
monthly (another night 1 hr).

2nd additional hr classes \$70
monthly

Club fee is due the first week of each month.

New Beginning Class: In this class I will focus on the O'mei Chi Kung, body

structure, basics, classics and principle of the Internal Arts (Tai Chi and Pa Kua). This will be a two hour class session on Saturday 10-12.

Intermediate and advanced members may participate in the Sat. basics class at no extra charge.

MISC. SESSIONS

Aug 5 - Sifu visit/birthday party
Sept 9th - 7&8
Sept 16th - club picnic
Sept 23rd - free hands

CLUB PICNIC

1-5pm - Sept 16th

Discovery Park south entrance



*When the spirit
controls the body, the
body obeys; when the
body overrules the spirit,
the spirit is exhausted.*

Liu I-Ming

FALL CLUB DEMONSTRATIONS SIGN-UP

This fall we will have our annual club demonstration. This is an opportunity for prospective students & relatives to get a look at what we do and why you're gone certain nights. (It's also to prove you have been coming here on all those nights (if there are other nights you'll like verified we have classes I can be bribed)). If you would like to do a solo or demonstrate some form with a group please sign up. I hope to keep the demonstration down to 1.5 hrs.

I WILL BE GONE AUG 11-21ST

CLUB TRAINING CERTIFICATION

In the 1995 March issue was the proposed certification of Master Tchoung's Tai Chi system in order to certify those teaching. NOTE: For those not interested in teaching or being tested on their forms this has no meaning. Well, the first two levels we agreed upon and it's the responsibility of the individual clubs chief instructor to conduct the exams and certifications. Level one certification is for members passing exams on a short form or sections greater than 2 or less than 6 in our long form.

Level two is long form certification and is to verify the member completing the long form (sections 1-6) having good strong basics and correct postures.

These certification merely state that at the time of the exam the individual demonstrated correct principles, execution, and understanding of the forms, body structure is safe and correct. Exams are given at the request of the individual student.

The NW TAI CHI ASSOCIATION (Harvey's club) has certified: Myra Allen, Mick Branch and Diane Schilling to Level 1. Scott Mullen has been certified to level two.

**NEW CLASSES
SEPTEMBER
LET YOUR
FRIENDS KNOW!**

Beginning classes start
Sat Sept 9th, 10-noon.

Concentrate On What Is Important!

by Harvey Kurland

When I started learning t'ai-chi ch'uan I wanted to learn everything, fast. Luckily, the instructor taught in a step wise progression. First I learned one technique, then when I did that correctly I would learn the next. Usually that would mean one movement per week.

When I was a science teacher on Guam, I took a teaching methods class through the Teacher Corps. The basic idea was first learn one thing, then after you understand it, learn the next. And most important, don't jump over information that you don't understand to learn new information. As that would just make you unclear on the new information. This was basically the approach of my first t'ai-chi teacher and also Sifu Tchoung. If a student jumps over the basic information to get to advanced "stuff" then in the long run they will have a poor foundation and their whole art will show it. As the saying goes: "Slow down I want to get there faster".

I find many students want to rush to learn new techniques. It is as if they were eating and want to take a giant bite of food, only to find they have too much in their mouth to chew. Gobbling rather than savoring. I find that some students want to go on to the next technique before they can do the current move correctly. I have to hold them back so they don't end up with a form that looks like it got hit by a tornado. They may feel frustrated, and a few have left, but as the instructor it is my job to get them to learn it correctly, or at least try my best to do that. The disadvantage of group classes is not everyone learns at the same rate. That is why students need to work on basics outside of class. Slow learners need to work hard on basics to keep up. Fast learners may want to learn more techniques, but they also must stress proper technique. But in the long run it does not matter if you learn one move a week, or one a month, as long as you learn it correctly and can do it by yourself. As Sifu Tchoung says in his book, "When one begins T'ai chi ch'uan, learning one or two moves daily is sufficient. If one tries to learn too much, it is difficult to learn the proper movements and easy to form bad habits. If a bad habit forms, it is difficult to correct it later." p283. This is very true.

