

Happy Holidays

1996 NEW CLASSES

TELL YOUR FRIENDS

◇ BEGINNING CLASSES

Saturdays 10-noon starting January. The first hour will be on the Pa Kua Chi Kung, The second hour will be basic movements and principles of the internal arts.

◇ NEW FRIDAY 7-8:30 CLASS:

7&8 Sanshou - Partner Tai Chi:- This session is open to all having completed either: Yang short form, Chen 48 form, or Pa Kua 8 Mother Forms (first month classes are in Magnolia fee is \$10 extra per month)

◇ YANG TAI CHI SECTION #9

Saturday 9-10am for month of January (outdoors). This is a refinements class for those who know this form (\$5 per session)

VIDEO DAY

December 2nd, 10-noon

The Phinney center is having its winter festival so it will be closed to classes. Instead we will have a session at my Magnolia place. There will be a discussion on gearing our practice towards where we want it to go in addition to studying tapes of Master Tchoung, Master Gao-fu, and Master Feng Zhi-Zhang. (3625 Magnolia Blvd. W (basement apartment).

DECEMBER 8TH, 7-8:30

Form Refinements

If you have questions about certain forms you've learned, or want corrections I will be available for this period. Fee will be \$5.00 per form. You need to book time in advanced.

et BELLS AND WHISTLES



goal oriented vs. process oriented

One of the primary problems we encounter when learning any of the internal arts we can blame on our culture. In short: we come from a culture that is goal oriented. Thus we're always looking for results or keeping our focus on tomorrow instead of today or now. Goal oriented isn't necessarily bad, our goal should be to improve our health and the quality of our lives. Put our intent in the direction we want our energy to focus towards, but when it comes to studying the internal arts what we see isn't the art but a method of learning to get to the art. The art itself is studying ourselves (*the book*), cleaning up the gunk, releasing the negative tensions, and figuring a way of regaining balance, harmony, and centering. It's a goal that keeps shifting and changing - it's to become healthy. When seeing the internal arts we see the shell, the forms, and assume the shell is the egg.

We need guidelines, a direction to follow and the techniques to bring us to a self-understanding and a self-awareness. This is the map to the art, the self-understanding, understanding our inner self is the art, this is our study. The forms and exercises will lead us to look at ourselves and really listen to our inner selves. This comes from our mindful practice. As we practice mindfully, each form and posture presents certain challenges that puts a mirror in front of us showing us where we are stuck. On a very basic level it may be the frustration of remembering the movements, the frustration of not practicing between classes, the frustration of not being able to put enough priority to

practice. Another level may be the difficulty of physically keeping the movement connected, fluid, smooth. Beyond this, once we may know a form or series of movements (without our energy going toward memorization) the mirror reflects where our tension lies, the stiffness, why we can't just soften and let go while performs the moves. The most common problem is trying to keep our mind totally focused on our movements and the HERE/ NOW.

This is the art as I understand it. It's refining the quality of each posture and transition, continuously polishing ourselves. Of course when we begin a new form the goal is to complete the form so we can then really study it. It's odd that most of us have a need to have the entire picture (form) before we feel we can start to really refine it - when in fact we can always begin to refine the very first movement or transition we already know. **Each posture is a form to itself.** Each posture is a lesson to itself. Each posture is a chi kung to itself if practiced correctly. Each posture is an application to itself. Yet we have an urge to complete all 20 or more movements before we feel we can begin to really work on it.

"the grass is always greener . . ."

When learning a new form it always seems incredibly long. Once we complete it, it seems too short! Also, when watching someone do a form you don't already know it really looks pretty neat, magical, special. Once we know it we take it for granted since it's common place now.

*"Before you know it, it's something special.
After knowing it, its nothing unusual."*

The self-defense aspect of the art attracts many. Seeing a master, effortlessly defend themselves like magic gives the impression it is easy and magical. NO EFFORT! What we don't see the masters 50 years of intense study and daily practice. We don't see the struggles with practice, the road blocks, the plateaus endured, the struggle to fit practice into every day life.

Though the principles of these arts is non-resistance and non-fighting, not using brute force or extra effort. The effort required is in studying and practicing diligently. Getting all the friction out of our bodies so each muscle, each joint (along with our mind and energy) functioning like an exceptional symphony. And in applications, in addition to our own symphony

we need to understand how to blend with the attacker's force.

The required steps are: first training our body and mind to harmonize. (solo forms, chi kung, and basics). Getting the kinks out is just like the preparation for baking bread: sift the flour, be sure all is mixed well, then thoroughly kneed the dough. If this process isn't done properly then the texture, taste and quality of the bread will not be very good.

As the 1,000 parts of our body begin to harmonize through our daily practice, or at least that they acknowledge each other, then we can concern ourselves with the self-defense aspects. Dealing with input from the outside. In a basic session this may just mean staying relaxed when our partner applies pressure to our shoulders and arms. At an advanced level it may mean staying relaxed as our partner throws a full powered punch at our face. The practice is in *each* practice, not the results of each practice. Feeling, listening, refining ourselves according to the principles of the art. If there is interest in immediate self-defense or fighting skills then Wing Chun, model mugging, and self-defense classes are best. You won't develop the chi kung aspects and degrees of listening skills but you will have a good repertoire for self-defense.

The same is true of the weaponry. If the body isn't in harmony and understands how to relax and what rooting is about; the sword movement merely become flailing a sword around, like a little child with a stick. Internal arts weaponry isn't learning the forms, they are working with a deeper and more complex coordination of muscles, mind, energy and body; a level beyond the solo forms. This is the process of the internal arts, refining our own selves and movements. If there is only interest in playing with weapons for self defense or forms there are much better ways of approaching it. Arnis, Kali, Kendo, Jojitsu, are quicker and effective.

patience - all in good time

Some of the impatience is a fear that the teacher will disappear or get tired of teaching. If you're a members of the IWA don't worry, my intent is to teach the entire systems of these arts but . . it will however take time. If you have gone through any beginning class on any of these arts you already have years of stuff to practice, study, and perfect. Don't bite off more that you can chew or swallow!

ATD

A STUDY GUIDE TO PA KUA CHANG GETTING A GOOD START - PART IV

by A.T.Dale

WEEK FOUR:

Our next step is to move from just holding one inner palm to linking them together - one inner palm to the next keeping the transition smooth between each posture without losing the connection, or permitting any slack from happening as you link them. This time as you walk the circle, at first hold each palm position one circle, slowly and smoothly move into the next posture. We are not talking about changing direction, just linking one inner palm with the next while walking in the same direction. Study and perfect the smooth flow of one palm into the other, then try to maintain the energy connection from one energy into the next. No slack or gap between any part of the movement, no wobbling either.

As the transitions become smooth and comfortable then shorten the span between each palm. In class our process is: one circle between each palm transition, then 8 steps between transitioning between palm, next transitioning every 4 steps, then 2, then one. You'll find as the stepping gets shorter between palms it becomes more difficult to keep the smoothness and connection between each palm.

LEVEL ONE:

Transition between each palm, one circle. As you move from one palm (like pushing the earth to hands floating on water) there should be no slack at all within the movements and arms. Have this transition slow, smooth and even-paced. It should feel natural and enjoyable. Now don't worry about making this transition at the completion of each circle. Instead hold one posture - one circle, then as you continue to circle try to stretch the transition out during the next circle walk arriving at the next palm one circle later.

LEVEL TWO:

Transition between each palm at the end of each circle. So, as you come to the end of your circle of pushing down the earth transitions a little more quickly into your next palm. Once you've gone through each inner palm, each direction then transition between then every 8 steps. Once this is done then work on transition between each palm every 4 steps, then every 2 steps and finally transition one palm to the other every step. As

the interval between each posture decreases be sure to keep the connections smooth and even.

LEVEL THREE:

When you find the above fairly easy then increase the speed of your walking and try to keep the smoothness both in walking and the transitions between palms. As you walk stay at one level; hips and shoulders moving level as you walk. At the same time the hand and arm moving smoothly and gracefully from one inner palm to the next. Don't let the speed scatter your energy, raise your center or cause you to float.

LEVEL FOUR:

Now this next constant connection is difficult (actually we spend the rest of our lives working on refining this process). Here instead of merely working on the smoothness of one palm transitioning into the next we will focus on our inner energy and muscle connections: hand to hand, hand to leg keeping the *chan ssu jin*, spiraling energy, constantly connected. There is an easy method to start instead of tackling it all at once. I find it easiest to work on the elbow-to-elbow connection first instead of palm-to-palm. It's less distance between elbow-to-elbow so less to connect. This connection feels like there is a rope that connects the two elbows, like the cord to open and close draperies. When one hand moves or twists there is a similar feeling in the opposite arm. Eventually this feeling of inner twining is felt from the feet to the hands as we move. As I said I find it easiest to feel and work with this connection elbow to elbow first before moving on to finding it palm-to-palm. After achieving a feeling of this connection then try to gain this connection leg to hand (left leg to right palm and right leg to left palm). This is a very deep energy and power connection that ultimately give us the fa-jin power.