The older method of teaching of following the leader and practicing a whole form at a sitting is the WORST way to learn t'ai-chi ch'uan. It is also the worst way to learn pa-kua chang or anything else. Practicing basics is what is important. For example in pa-kua chang one must be able to do the basic circle walk

before learning the forms. Otherwise the form will be empty. You need to get the connections down at a basic level first. So it is basic walk, the mother palms and walk. Even now that is what I primarily do. In t'ai-chi you need to practice the basic steps. If you cannot do the walk easily and be grounded, then the hand movements are of no consequence. The basic walk, walk with ward-off, walk with brush knee, etc., are all basic drills that need to be mastered. If one only does the form then the basic techniques never get enough emphasis to be correct. When I practice I may do 10 to 30 brush knees in a row. The form is like an encyclopedia. The basic practice gives the form substance. As one progresses one will enjoy the basic drill much more and grow to understand its importance. Each technique is enjoyed for itself and there is no goal to complete the form, i.e. "Get it over with".

I now see the wisdom of teaching the short form. One can concentrate on a few techniques and "Get into" them. In our last tournament those who did best in pushing hands, who were clearly well rooted and could do the moves well, primarily did short form and basics. They were not the people who did 10 different pretty forms. They were rooted with good basic movement, and it worked. They focus on basics and standing postures in their training.

I no longer see the need to learn every form in the book ,but rather enjoy the simplicity of basic exercises. It is easy to get into the trap of more is better, after all if you know more forms, you must know more? Not from what I have observed. Other than a few outstanding athletes who are able to concentrate and keep each set clear, I've seen most of "Form Collectors" turn them into a mish-mash of poorly done techniques with the mind set of getting to the end of the form, rather than being IN the form. All the forms look like each other so they have a lot of junk. Too many forms to practice means not enough basic training time. Don't get seduced by more is better, i.e. greed. But rather thoroughly enjoy each technique, just as you should chew a delicious meal completely to enjoy it. There is no rush. After all where are you going?

Harvey Kurland received his Masters Degree from the University of Washington and has dedicated himself to public health issues for the last 30 years. He has degrees in public health education and exercise physiology. He is a certificated chief instructor of t'ai-chi ch'uan by Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-Tchen and teaches at the University of California at Riverside and Loma Linda University. He also holds certification from the American College of Sports Medicine and International Sports Sciences Association.

**"Slow
down I
want to
get there
faster"**

ON MAKING MISTAKES

by Bruce Brown & Sparky

The path towards acquiring skill in taiji chuan is strewn with pitfalls. When I first started learning the form, I, like most others, focused on following my instructor. I mimicked him to "get it right". After years of trial and error (trial for my teachers, error for myself) I let go of the mimicking and began to explore the movements. The result for me has been a non-judgmental, non-critical, more playful approach to the art.

This has also resulted in a newfound joy in making mistakes. Now I would love to say that I have reached the level of mastery at which my movements were flawless and that I purposefully engage in "poor posturing" in order to play with the alternatives. . . not quite. I still (and probably always will) trudge along trying to improve quality or unearth a nuance in my practice. Occasionally I'll come up with something here or there that I intuitively know is right, or at least "more right" than I had it before.

Having tasted this very transitory success, it gets stored and I keep plugging away to someday taste it again (or even transcend it). This is significant in that it provides me with a reference point with which to work with. This process is usually more effective if one has at least a good grasp of the basics. . . a certain facility with the movements and principles involved.

The mistakes are actually alternatives. There are an infinite number of ways of moving through a posture. The varying subtleties of physical, psychological and energetic assure that no posture is ever repeated exactly the same way. Each has its own qualities and is there to be researched and refined. Exploring the possibilities, playing with the "what ifs" can free us from dogma. Taiji chuan can be a very elegant, practical and efficient way of moving through space. If we are able to integrate the principles into our lives (e.g. wake up and be sensitive to the world around us), those "mistakes" we make will become lessons for an improved practice.

The "correct" way is some theoretical, untouchable, rather dead ideal that has much less to teach us than our "real", earthy, idiosyncratic practice that we have available to us now.

Albert Einstein once said "1+1=2 is a good idea. 1+1=3 is also a good idea". It is in that open spirit that I try to do things, (although I wouldn't want the engineer who designed my car to only follow the latter).

July 1995

FENG ZHIQIANG ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT QIGONG CONT.

When is the best time of day to practice qigong?

For the type of qigong I teach there are four periods during the 24-hour cycle that are best: 11:00 p.m.--1:00 a.m., 5:00 a.m.--7:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.--1:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m.--7:00 p.m. According to ancient principles of the *Yijing* from 11:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. yin is exhausted and yang is born; from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. yang qi is ascending and flourishing; from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. yang is depleted and yin is born; from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. yang qi is descending and withdrawing. 11:00 p.m.--1:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.--1:00 p.m. are periods when yin and yang are in transition. Between 5:00 a.m.--7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.--7:00 p.m. yin and yang are waxing and waning.

Why are these four periods the best time to practice qigong?

According to traditional Chinese medical principles, the yin and yang of the human body are in sympathy with the yin and yang of heaven and earth. These four periods are likewise in sympathy with the four seasons. The period from 5:00 to 7:00 a.m. is dawn and corresponds to spring. The period from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. is midday and corresponds to summer. The period from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. is dusk and corresponds to autumn. The period from 11:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. is night and corresponds to winter. In spring things are born. In summer they flourish. In autumn they are reaped. In winter they are stored. Therefore these four periods are especially potent times in which to practice qigong.

If you practice at other times, will the results be different?

It is best to practice during the four periods mentioned. And of those, the periods between 11:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. are the best. If you can't arrange your schedule so that you can practice at these times, you can also practice at other times, but the results will not be the same. However, no matter what time of day you practice qigong, the most important thing is to properly grasp the technique so that it leads into a quietness. Even if you choose the best times of day to practice, if you do not do this, you will still not achieve good results.

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the following poem was inspired by Robins experience with tai chi and chi kung

A CALLING

*I move diagonally,
like the bishop,
across the squares,
gracefully,
from corner to corner,
never hopping,
never taking the vertical path,
never lateral arabesques --
taking the hypotenuse
across the squares of life,
the shortest path,
the least resistance.*

*Yet tonight
I am called
by the spiral,
circling ever wider,
beginning in the center,
filling the square,
filling the board,
spilling over the edges,
filling the ocean,
then unwinding,
slowly,
very slowly,
reclaiming the center
once again.*

R. Atkins

5-11-95

WHAT DOES RESPECT MEAN? HOW IS IT SHOWN IN CLASS?

During one session I was asked how respect was shown to me as a teacher Sifu. Respect as we've always hear is earned, true. Many times we confuse respect for just basic courtesy to those around us as well as ourselves. I will use the word respect and let you decide if it's 'RESPECT' or courtesy.

First, respect for the teacher is demonstrated by respect for the class and club members. This included helping one another, encouraging one another, being

attentive, keeping chatter to a minimum, and practicing sincerely.

Respect for the teacher is being courteous. Being courteous to the teacher and other class members such as asking questions that pertain to the lesson, not talking for ideal chatter or gossip while class is in session. Though there may be friendships with the teacher, when class is in session it's a professional relationship.

There are many ways of being rude, i.e. showing disrespect, some are blatant, others very subtle. One rude item is telling the teacher how his teaching compares to your previous teacher, Even if the compliment is good, do you want your teacher to assume you are there to do a comparison? The time should be for this lesson and now. Comparing can be done on your own, don't waste valuable lesson time for this. Everyone has their strong and weak points! Be in class with a positive attitude. If you don't like the class why be in it? If you don't feel like practicing you may sit out but don't just be in other's way or distract others with conversation.

One of the worst things to see while teaching a class is yawning, or a bored look from a student. Once in a while a teacher gets a student with the body language of, "Prove it to me, I dare you." All of these aside from being disrespectful can make a class seem too long.

Practice while in class. Walking around visiting with others, reading the posters on the wall, or ignoring the lesson are very poor.

Unless told to 'play' with the movements don't wander from the techniques you're expected to be working on. Or, show your classmate what you're learning in another class. Save that for later.

Sometimes a technique may not make sense, or perhaps you were shown differently at another time. Blurting out in class, "That's not the way you showed be before", or "Oh, it's changed again" are all very rude. The internal arts are based upon change so . . . change will happen. But also, as a beginner you will be shown a very basic level, as you advance and demonstrate a certain understanding the movement may change, become more refined, or it may need to adapt to the current situation. Once something is written in stone it can break. Of course a comment like, "Master so and so does it this way" should never come up. You are in this class now, if you have questions on a variation you can ask something like, "is this way OK?" or ask the differences between the two methods. But be happy, you have two options now. ATD