TAI CHI MEMBERS:

"All parts of the body are strung together without the slightest breaks." - Tai Chi Chuan Ching by Chang San-feng

The only part of the above levels that doesn't apply to Tai Chi members is increasing the speed between postures. As you practice keep the connections and movements smooth with no seams between postures.

THE POWER OF 'INTENT'

intent leads energy

This is the principle that the internal arts, Taoist meditation practices and all Chi Kung systems are based upon.

As we practice our forms; when we punch, push, grab, roll-back etc. Our thoughts lead the energy current strongly in the direction of that limb, or to a certain area of the body. This keeps the energy moving, perhaps cleaning the 'pipes' and flushing out blockages and obstructions within our system while the movement strengthens the ligaments, tendons and muscles (the insulation).

Now, I'd like you to think about the most peaceful spot you've ever been to, or the happiest time you can remember. Linger with this thought for a moment.

This thought creates biochemical changes in the body. Thinking of a peaceful place; by the beach, woods, waterfall. Peaceful thoughts will quiet down the mind, relax the body and open up the muscles to a better energy flow. Just the thought has this effect on your body.

Now think about eating your favorite desert, your favorite fruit, fully ripe on a hot day. Just the mere thought creates an energy flow, creating your mouth to water.

intent leads energy

Be careful about what you think. If thinking about eating a juicy ripe strawberry causes your mouth to water, energetic and chemical changes take place in your body by the mere thought.

intent leads energy - "I'll never get this."

intent leads energy - "I can't seem to do anything right."

intent leads energy - "I'm so clumsy."

intent leads energy - "I'm too old to get it."

intent leads energy - "I would like to be physically fit."

intent leads energy - "I'd like to be centered and calm."

intent leads energy - "I want to be good at this."

intent leads energy - "I want to master this form."

intent leads energy - "I'm fine, I'm doing OK"

intent leads energy . . .

Thinking of pleasant thoughts create a positive energy flow within the body. Thinking of negative things has a poisonous effect on the body. This, of course, happens on all levels: mind, body and spirit.

As we practice more and more we begin to work energy stronger; it's important to realize the effect our thoughts and intent have as we're able to access more energy. Thoughts like, I'll never get this, I'm no good, I'll never be as good as . . . , etc. All create a poisonous energy patterns in our body and energy field. We need

to eliminate these thoughts. We need to keep the energy flow toward a healthy and strong self. We need to focus on thoughts and actions that will nurture ourselves. Each practice is like digging a hole deeper and deeper thus it can hold more water/energy. Our thoughts are like the nozzle of a hose that focuses all this water/energy in a particular direction whether for positive, healing work or negative, harmful work, inwardly or outwardly.

JUST THINK ABOUT THIS:

If I say an apple is sweet and you can taste how sweet an apple is, it's only because the taste of an apple is part of your understanding. In you exists the sense of what a sweet apple is. What I said resonates with something inside you. If you've never had an apple my comment has no meaning to you, you won't recognize what it means. So . . . as we watch someone of high skill, if we see something beautiful, fluid, peaceful, etc. We can recognize it only because it is inside of us, it resonates with something inside of ourselves. There is, at the least, a seed of that perfection, beauty, skill inside us that can be nurtured. So we each have the potential to achieve the skill levels we see and can appreciate since it resonates to something within us. *To the same thing inside us.* Our undeveloped potential. Otherwise we wouldn't have any appreciation of it, or even an understanding of why it is strong and special. We each have that potential. *Intent leads energy:* we have a choice to nurture that special something inside of us.

When we think of a pleasant situation we can feel a happiness or calmness within ourselves. Unfortunately when we think negative thoughts we may not feel as much or anything. It's my assumption this is so because those thoughts are actually common to our way of thinking so they aren't anything special. We're numb to the effects they have on us. If you think of something sour there is an definite effect we can feel but when those negative thoughts occur they sneak their way into our energy patterns.

intent leads energy

CREATING A POSITIVE CHANGE

Now do we bring or create a positive energy flow to our surroundings? We each have the power to keep or create a positive, healthy, forward moving future. A person who is centered, calm, positive or happy will 'brighten' the days of those they come in contact with. Similarly a negative, angry attitude will poison the atmosphere that surrounds them. This is important to keep in mind. Do we nurture our surroundings or poison them? How do we want to ultimately live? In health, fear, kindness . . .

intent leads energy - create your own future

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